

that the promises tarry long, but they will certainly all be fulfilled in their season.— Man, being the creature of a day, must hurry the execution of his purposes, or they may never be executed at all: but with God there is no such necessity for haste, for He has eternity to work in. And by thus allowing evil systems to develop themselves, the consequences of error and sin are more fully apparent, the forbearance of God more beautifully exhibited, and His justice, in their punishment at last, more gloriously displayed.

The existing state of Romanism affords a striking illustration of this truth. For upwards of thirteen hundred years, He has borne with this monstrous system of spiritual despotism, and civil tyranny united: and yet though vastly weakened, it still exists: in many places exhibiting tremendous energy and exercising most mischievous power. It is scarcely possible for an enlightened observer to contemplate this terrible system, without wonder and alarm. Engrafting some of the practices and dogmas of heathenism upon the pure and simple truths of Christianity, and inventing others of which heathenism would have been ashamed, it conciliated and deluded the crowd, whilst it degraded, and enervated the religion which it perverted. It did not ignore the truth, but it dragged it into a sacrilegious alliance with superstition and idolatry, and overlaid it with heaps of rubbish. We do not say that it completely concealed the truth. It was always discovered and embraced by a few devoted Christians within the Church of Rome, who shone like brilliant stars in its dark night; but the masses of the people have been so drenched with superstition and idolatry, that the divine light within them has been darkened; a ferocious fanaticism has been substituted for the gentle and loving spirit of the gospel; and they have become in all thoroughly Popish

countries stunted in intellect, and degraded in condition, unfit for the exercise of liberty, and reduced to the condition of slaves. That this is no exaggerated and partizan statement may be evident to any well-informed person, who reflects on the social and political condition of Roman Catholic countries at the present time.— Just in proportion, as the spirit of Popery predominates, is the country degraded and ruined.

For more than a thousand years this evil system lorded it over Europe, paralyzing the energies of man, and impeding all social improvement; substituting a gaudy and idolatrous ceremonial for the simple, and intelligent worship of the only living and true God—a religion of forms for the religion of the heart—frustrating, to a large extent, for a long time, the work of Christ, and almost subjecting the world to the effects of a second fall. At length the darkness was broken, the light of truth dawned upon the minds of men and the glorious reformation took place, by which the half of Europe was emancipated from the mental bondage and spiritual despotism, under which it had been so long prostrated. To all the nations the light was offered; but many of them extinguished it with the blood of the saints, and are suffering to this day the consequences of their guilt,—writhing in the chains of despotism which they have vainly endeavored to break, and affording to the world an awful evidence of the impossibility of maintaining liberty, in a land where true religion is proscribed and persecuted.

It is alarming to contemplate the vitality of error, and its readiness to spring up afresh in the congenial soil of the human heart. In the succeeding century, the reformation had lost much of the ground which it had gained in Europe; and the contest was transferred to the northern shores of the New World. As “westward