tion, more living and growing more directly out of the bosom of religious feeling itself, has taken the place completely of the old mechanical theory. For this very reason the later theology, of which the art is to be a distinguishing ornament, shows itself specially adapted to promote practical exegesis in the right form; as this is suited also to show, that by the overthrow of that old contracted view nothing is lost in the use to be derived from the Scriptures, but rather a great deal gained. In a still higher and richer sense than before, will the Bible by this means remain, in the face of all sorts of worldly culture and outliving the whole, the Book of Life. Men will no longer seek to find in it the solution of questions that pertain only to the interest of science in its different spheres, or that go quite beyond the range of human knowledge,[1] but will use it as the oracle for all that is necessary for man's *salvation*, for all the relations of life as they should be ordered in reference to its eternal scope. And for such right use of the Bible always practical exegesis must still show the way.

Translated by J. W. N.

MODERN CIVILIZATION.

Protestantism and Catholicity compared in their effects on the Civilization of Europe. Written in Spanish by the Rev. J. Balmes. Translated from the French. Baltimore: Published by John Murphy & Co. Pittsburg: George Quigley. 1851. 8vo. pp. 514.

A very interesting and able work; written by a devoted Roman Catholic; but none the less worthy for this reason of being diligently read and considered by all intelligent and earnest minded Protestants. It is the boast of Protestantism, we all know, to seek the light, to shrink from no inquiry, to encourage the most unbounded intellectual and religious freedom, to be ready to listen at least even to an enemy's voice speaking in the name of reason, and not to refuse instruction from whatever quarter the smallest measure of it can be drawn. The only regret would seem to be with a certain class of its champions

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[1] Ἃ μὴ ἑώρακεν ἐμβατεύων, curiously praying into the secrets of the invisible world, Col. ii: 18.

often, that the opposite interest, that of the Roman Church, is not willing to meet it on the same fair, liberal and honorable terms; that when it says, "Come let us *reason* together," that proud party should only scorn the proposal, and seek on principle and system rather to cover itself up in blind fog, and to resist all learned investigation as something that is felt instinctively to be full of danger to all its towering pretensions. The complaint is that Roman Catholics love darkness rather than light, and are not willing to stand forward before the world, and give account of the faith that is in them at the bar of history and logic. In these circumstances, the book before us certainly deserves a welcome reception at the hands even of those whom it undertakes to assail and attack. For it is no vulgar onset, made up merely of declamatory noise and slang. It abounds, beyond all contradiction, in comprehensive learning and profound observation. It is full moreover of vivacity, the vigor of a fresh spiritual life, such as it is refreshing to commune with, whether we can lend ourselves fully to its cause or not. The work has evidently suffered some by translation, but it retains still no small amount of its original glow, rising at times into actual eloquence of no ordinary kind. Here then is just what we should all be glad to see, an able and dignified attempt on the side of Romanism to show itself better than Protestantism, on the very field which this last has been most ready of late to claim as altogether its own, the relative bearing of the two systems namely on the progress of modern society. Now instead of battling with the wind, our valorous Samsons have the opportunity of grappling, shoulder to shoulder, with a real flesh and blood foe, in the full panoply of Rome, whom all must allow to be in every respect worthy of their best prowess and zeal. Shall we not be glad of this for *their* sakes, as well as for the sake of that great cause of truth which is here in controversy and debate? Here is a fair field for new laurels, more green than any that have yet crowned their brows. Will they suffer it to go without improvement and use? One solid refutation of such a work as this of Balmes would be a more meritorious achievment for Protestantism, than fifty or five hundred replies to Archbishop Hughes in the reigning pulpit and rostrum style. What we need is not declamation and bold popular rant, but true scientific discussion; such as Rome is commonly charged with eschewing and abhorring, but has here at least happily so far forgotten herself as of her own accord to offer and court, on an arena which is open to the free gaze of the whole world. Let the book be read, and not ignored or treated as a nursery tale. Let its facts and reasonings be examined and understood, and not set aside with the wholesale flippancy of common schoolboy learning. Let its argument be honorably and honestly met and shorn of its strength, not turned into mountebank caricature merely, misrepresented and abused. Then in truth shall we have a victory, worthy of something more than bonfires and crackers. Nothing will be lost, but much gained, for the Protestant interest, by a trial of its merits thus ending in its own more full and conspicuous vindication. It is not by having nothing to withstand and surmount, but by facing rather and overcoming the most powerful opposition, that a good cause is shown to be worthy of confidence and trust. It is when the floods come and the winds blow, that the house on the rock is proved to be better than that whose foundation is only in the sand.[1]

