

obligation unless we are in the habit of placing the truth before our fellow-creatures, and directly appealing to their consciences; unless our children, our servants, our friends, relatives, and neighbours, are reminded by us of their perilous state as sinners against God, instructed in the way of salvation, and so plied with the warnings and invitations of the gospel as to be left entirely without excuse. These are the duties connected with the present aspect of the times, with regard to benevolent exertion.

The triumphs of religious freedom are to be ranked among the most favourable signs of the times. Persecution is now unknown, except in the form of those petty vexations, which penal statutes can hardly reach, and which happily betray the aggressor's weakness as well as his malice. The government of our country is conducted on the acknowledged principle that "all good subjects ought to possess equal rights." Religious opinions and practices are no longer regarded as qualifications for political office, and universal freedom is become the law of the empire.

Believing that our Saviour's kingdom is "not of this world," and that all coercive measures are utterly inconsistent with the principles and spirit of his gospel, we cannot but contemplate these events with joy and thankfulness. We are taught that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" and we know that religion disdains the feeble and incongruous aid of worldly power. The trappings of courts do but conceal her beauty, and the array of the warrior only impedes her march. Too long has Christianity been prostituted to purposes of earthly policy, and used as an appendage to the state. Men have thought to do her honour by investing her with the insignia of empire, and giving her power, and wealth, and patronage. But experi-

ence has demonstrated the folly and mischievous tendency of such corruptions. They have furnished convenient inlets to ambition and hypocrisy; but they have rendered immense disservice to religion, by preventing mankind from discerning her true excellence, and supplying plausible pretexts for infidelity. It is impossible that such a state of things can long remain. In proportion as the word of God regains its authority, these abuses must fall, and in the brightness of the millennial day, to which we are fast approaching, they will vanish as darkness before the sun. Yet a little while, and we shall see Christianity enjoying the fair trial of her powers, disencumbered of useless ornaments, untrammelled with the burdensome armour of penal laws, and "travailing in the greatness of her strength," to the utter discomfiture of all opposers: like the powerful nation described by our immortal poet, "rousing herself as a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks—as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means." *

Christians! it is ours to share in these bloodless triumphs, by opposing with all our might whatever is inconsistent with a pure and spiritual religion. Let us carefully investigate the inspired records of Christianity, whence only we can derive accurate views of the gospel, and of the divinely appointed means for its promulgation. Let us determine to institute a most rigid scrutiny into our systems and practices, and if we discover any thing restrictive, intolerant,

* Milton.