

have been expected to have turned in a totally different direction: and yet the phenomena referred to, are not without their prototypes. The earliest assault on the inspiration of the Old Testament was from a learned Jew of the 12th century. At the revival of learning in Europe, the heroic achievements of a Wickliffe and his associates, had a melancholy set off, in the wild fire of infidelity, which overran Italy, fed in too many instances by sacerdotal hands. In more than one instance, avowed unbelief associated with lax morality, mounted the papal throne. In Germany, for two centuries past, the very worst forms of error have been put forth by men who held offices of trust in the Church or in the theological seminaries. Two centuries ago, as also within a century past, the vilest attacks on the morality of the Scriptures, and on the Miracles of the blessed Saviour, were made by Clergymen of the English Church, equally learned, but far more honest than some who have followed them in the same unholy career; for it never occurred to a Woolston, a Lindsey, or a Fellowes, that they could with any consistency remain in a Church whose doctrines they had repudiated. The battles of the faith have been fought over and over again; and, if new causes have produced new forms of unbelief, experience of the past teaches us how to deal with them. Thirty years ago, Cardinal Wiseman published one of the best treatises yet known on the "harmony of science and revelation;" but strange to say, the Tractarians of Oxford with Pio Nono and his Encyclical, have since attempted to bear down upon science in its onward march, with the simple affirmation *ex cathedra*—"Thus saith—the Church"! French infidelity was nurtured amid the corruptions and vices of a fallen hierarchy; and we have no doubt at all that Oriel College and the Vatican have been exchanging signals while the genius of infidelity stands by and smiles complacently. Superstition and scepticism are strangely allied; and Voltaire is not the only instance of hoary infidelity, when it has run its course, taking refuge amid the soothing blandishments of "the mystery of iniquity."

Thank God, the counteractives of infidelity are many. We have a Christian literature, well appointed and amply encouraged. The Episcopal Bench in England never had before such an array of intellectual and moral excellence; and eleven thousand of the Clergy have protested against error in a form that will tell propitiously. Ireland scarcely owns a hierarchical Puseyism at all; and her sturdy Presbyterianism stands high and massive, as the oak of the forest. The "Historical Theology" and the orthodox "Church principles" of the South and of the North, in our father land, are uniting their hitherto broken ranks under the one banner of "Westminster" and the "Covenants" somewhat modified indeed, but sufficiently clear and Scriptural for every practical purpose. Germany has seen hopefully an ebbing and a returning tide; while Italy has her "Presbytery of the North," and France her "free and independent" evangelical Church. These are only a few of the bright lines which mark "the bow of the promise;" but they are quite enough to aid our "sons of Issachar" in learning to "know the times": and in laying down a practical sketch of "what Israel ought to do."

In few matters of opinion has the Protestant world been more at one than in fixing the great Apocalyptic period of the Papal ascendancy to the year 606 of the Christian era; and if this opinion is well founded, the close of the 1260 years must be near at hand. There are many things in the political condition of the Papacy that tend to cherish anticipations of impending changes; and a speedy and large diminution of its relative influence. The formation of a new kingdom of Italy; the hopeful position of the realm of Sardinia; the disaffection of the people of Rome and of Italy generally, to priestly rule; the progress of liberal opinions on the continent generally, and the growing ascendancy of an enlightened moderate party in the Roman Catholic Church as opposed to the spirit of the ultramontanes; these, and collateral appearances, are all favourable to our most sanguine hopes, as to the fu-