The work before us, we say, deserves the attention of intelligent Protestants, viewed merely in its polemical relations towards the system with which they are identified in opposition to the Church of Rome; for it is a respectable, dignified and truly learned challenge in this view, which furnishes fair and fit *occasion* at least, (not less perhaps than even the celebrated "Symbolik" of the German Möhler,) for revising and resettling if possible still more firmly than before the argument for the Reformation. But we should not do justice either to the book or to our-

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[1] Some, we know, affect to deride the idea of any such really trying force in any shape, on the side of the Roman Church. They will have it, that all its artillery is made up of fools' bells and children's rattles. To such we commend the following caution, which we are glad to find lately in the *New York Observer*:—"It is quite fashionable to sneer at Catholics as, on the whole, rather contemptible antagonists. They may have learning, it is thought, but it is antiquated lumber. They may have eloquence, but it tends to declamation. They may have art, but the cunning is too transparent, to be tried before an American community. Those who reason thus, do not know the resources which Rome possesses, and can create in men. They ought not to judge of all Romanist archbishops, by John of New York. There are men here, or certainly there are men in training to come among us, who will try to do the same work which Cardinal Wiseman has done in England. The power of eloquence, and learning, and sanctity, has not yet been exhausted in the service of that terrible organization, that wondrous device of the wicked one; and Protestants are called on to see to it, that there shall be men as *learned, as accomplished*, and more truly Christian, in training, to cope with the emissaries from Rome. Let us take warning in time. It is not by declamation, nor by contempt, nor even by sinewy argument for the common mind, that this foe is to be effectually overcome; but learning, and eloquence, and taste, and piety combined, must be formed and sustained by Protestant institutions of the highest and most thorough character—or we shall suffer for our neglect."

selves, if we shrunk from acknowledging that its claims to the interest of Protestants, in our eyes, go much beyond such merely incidental and comparatively indirect use. To a large extent, we look upon it as a noble and masterly apology for the cause of Christianity itself, over against the radical and infidel tendencies of the age, which under the plausible cover of hostility to Rome and zeal for freedom, are directed in truth against the whole mystery of Christ and his Church, and would if it were possible sweep it entirely from the face of the earth. There is a certain style of Protestantism, we know, though certainly a very bad style of it, which is ready at once to place itself in the wrong here, by confounding such an apology for the Christian Church with an apology for Romanism as it now stands, and so planting itself in opposition to it on the same ground substantially with the antichristian interest against which directly the defence is directed; as though it were better in this case to make common cause for the time with infidelity itself, than to be found in any sort of juxtaposition with Rome. With this way of thinking *we* of course have no sympathy; neither are we willing for one moment to allow, that the main body of the cause so eloquently set forth in the argument of the learned and pious Balmes belongs to Romanism only, and not to Protestantism; for that would be tantamount in our mind to a surrendry of this last interest altogether, as something in no sort comprehended in the past life of the Church and the glorious fountain from which it springs. The more trophies and crowns of honor the Church of former ages can be shown to have won in the service of her adorable Head, the more tokens her history can be brought to furnish of his powerful presence in her midst, the more will we be pleased and rejoice, Protestant though we be; and we shall not suffer our satisfaction to be taken from us certainly, just because Romanism, as in the present case, may be active in proclaiming the distinction, and would fain turn it exclusively to its own credit. Looking at the matter in this way, we know no good reason why the book before us should not be welcome to Protestants, as a general apology for Christianity, full as much as to Romanists.

We should be glad indeed to have it widely studied, for the very reason that it seems to us admirably adapted to expose and counteract those false views of the past history of the Church, to which we have already referred as too often usurping the Protestant name, and causing it to appear in bad connection with open unbelief. It belongs to the character of this Pseudo-protestantism, to make the chasm as wide and deep as possible, between the time since the Reformation and the time that went before. It takes a pleasure in finding all wrong and false in the one direction, in order to have the more reason for glorifying all as right and true in the other. The reign of Christ, in its eyes, took a new start with Luther, after having been through ten long centuries overwhelmed almost entirely by the reign of Satan. There were no doubt all along a few witnesses for the truth here and there in places out of the way; but the great body of the so called christian world, the nominal succession of the universal christian name, had become hopelessly corrupt, wedded and sold to the power of all sorts of error; so that the only wonder is, that it should have been able to hold together at all, to keep up its own organization, through so vast a tract of time. But this simply shows, how an infernal policy had got possession of the visible church for its own ends. The whole was indeed the Devil's master-piece, a wondrous device of the Wicked One, to enslave the nations and lead them captive at his will. It was indeed sufficiently irrational and absurd, as well as monstrously profane, and at the same time so boldly and impudently arrogant in its pretensions, putting its foot on the neck of kings, that we may well be astonished at the long and wide success of its usurpations; but the time was dark and the mind of the world unripe; and all pains were taken by the usurping power to perpetuate the darkness, nay to make it always more black and deep, as a favorable covering for its nefarious purposes and plans. There was a systematic effort made to extinguish the light of the Bible, and to bind the human mind in chains of ignorance and superstition. All free inquiry was discouraged, and the rights of private judgment trampled under foot. The doctrine and discipline of the Church, in the hands of a licentious ambitious priesthood, became both together a pliant contrivance merely, for the advancement of high handed spiritual tyranny in one direction and the most abject blind obedience and bondage in another. Thus the presence of the Church lay like a fatal incubus, throughout Europe, on all upward tendencies in the moral and social system, not for one century only, but for a whole dreary millenium of years. The nations were struck as with deadly paralysis, and had no power over their own limbs. All political institutions were hindered in their natural growth. Letters languished. Morals and manners ran perfectly wild. It was one age of darkness always only followed by another. To imagine any real progress in such circumstances is out of the question; the most that can be allowed is, that the ulcer of the times might have been gradually ripening towards such bad extremity,

