

worldly, or in any respect contrary to sound doctrine, let us drag it forth to the light, that it may be publicly denounced and disavowed. And let us rejoice in every event that tends to strip the gospel of the pompous adornings men have put upon it, and to reduce it to its original pureness and simplicity. The consummation of this great object may not take place till momentous changes have been experienced, affecting the whole frame of society. Yet may the Christian calmly wait for the result; when the nations are shaken, the church shall be purified and established; and then "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Once more:—We place among the signs of the times *the existing hindrances to the progress of truth and the prosperity of religion.*

The growth of popery must be regarded as a great and alarming evil. It has been attributed to two causes. The first was the alleged oppression of its adherents; for by a kind of moral instinct we retain more firmly those opinions for which we are reviled and persecuted: that cause is now removed. The second is the disingenuousness of its advocates. They would fain persuade us that the absurd or obnoxious principles and the idolatrous practices of their community (we cannot call it a church) have either become obsolete, or are so modified as to be unobjectionable and harmless. Many have been seduced by their sophistry, and have learned to look at popery without abhorrence, or even with some degree of veneration, for its high antiquity and the gaudy magnificence of its ritual. It is necessary that we should be on our guard. Whatever may be our political speculations on this subject, we must not forget that the papal system is unchanged and unchangeable; that it is the great cor-

ruption of Christianity, described in the prophecies of the New Testament; that it neutralises or openly denies the atonement and intercession of the Saviour, pardon and salvation by free grace, justification by faith, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit; that under its influence those who ought to be "the Lord's freemen" become the vassals of a proud and domineering priesthood; that for spiritual worship it substitutes gross idolatry and senseless superstition; that it takes away the key of knowledge from the people; that it visits all other parties with its relentless curse, and dooms them to perdition; and that as the harlot of Babylon is herself destined to sure destruction, so all who are confederate with her shall be involved in her ruin, and "partake of her plagues." It is incumbent on us therefore, to inquire more carefully into the true grounds of protestantism,—to follow the enemy into all his strong holds and corners,—to expose before all the world the vile imposture that has been palmed on mankind in the name of Christianity,—to maintain an unsparing aggression on the errors and superstitions of Antichrist,—and at the same time to re-examine our own systems, of faith and discipline, lest we may have unconsciously deviated from the plain directions of Scripture, or in any respect countenanced tradition and will-worship, the main pillars of the papacy.

But we must confess that our fears are less excited by the growth of popery than by *the rapid and extensive progress of infidel opinions.* It is a lamentable fact, and cannot be gainsayed, that Christendom abounds with unbelievers in divine revelation, and that they are found not only among the wealthy, the learned professions, and the educated classes, but also, and in very great numbers, among the lower orders. The periodical press is deeply imbued with