

the nature of the human mind to see that in so great and remarkable a revolution of religious opinion as has marked the last quarter of a century, some of its most earnest advocates would be almost sure to run into extremes. When the strain in one direction has been excessive, we must be wanting in the commonest observation, if we do not *expect* its rebound in the direction which is opposite to be proportionably violent.

Arguing too, *a priori*, from the peculiar character of those who alone are fitted for the office of religious reformers, and from the difficulties and trials by which they are necessarily assailed, we must be *prepared* to mourn over excess where we should have hoped for moderation, and to sorrow over those who in striving after perfection, have overrun their mark and fallen into error. The philosophy of the question, however, has been well argued by much abler writers, and since our investigation has thus far been historical in its nature,—we shall address ourselves to the task of glancing briefly at the past, and endeavour to show in a few words that every effort which has been made towards reformation in religion has invariably been accompanied by excesses both in opinion and act.

The state of God's ancient Church was we know most corrupt, at the period of our Lord's advent. He came to work the most blessed reformation which the world has ever seen, and most earnestly did His followers labor to spread the knowledge of His saving name; but even concerning these men it was said by the word of inspiration, "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Accordingly