

volt the understanding, and shock the common reverence of humanity. They drag the Ineffable and Eternal down to the platform of their own passions, and would make him fight the battles of their own miserable prejudices. The Rev. Dr. McNeile of Liverpool, whose eloquence is made telling by the ready rhetoric of special and definite divine judgments, declared, on the fast day in England, that the national sin was the support rendered to Romanism, and hence the present judgments. The same school of religionists gave the same cause for the disastrous famine in Ireland a few years since, while the Rev. Dr. McHale of Tuam, a man of somewhat similar mental type, but brought up under other and opposite influences, declared that that famine was a judgment for the neglect of the Catholic faith. We find this spirit manifesting itself occasionally, with more or less force, everywhere. Even in the city where this page appears, a minister not long since declared that the Almighty, as soon as He heard that Britain was to have a day of national prayer, lifted up his arm, and, by way of sanction beforehand as it would seem, struck a blow of judgment — we are not responsible for the irreverence * — struck a blow of judgment some three weeks in advance of the actual day of supplication.

When narrowness, and fanaticism, and extravagance, can be brought to a close in the pulpit, we may hope to have more religious seriousness in the secular press. But not, we fear, until then. The tendency of one extreme, always, is to beget its opposite. We have a strong conviction that if the religion of the pulpit were improved, we should soon have much less to fear from the profanity of the press.

* "Prayer has more might than booming cannons and roaring batteries. And no sooner has the nation been called upon by the Queen, as the temporal head of the nation, to observe a day of solemn fast, humiliation, and prayer, than God lifts up his hand, and the Czar in the height of his pride, hurling his armed legions against us, is smitten to sudden death." — *Address of Rev. D. Fraser, in "Montreal Witness" of March 28, 1855.*