as was needed to call out the latent powers of society finally in the way of protest and redress. It would be a relief, only to be sure that history stood still. But it is not of the *nature of the* world's life to remain thus stationary for a thousand years. Not to move forwards, is as a general law to move in the contrary direction; and it would seem accordingly that in the case before *us*, the shadow actually went back on the dial plate of civilization, God only knows how many degrees, between the sixth centuryand the sixteenth. In the ever memorable and graphically characteristic language of *Kirwan*, *the coryphaeus of this* theory of history: "When the Reformation occurred, the *retrograde* movement of the world towards ignorance and barbarism and idolatry, had *almost* been completed. Had it not occurred, a radiance might continue to gild the high places of earth after the gospel sun had set—a twilight might be protracted for a few ages in which a few might grope their way to heaven; but each age *would* have come wrapped in a deeper and yet deeper gloom, until impenetrable darkness had fallen on the world!"

What a dismal picture of God's providence and Christ's faithfulness to his own word, in the *history of Christianity for a* thousand years! And there are men, calling themselves evangelical and friends of the Saviour's cause beyond others, who can gloat over this view of the past, and feed their fancy sweetly on its hideous features, out of spite to Rome, in the imagination that they are doing God service, as well as pleasing their own hearts, by their miserable infidelity. To all such, who may have a zeal for Protestantism in their own way, but not according to either faith or knowledge, as well as to all others also of better disposition, who may find their minds bewildered and oppressed with the authority of this false theory of *church history*, without being reconciled to it in their hearts, we earnestly commend the book here under review, as one eminently suited to assist them at least, in rising towards a higher, purer and more animating vision of the glorious city and commonwealth of God. The very object of the work is one, that should find a response in every believer's soul. In full contrast with the Pseudo-protestant spirit *just noticed, it moves in the element not of infidelity* but of faith, and aims not to undermine, but to establish the Divine character of Christianity, by showing that the seals of its truth which appear upon it in the beginning, the evidences in its favor that stand forth to view from its history during the first four centuries, are followed by corresponding seals and evidences under the same outward form in the centuries of darkness that follow. Is not this a noble purpose? And if it can be to any extent made good, shall it not be considered a welcome service which is thus rendered to the cause of religion and piety? If it be honorable to vindicate the ways of God to man in common history, or in the constitution of mere nature, how much more should it be so regarded to vindicate his truth and fidelity, as they are concerned in the *history of his Church* for ten centuries of years. Any argument that addresses itself to such an object in a serious and manly way, deserves at once our gratitude and respect.

We have good right in this case to say still farther, that the only proper posture to begin with in any such inquiry, is that of trust and hope in favor of the end it aims to reach. It has often been remarked truly, that the first condition for doing justice in any case to the evidence in favor of religious truth, is a certain measure of sympathy with the truth itself and a wish to find it true; whereas an opposite *leaning of the heart*, or even a state of cold philosophical indifference, can hardly fail to act as a heavy downward weight in the wrong scale. Apply this to the general question here in hand. Did the presence of God in the Church, as it may be clearly read in the first four centuries of its history, become a total failure in the ten centuries that followed, making room only for the presence of the Devil; or may it *still be read, from the fifth century* down to the fifteenth, by tokens no less wonderful and glorious than before? To this question the really *christian* answer, it is plain, can be but one; and that is such as springs at once to the *mouth of all childlike* unsophisticated faith. The overwhelming presumption, not to be got rid of without an effort, where the divine origin of our holy religion has at all made itself felt, is that God did not forsake the work of his own hands after the fourth century, but continued to reign over it through the Middle Ages as directly as before; so much the honor and credit of the christian cause is felt imperiously to require; *and so far as the heart is at all* properly predisposed towards this cause, and in sympathy with it, it cannot fail both to expect and to desire that such natural presumption in its favor shall turn out to be in full agreement with the actual voice of facts. The man who comes to the study of the first three centuries of ecclesiastical history with the skeptical spirit of a Gibbon or Voltaire, as compared for instance with the child-like veneration of a Neander, is by his very position disqualified for all sound historical judgment in the matter with which he is called to deal; his mind is vitiated by the prejudice of infidelity from the very start; *and it is only natural* accordingly, that he should find all to be as destitute of divinity as it is the wish of

