

At length, after a long night of error, and centuries of darkness, reviving literature brought on the auspicious day-break, and cheered our Western Hemisphere with the light of Reformation: but the blessing was only partial. In more than half of Europe, falsehood maintained its ground, and bigotry could still support the establishments of ancient superstition.

Offended at these abuses, and averse to the toil of honest and candid enquiry, men of letters in Catholic countries confounded Christianity with its corruptions, and their successful attack upon the latter, accompanied with subtle and farcastic insinuations against the sacred Book itself, destroyed the faith of multitudes.

Human reason likewise elated by a deliverance from a long thralldom, and enriched with stores from the lately recovered learning, rebelled against its Author, and, rejecting whatever the mind of man was unable to comprehend, filled up with self-conceit the place of Christian humility. This presumptuous spirit of scepticism having pervaded the continent with an influence most fatal to its religious principles; objects of sense, the splendor and accommodations of voluptuous life, took possession of the
general