

While the cannon is pointed to its walls without, the deadly weapons may be as active against it within the fortifications. The Church, that wider scene of peace, is compared to a city, with its walls and its fortresses; and the same peace which Christ left with individuals: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you": the Psalmist here prays may be enjoyed by the whole Church: "Peace be within thy walls, prosperity within thy palaces": peace, which is the opposite of all internal and external tumult or strife, be within thy walls. The Church is exposed to contentions within and without. The Church is a beleaguered city, and while the strife of opposition is around her, her fortresses are often betrayed to the enemy, and her very citizens turn their weapons against her. Is it not so, is it not often so, with the church? Has she not often to maintain the war both without and within? She is assailed by the world, by the Devil and his forces, and those who should be her defenders become often her active enemies. The church has ever been a beleaguered city. It has been a circumscribed spot in the midst of the world, a citadel of truth, and the rage of Satan has been untiring against it. It has been all his aim to take possession of this city, to disturb its tranquillity, and sow dissension among her citizens. Does not all the history of the church prove this? Not to go back to Old Testament times, look to the church in the persons of Christ and his disciples. Was it not a beleaguered city then, and did discord not sometimes break out within? Would Judas not have betrayed the church to its enemies? Look at the gathering ranks, the investing enemies, in the first ages of Christianity. What blood was shed, what martyrdoms inflicted, that the peace of the church might be destroyed, and that the church itself might be overthrown! Was not the reign of the emperors, down to Constantine, one effort for this, one continued assault upon the bulwarks of the church? Then the enemy changed his policy. He introduced the elements of disorder within the church itself. Even before that time he sowed dissension and strife among the church's defenders or citizens. And what is the history of the church from that time to the Reformation?—Where was the peace of Jerusalem then? How distracted was the church! What heresies arose, what strifes, till the church was found in a scattered few,

amid the solitudes of vallies, and the fastnesses of mountains. How was the church persecuted, and by those who professed themselves to be exclusively the church of Christ! What confusion, what division, what dispeace! Often might the prayer be put up: "peace be within thy walls"; but it was not heard. What country has not seen the contentings of the church, and the sufferings of her citizens?

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints,
whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept the truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and
stones,

forget not". These persecuting times have passed away. But who can tell how long this may be, while even now all is not the quiet and peace one would like to see within the church; nor will that quiet and peace be attained till a more advanced period of the church's history. What confusion still among the ranks even of God's people, of Zion's citizens! What discord, what disunion, what strife! Has the church peace? Is the noise of contest not still within and around her walls? Are there not contentings for the truth within, and are there not musterings and contentings against the enemy without? Is not Rome summoning her legions again to do battle with the saints of the living God? The last great contest, it is thought, is coming on. There is not yet peace for Jerusalem. Are we prepared for the contest? The best interpreters of prophecy say there will yet be a struggle with the man of sin; and it does appear as if that struggle were coming on. Popery is making rapid progress; it is introducing itself into the courts and cabinets of Europe. It is seizing on the islands of the sea. The last great bulwark of Protestantism, as a great man said on one occasion, has yielded, or is about to surrender. "Britain has ceased to protest, or to be protestant, as Geneva did some time ago". Britain nationally is no longer Protestant. The battle is again waged with the old enemy of the church. Let us be prepared for the contest. Let us be armed with the armour of God's truth, and with the armour of righteousness on the right hand and the left. Let the word of God be supreme in our own hearts. *Let there be no foreign power there.*—Self-will must be renounced—every sin must be subdued, every rebellious pas-