his heart it should be, a jumble of absurdities, a tissue of delusions, in which is to be read no trace whatever of God's supernatural presence, but the melancholy record only of corruption, passion and folly, on the part of man. And why should the same observation be of any less force, when extended to the ecclesiastical history of a later time? Shall that be taken as a recommendation for the student of such history here, which in the other case is allowed on all hands to amount to a full disability for his task; that he comes to it, namely, with the unbelieving sneering humor of an absolutely infidel mind, wishing to find all as bad as possible, and fully possessed beforehand with the theory, that it is a reign of wickedness and folly only that fills the history of the Church through this long period, the very masterpiece indeed and most perfect work of the Devil, and in no sense whatever a reign of righteousness and truth presided over by the Holy Ghost? To state such a question simply, is at the same time to expose its absurdity. No; in this whole controversy, we are bound to see and allow that the presumption of truth, for all true christian feeling, is from the outset against Pseudo-protestantism and in favor of the opposite side. This wholesale denunciation of the Church of the Middle Ages, accompanied with ribaldry and scorn, whatever ulterior object men may mean to serve by it, is in its own nature of infidel relationship and complexion; and from the very outset therefore we are bound to regard it with suspicion, to go against it with our prayers and wishes, and to withhold from it all assent that is not as it were wrenched from us by proofs that cut off all room for question or debate. Such a work as this of Balmes on the contrary, so far as it aims simply to establish the honor and credit of the cause thus maligned and to vindicate the faithfulness of God to his own word for a thousand years, challenges our best sympathies in its favor from the start. We feel, so far as the pulse of a sound christian life beats in our hearts, that it ought to come off victorious; we wish it success; we make common cause with it in our desires and hopes. A friendly spirit seems to surround us in its pages. We are refreshed and invigorated by the very air that breathes upon us from the whole region and field of its argument; for it is the element of faith and reverence and love, that comes to the soul like the sense of its proper native home; and to move in it is of itself at once a source of spiritual joy and strength.

It will be observed, that the work before us aims in fact at two general purposes: first, to vindicate the honor and credit of the Church before the time of the Reformation, as the true mother

of our modern civilization and culture; secondly, to show that Protestantism, instead of helping, has only hindered and retarded the onward movement of this cause. These two objects in the mind of the author indeed seem to be almost one and the same. But it needs no great depth of reflection certainly to see, that they can easily bear separation. We may allow the first, and yet oppose the second. Pseudo-protestantism indeed, as we have just seen, falls in here with the other view; making the opposition between the time before the Reformation and the time since to be of such a nature, that any merit allowed to the first must be taken as an equivalent drawback on the worth of the second. But this is in reality to give up the defence of Protestantism altogether, and to sell the whole cause into the hand of its enemies. We of course agree to no such treason. On the contrary we earnestly protest against it, as the sorest and deepest wrong that could well be inflicted on the Protestant cause. We deny that the honors and glories of the Church before the Reformation, whether in the first or middle centuries, belong exclusively in the way of historical heritage to the present Roman communion. Our faith in Protestantism is conditioned by the assumption, that the succession of the old church life still flows truly and vigorously in its veins. Why then should we wish to detract from the merit of this life at any point, and not be pleased rather with all that redounds to its praise? When the question is asked: What part has it had in the great work of modern civilization? we are quite willing, nay anxious, to find the answer as widely favorable as possible; and we give ourselves no trouble, in this case, about the bearing this may have on the comparative merits of Romanism and Protestism. That brings into view another question altogether, which we would be very sorry to consider so involved in the first as to be brought to a conclusion by it one way or the other.

