

Dominical Sabbath was the nurse of Anglo-Saxon morals and godliness ; but in many parts of the land this element of blessing and vitality is obliterated by the prevailing ideas of a Celtic and Latin proletariat, which cannot be grafted on our Anglo-Saxon stock. Till now there has existed among us a recognized standard of common convictions, to which an appeal might be made with immediate effect ; but already the Bible is banished from our schools with indignity and contempt. Our highest courts have pronounced a general respect for that ostracised touchstone of truth and honor, indispensable to the just administration of the laws of the land. The language of our great jurist—Chancellor Kent—is emphatic as to the importance of public veneration for that Book which lends its sanctity to an oath in courts of justice. Washington has multiplied maxims in his counsels to his countrymen, impressing on us the truth that whereas a republic cannot be perpetuated without popular morality, so morality cannot long exist apart from true religion ; and true religion, in his day, and down to our own, has been regarded as inseparable from a universal acceptance of the Book which gives us the Decalogue and the sublime example of Jesus Christ. This, too, is a moribund sentiment. The gospels are flippantly classed with the Koran and the Zend-Avesta, as equally imperfect and equally useful ; nay, sentimentalists in pulpits and on platforms are applauded when they contend that the Bible is not more truly the Light of the World than the monstrous fables of the Brahmin and the Buddhist. Millions of our countrymen are forbidden to read it ; and a rampant unbelief co-operates with corrosive superstition to drive it out of popular sight. Materialism and mammon-worship predominate in our great cities ; while mere indifference lends itself to their controlling influence. The Gallios of the market, the masters of trade, and the tacticians of politics “ care for none of these things.”

What is Christianity doing, with its immense resources and gigantic energies, to stay this plague of national decline ? Alas ! Christianity itself is paralyzed by sectarian divisions and by the spirit that cherishes them, repugnant as it is to the precepts of its Divine Author. Christ never authorized a divided household, nor the dissolution of what He gave us “ fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.” Where is any promise of triumph over the world save only to the Church in its unity and integrity ? Yet these divisions are kept up not only where cardinal principles are involved ; they are supported by wasteful expenditure, and even by plausible argument among those who proclaim that they differ only in “ non-essentials.” If so, why differ at all, at the sacrifice of that essential unity which is a primary precept of the Gospel ?

“ Can aught exult in its deformity ?”

Can a thoughtful Christian delight in a popular Christianity “ which shape has none, distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ?” Compared with the Church in its martyr ages, we are all as dead men ; our habitation is a valley of dry bones. “ Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain.”

In the temper of this survey of facts there is nothing pessimistic. Ten righteous may save a Sodom ; and perhaps a tithe of our population is Christ-seeking, if not Christ-loving. Wherever there is a Christian household, where God is truly worshipped, there is the salt that may preserve us. Besides, there are signs of a great awakening. There are mourners in Israel ; there are Ezras and Nehemiahs among us, who are gathering a people that have “ a mind to work” and to rebuild. Here is the dove after the deluge ; the olive-leaf appears, and the rainbow may be looked for. Let us sing an old song and make it “ a new song,” for such are those of the Psalter that point to the Gospel work. “ Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion ; for the time to favor her, the set time is come.” How