

dence of the churches; against such efforts, the piety and intelligence of enlightened minds cry out; and sooner or later the Churches must, acting upon their deep seated convictions, repudiate all such assumptions of power, and leave behind them, far in the distance, the very men, who now coolly wield the weapons of proscription, and seek to steady the ark of God.

It has long been a favourite idea amongst certain classes of men, that the common people are unfit to be trusted with any share in the government of Christ's house. Yet such an idea is a miserable fallacy. God's people are not required to guide the ponderous machinery of civil government, to adjust the jarring interests of sovereign nations, and to arrest the impetuous onslaughts of belligerent powers. They are not required to make astronomical calculations, or geological surveys, no work beyond their information or their strength is assigned to them; on the contrary, heaven has given to them a few plain laws, which the least gifted amongst them can comprehend. Courts of appeal, and other elements of human government may be necessary to controul unsanctified hearts, and to magnify oligarchical importance in the eyes of men; but the true disciples of Christ, however quietly they may submit to them, must feel, that they are subversive of those rights which belong to them as Christ's freemen. A lurking veneration for systems that are associated with much that is good amid their earliest memories, not unfrequently binds men as with a strong cord, and lends them to sustain such systems, while their intelligence, and every free emotion of their hearts pull in another direction. To be convinced of the truth of this, we have only to look at the many scenes of rebellion, and of consequent wholesale exclusions, which have occurred of late years, amongst ecclesiastical oligarchies, on both sides of the Atlantic. Arbitrary power has, by simply stepping a little too far, developed its nature to the people. Their veneration has given way, and what has been their course? They have not fallen back into a condition of more torturing servitude; but following impulses which light has superinduced in their souls, they have moved forward, if not from underneath the yoke, at least to a position of more enlarged liberty. And it is a notable and significant fact, that the sympathies of the world, are with those, who resist attempts to trifle with their freedom, and to withhold from them those rights, which the Son of God has conferred upon his people. In all this we clearly perceive progress, in defiance of many obstacles.

Again, we everywhere observe a decreasing confidence in human creeds and standards. There is a world-wide murmur of indignation, when men are tried, judged, and condemned by these, instead of being brought to the word of God. Against writing and printing a synopsis of the faith and practice

of any church, or writing and printing in detail its entire belief, there can be but little objection. Let such books be employed as other denominational works are employed, and they would cease to be what in many cases they now are, the bulwarks of error, mingled with some truth,—the relentless instruments of persecution in some cases, and in others of proscription. The famous Gorham case, in England, is instructive on this point; as it has evolved the true feelings of millions who are themselves under creeds, as to the authority of such documents. The Bishop of Exeter has been condemned by all parties, while Mr. Gorham has been sustained by the sympathies of an enlightened world. So strong, so resistless has been this condemnation on the one hand, and sympathy on the other, that the politico-ecclesiastical courts of England, have decided the case in palpable opposition to the Episcopal creed. In the light of the Bible, we firmly believe that the Bishop was wrong, but, in the light of his creed, he was certainly right. He fought earnestly for his creed, and was defeated; but the creed was defeated, as well as the Bishop. The voice of the millions that has condemned his course and his sentiments, has uttered a sentence of condemnation against his creed. There was a time, when such standards had sufficient authority to drive a refractory subject to the dungeon or gibbet; but those days are past; Ichabod is inscribed upon their musty forms, and to seek to enforce their authority, is to go abreast of the intelligence of the pious, Bible-loving disciples of our Lord in all lands. We have heard of many church trials of late years, where men have not been permitted to defend themselves by God's word, but have been required to harmonize their sentiments with human standards; but we have known no case where this course has been pursued in which the devotedly pious have not joined in a hearty condemnation of the course. In all this, progress is perceptible, even amid the toils of the most formidable obstacles.

Baptist churches are not by any means out of the reach of danger, in reference to such subjects as those glanced at above. In their missionary operations, they may, by some exclusive life-membership scheme, effectually establish a proud oligarchy; and thus deprive the churches of a voice in the distribution of their funds for missionary purposes. And in our intercourse with each other, as churches, we may put us, as in the place of a creed; and censure with Popish authority, while we are discarding the employment of Popish weapons. We may elevate our advisory councils into Presbyteries, and give to their results as much authority as is given to the decrees of the Council of Trent. We, too, have our obstacles to encounter; but, with God's word in our hands, and Christ's love in our hearts, let us, in humble dependence on the promised grace of the Spirit, go forward!

REVIVALS.

We notice in several United States papers, cheering accounts of religious awakenings in various quarters. Those revivals have generally been the fruit of protracted efforts in connection with the labours of some evangelist, experienced in the science of religious agitation. We have witnessed such revivals, and our experience neutralizes much of the joy which we would otherwise feel, on reading of the conversion of multitudes. We have lived in the somewhat anxious pleasure of protracted meetings in their progress; and we have passed through the torturing pains which afflict a pastor's heart in their reaction, and hence our fears as to their results. During seasons of protracted effort, churches are all energy; they pray with earnestness; they labour with burning zeal; they are ready to compass sea and land to bring souls to Christ; and they do not labour without success; but let a few weeks pass over their heads, and the zeal of the majority is exhausted, their efforts to save souls cease; they visit the prayer-meeting regularly for a time, but it seems to have lost its interest to them: next they either absent themselves from such seasons of worship altogether, or attend only when it is *perfectly convenient*; and the pastor, with feelings which none but a pastor so circumstanced can comprehend, sees his flock straying away into forbidden pastures, and only finds his hands held up by a faithful few, who are filled with joy and love in view of the fact that they are permitted to follow the Lamb 365 days in the year. In such remarks we make no indiscriminate thrust at extraordinary effort. It may, in some circumstances, be both proper and profitable: as a general rule we think it to be neither. The fact that souls are truly converted to God, in such seasons, instead of leading to the belief that such seasons are necessary, ought, we think, to produce just an opposite conviction. If the churches have practical proof that the means of grace faithfully employed, meets with the Divine blessing, and results in the salvation of men, is it not fearful to see a church deliberately step down from such a position—cease to be in earnest in the employment of heaven's instrumentalities, and leave thousands of impenitent mortals around them to their fate, until another protracted meeting! It is not necessary for churches to live in the excitement of such seasons, in order to meet the approval of heaven, and instrumentally to lead souls to Christ. Confidence in the promises of the Spirit—dependence upon his power, with a calm but earnest use of the means which he has given, will secure to any church a continual revival. With Christ's order and Christ's doctrine, we are fully equipped for the race and warfare which we are commanded to run and fight. If we want revivals, let us maintain fully this order, and present faithfully those doctrines.