Modern European Civilization presents to our view the grandest and most imposing spectacle in the universal history of the world. With all the richness and variety of its contents, with all the field it covers in space and the long tract through which it reaches in time, it is still a single fact, capable of being viewed as a whole and allowing comparison in this way with other facts of the like sort, other systems of civilization that have passed away before it or that still prevail in other parts of the earth. So we find it commended to our attention in the celebrated Historical Lectures of M. Guizot. The more the subject is studied, in the way of comparison and contrast especially with the ancient civilization, and with due regard to all the conditions under

which the modern culture has been brought to pass, the more full of interest will it appear and worthy of admiration. The modern civilization of Europe is in some respects a comparatively recent fact; it begins to appear in its proper form only a few centuries back, and is still but entering we may say on the full solution of its own social and moral problems. But as such a new creation, it is not to be regarded of course as bursting upon the world by accident or sudden surprise. There was a long preparation for it in previous ages; and this preparation enters properly into the constitution of the fact itself, just as really as the growth of the stem or stalk is one with the life of the bursting flower that forms its end. The greatness of the fact here is to be estimated by the wide and vast scale of material, time and work, through which it was brought to pass. A full thousand years were required, to bring it up to the form it carried in the age of the Reformation. To understand it properly, to do justice to the historical greatness of the fact, we must consider it as a process or movement reaching through all this time; we must have clearly before us the difference between the beginning and the end; we must be familiar in our thoughts with the elements of darkness, disorder and contradiction, in the midst of which the work of regeneration was to be carried forward from age to age.

The old Roman civilization, it will be borne in mind, had run its course and was ready to perish of its own accord; when the full tide of barbarism was poured upon it from the North, and scarce a wreck was left to tell of its ancient glory. It is hard for us now to form a conception of the political ruin that followed. The foundations of society were literally broken up, and moral chaos reigned on every side. The elements of barbarism were let loose in every direction, to roll and toss in perpetual confusion without control. There was nothing stable or firm. "States were created, suppressed, united, and divided; no governments, no frontiers, no nations; a general jumble of situations, principles, events, races, languages: such was barbarian Europe." Thus speaks M. Guizot; who then goes on also to tell us, that this tumultuating state of society lasted through hundreds of years. "It must not be supposed that the invasions of the barbarian hordes stopped all at once, in the fifth century. Do not believe that because the Roman empire was fallen, and kingdoms of barbarians founded upon its ruins, that the movement of nations was over. There are plenty of facts to prove that this was not the case, and that this movement lasted a long time after the destruction of the empire." To the invasions

from the north was added in time the Saracen pressure on the south. "Such was the situation of Europe from the fifth to the ninth century. Pressed on the south by the Mohammedans, and on the north by the Germans and Slavonians, it could not be otherwise than that the reaction of this double invasion should keep the interior of Europe in a continual ferment. Populations were incessantly displaced, crowded one upon another; there was no regularity, nothing permanent or fixed."[1] Various attempts were made to reorganize society; but it was not till after the commencement of the tenth century, according to Guizot, that the reign of barbarism could be said to have received any effectual and lasting check. And then of course the material out of which the new order was to rise, lay still in rude and wild disorder on all sides. It was the work of centuries still to bring them into shape and fit them to their proper place. These were indeed dark ages, wild ages, abounding in ignorance, wickedness, lawlessness and blood. But the worse we conceive of them in this view, the more reason only will we have to admire the mighty power of the process which was still at work in the bosom of them, to bend such unruly forces to its own use in the elaboration of the modern European culture, and the deeper must be at the same time our sense of the greatness and significance of this vast social result. For out of chaos here, through centuries of strife and confusion, has sprung in truth a new world of order and light and law, such as earth never saw before; a civilization which with all its present defects, and the dangers of failure to which it is still exposed, must be allowed immeasurably to surpass in what it has already produced, and in its capabilities of future production, every other human civilization that has yet appeared.

In explaining this great historical fact, it is known generally that M. Guizot allows a large place to the agency of the Church, as one of the factors concerned throughout in bringing it to pass. In this respect he shows himself a more respectable Protestant, and with all his rationalistic sympathies is found to be a more safe guide in the sphere of religion, than many of far less learning and much higher pretension to piety, with whom it is a point of orthodoxy to reduce this agency to zero, or even a good many degrees lower still, for the purpose of disparaging the Christianity of the Middle Ages. "The Church," he tells us, "has ex-

[1] General History of Civilization in Europe. American ed. 1838. p. 72–76.

ercised a vast and important influence upon the moral and intellectual order of Europe; upon the notions, sentiments, and manners of society. This fact is evident; the intellectual and moral progress of Europe has been essentially theological. Look at its history from the fifth to the sixteenth century, and you will find throughout, that theology has possessed and directed the human mind; every idea is impressed with theology; every question that has been started, whether philosophical, political, or historical, has been considered in a religious point of view. So powerful indeed has been the authority of the church in matters of intellect, that even the mathematical and physical sciences have been obliged to submit to its doctrines. The spirit of theology has been as it were the blood which has circulated in the veins of the European world, down to the time of Bacon and Descartes."—"The influence of the Church, moreover, has given to the development of the human mind, in our modern world, an extent and variety which it never possessed elsewhere. In the East, intelligence was altogether religious: among the Greeks it was almost exclusively human. There human culture, humanity, properly so called, its nature and destiny, actually disappeared: here it was man alone, his passions, his feelings, his present interests, which occupied the field. In our world the spirit of religion mixes itself with all, but excludes nothing.——Thus the two great sources of human development, humanity and religion, have been open at the same time, and flowed in plenteous streams. Notwithstanding all the evil, all the abuses, which may have crept into the Church, notwithstanding all the acts of tyranny of which she has been guilty, we must still acknowledge her influence upon the progress and culture of the human intellect to have been beneficial; that she has assisted in its development rather than its compression, in its extension rather than its confinement."[1] Guizot takes pains moreover to distinguish in this case between simple Christianity and the Church. "At the end of the fourth century, and the beginning of the fifth, (Lect. II. p. 50.) Christianity was no longer a simple belief, it was an institution—it had formed itself into a corporate body. It had its government, a body of priests; a settled ecclesiastical polity for the regulation of their different functions; revenues; independent means of influence." As a mere doctrine or theory the new religion would not have been able to sustain itself at all in the dissolution of the old Roman

[1] Gen. Hist. of Civ., p. 151, 153.

world, much less to control in any way the action of the blind forces that now gained the ascendency. "At this time there existed none of those means, by which in the present day moral influences become established or rejected without the aid of institutions; none of those means by which an abstract truth now makes way, gains an authority over mankind, governs their actions, and directs their movements. Nothing of this kind existed in the fourth century; nothing which could give to simple ideas, to personal opinions, so much weight and power. Hence I think it may be assumed, that only a society firmly established under a powerful government and rules of discipline could hope to bear up amid such disasters, could hope to weather so violent a storm. I think then, humanly speaking, that it is not too much to aver, that in the fourth and fifth centuries it was the christian church that saved christianity; that it was the christian church, with its institutions, its magistrates, its authority,—the christian church which struggled so vigorously to prevent the interior dissolution of the empire, which struggled against the barbarian and which in fact overcame the barbarian: it was this church, I say, that became the great connecting link—the principle of civilization, between the Roman and the barbarian world."

At the same time M. Guizot does not hesitate to ascribe a certain amount of evil also, to the general agency here brought into view. "By softening the rugged manners and sentiments of the people; by raising her voice against a great number of practical barbarisms, and doing what she could to expel them, there is no doubt but the Church largely contributed to the amelioration of the social condition; but with regard to *politics* properly so called, with regard to all that concerns the relations between the governing and the governed, between power and liberty," her influence in his opinion (p. 153) has been baneful. Altogether too the agency in question is treated in these famous Lectures only as one among several other great factors, that might seem to have wrought together, with a sort of accidental conjunction and co-ordination, under the conduct of Divine Providence, for the accomplishment of the ultimate result. Much account is made in this way particularly of certain traits and tendencies supposed to have been imbedded in the original nature of the Teutonic barbarians, such as the feeling of personal independence and the idea of military patronage, that grew up subsequently into the feudal system. The theory is, that modern civilization, in its infancy and throughout, is a sort of compound of various independent forces and elements, that

have conspired with more or less volcanic confusion and violence to bring it to pass; among which it is felt necessary in philosophical candor to assign a conspicuous place to the organization of the Medieval Church, whose activity is found to run parallel at least with other forms of power from the commencement of the whole movement to its close.

In the work of Balmes now before us regard is had all along to this theory of M. Guizot, as one which with all its pretended fairness does gross wrong to the actual truth of history, as well as to the honor of the christian religion. The work of the Spaniard however is of a far wider range than that of the Frenchman, and throws it also completely into the shade by its superior learning and more brilliant style of thought. He gives the whole glory of our modern civilization to the Church. There were other powers of course, merely natural and secular elements, that entered largely into the process; but these are not to be regarded as parallel or co-ordinate with the Church; they were but as matter and stuff rather in her hands, which took shape and place at last in the general structure only through the plastic pressure by which they were thus powerfully ruled; to her in a sense exclusively belonged under God the animating supernatural spirit and wondrous architectural skill, by which the whole work age after age was slowly carried towards the skies.

"Our hearts swell with generous indignation," this author writes, "when we hear the religion of Jesus Christ reproached with a tendency towards oppression. It is true, that if you confound the spirit of real liberty with that of demagogues, you will not find it in Catholicity; but if you avoid a monstrous misnomer, if you give to the word liberty its reasonable, just, useful and beneficial signification, then the Catholic religion may fearlessly claim the gratitude of the human race, *for she has civilized the nations who embraced her, and civilization is true liberty.*"——"With respect to civilization, a distinction is sometimes made between the influence of Christianity and that of Catholicity; its merits are lavished on the former, and stinted to the latter, by those who forget that, with respect to European civilization, Catholicity can always claim the principal share, and for many centuries an exclusive one; since during a very long period she worked alone at the great work. People have not been willing to see, that when Protestantism appeared in Europe, the work was bordering on completion; with an injustice and an ingratitude which I cannot describe, they have reproached Catholicity with the spirit of barbarism, ignorance and oppression, while they were making an ostentatious display of

the rich civilization, knowledge and liberty, for which they were principally indebted to her." A proper comparison between the course of life in the East, where this agency was in large measure wanting, and the progress seen in the West, where it was in full force, should of itself be enough to correct this false judgment. "In the West, the revolutions were multiplied and fearful; the chaos was at its height; and nevertheless, out of chaos came light and life. Neither the barbarism of the nations who inundated those countries, and established themselves there, nor the previous assaults of Islamism, even in the days of its greatest power and enthusiasm, could succeed in destroying the germs of a rich and fertile civilization. In the East, on the contrary, all tended to old age and decay; nothing revived; and under the blows of the power which was ineffectual against us, all was shaken to pieces. The spiritual power of Rome and its influence on temporal affairs, have certainly borne fruits very different from those produced, under the same circumstances, by its violent opponents."—*P.* 80, 81.

"Although the Church attached the greatest importance to the propagation of truth, although she was convinced that to destroy the shapeless mass of immorality and degradation that met her sight, her first care should be to expose error to the dissolving fire of true doctrines, she did not confine herself to this; but, descending to real life, and following a system full of wisdom and prudence, she acted in such a manner as to enable humanity to taste the precious fruit which the doctrines of Jesus Christ produce even in temporal things. The Church was not only *a great and fruitful school; she was also a regenerative association;* she did not diffuse her general doctrines by throwing them abroad at hazard, merely hoping that they would fructify with time; she developed them in all their relations, applied them to all subjects, inoculated laws and manners with them, and realized them in institutions which afforded silent but eloquent instructions to future generations. Nowhere was the dignity of man acknowledged, slavery reigned everywhere; degraded woman was dishonored by the corruption of manners, and debased by the tyranny of man. The feelings of humanity were trodden under foot, infants were abandoned, the sick and aged were neglected, barbarity and cruelty were carried to the highest pitch of atrocity in the prevailing laws of war; in fine, on the summit of the social edifice was seen an odious tyranny, sustained by military force, and looking down with an eye of contempt on the unfortunate nations that lay in fetters at its feet. —In such a state of things it certainly was no slight task, to re-

move error, to reform and improve manners, abolish slavery, correct the vices of legislation, impose a check on power and make it harmonize with the public interest, give new life to individuals, and reorganize family and society; and yet nothing less than this was done by the Church."—*P.* 90, 91.

This vast work of social regeneration required for its basis the *destruction of slavery.* It is not easy for us now to conceive of the extent to which this evil prevailed in the ancient world, or of the difficulties that stood in the way of its perfect extirpation. Guizot allows large credit to the Church for the revolution which has been wrought in regard to it, but refuses to give her full praise; because, as he says, "slavery existed for a long time in the bosom of christian society without exciting astonishment or much opposition." But this only shows that the revolution was conservative and agreeable to the genius of the Gospel, not radical and after the fashion of Red Republicanism. "Slavery was deeply rooted in laws, manners, ideas, and interests, individual and social; a fatal system, no doubt, but the eradication of which all at once it would have been rash to attempt, as its roots had penetrated deeply and spread widely in the bowels of the land." The number of slaves was immense. They could not be set free without the will of society, and their freedom also conferred upon them as a general sudden gift must have proved a curse to themselves as well as to others. To *accomplish a real and lasting* removal of the evil, it was necessary that the sources of it should be corrected, and that the general order of life out of which it grew should be brought to assume a new *spirit* and a different form. This was a work which in the nature of the case required the *strong action of a profound and constant force*, bearing through a series of centuries towards the same end. We have no right then, according to our author, to enter an exception to the credit of the Church in the case of this great work, on the ground that it was not carried through at once in a *violent and sudden way.* "That slavery endured for a long time in presence of the Church is true; but it was always declining, and it only lasted as long as was necessary to realize the benefit without violence—without a shock—without compromiting its universality and its continuation. Moreover we ought to *subtract* from the time of its continuance many ages, during which the Church was often proscribed, always regarded with aversion, and totally unable to exert a direct influence on the social organization. We ought also, to a great extent, to make exception of later times, as the Church had only begun to exert a direct and public influence, when the irruption of the northern barbarians took place, which, together with the corruption that infected the empire and spread in a frightful manner, produced such a perturbation, such a confused mass of languages, *customs*, manners and laws, that it was almost impossible to make the regulating power produce salutary fruits. If in later times it has been difficult to destroy feudality; if there remain to this day, after ages of struggles, the remnants of that constitution; if the slave trade, although limited to certain countries and circumstances, still merits the universal reprobation which is raised throughout the world against its infamy; how can we venture to express our astonishment, how can we venture to make it a reproach against the Church, that slavery continued some ages after she had proclaimed men's fraternity with each other, and their equality before God."—*P.* 94.

This leads to a somewhat extended view of the action of the Church towards slavery, in four separate chapters of the book devoted expressly to the purpose. In connection with these we have presented to us at the same time, in the way of appendix at the close of the volume, a tolerably full apparatus of the original authorities, the canons of different councils and other documents, on which the statements of the text are made to rest. The whole forms a very interesting and truly instructive disquisition on the subject of slavery, and its relations to the christian *church*, which well deserves the attention of the mere historical scholar as well as the friend of true religion. We find evidence enough of the continuance of this terrible social abuse in Europe far down towards modern times; references to its presence meet us on all sides; it might seem in one view even to have *found a sanctury in the* bosom of the church itself. For we find here also the ownership of slaves, in the form directly of church property and in the service of the ministers of religion. It was necessary thus from time to time to restrain abuses that grew out of the evil among ecclesiastics and religious houses themselves; *and for one bent on making out a dark picture of the* Middle Ages, for the purpose of laying it all to the account of the church as it then stood, it would be easy enough to derive from this quarter alone the most ample material for denunciation and reproach. It was in truth a dark time, a period of wild disorder and misrule in the *history of the European world.* Strange illustrations of the rude state of manners meet us even in comparatively late times. What shall we say of the fact, that even so late as the twelfth century the Irish were accustomed to buy English slaves of merchants, robbers and pirates, and that it was quite common even *for parents in England* to sell their own

children into such miserable servitude! But what now was the part taken by the Church, as a public historical institution, in regard to this monstrous system? To this question, so soon as we refer to her own authoritative acts and declarations, there is but one answer and that immediately at hand. From first to last, her influence has been steadily directed against slavery. Under no circumstances has she allowed herself to be bribed into its service, so as to lend her countenance and sanction to it as something good in the social order of the world. She had a philosophy of her own here, far more sublime than that taught either by Plato or Aristotle, which she never relinquished for a moment, in the face of any amount of interest, power or fashion, arrayed on the opposite side. Her whole theory of man's personality, and of his relations to God, went in full opposition to the relation in question, and so far as it gained ground could not fail to sap and undermine always more and more the whole system of thought on which it depended. That this opposition was at the same time patient, that it did not expend itself at once in a whirlwind of fanaticism, that it protracted itself with a wise accommodation to circumstances from one age to another, in the midst of all sorts of difficulty and discouragement, only serves the more impressively to commend it to our admiration and respect, only goes the more fully to characterise the agency as something greater than mere humanity and in affinity with God.

Not only was the general doctrine of the church a quiet protest continually against slavery, there was a continual exercise besides of ecclesiastical legislation, all looking towards it as an evil and aiming to limit and restrain its abuses. It is remarkable that from first to last this agency never swerved from the one direction; its scope was always the same. That manifold corruptions and abuses prevailed among the ministers of religion themselves, that the disorders of the time extended in the persons of many ecclesiastics to the very bosom of the sanctuary itself, is not to be questioned for a moment; the evidence of it is found at large in the ecclesiastical monuments of every age; but this only makes it the more wonderful, that the spirit of the system as a whole should notwithstanding have remained true always to the cause of humanity and mercy. The decrees of councils, the voice of the church in her corporate capacity, her universal policy and legislation, were ever on the side of righteousness and freedom and in opposition to tyranical wrong. She regarded herself from the beginning as the refuge of the distressed, the advocate and helper of the needy; and so the cause

of the slave also was viewed as her natural and proper charge. She was their patroness and guardian, and it was their privilege to lay claim to her protection in this character. Her relation to them is strikingly shown by the fact, that it was common for slaves who had offended their masters to fly to the christian temples as an asylum from their wrath; in which case her mediation was ever ready to be powerfully exercised in their favor. We find various decrees of councils bearing upon this object. So it was common to perform manumissions in the churches, for the purpose of making them more solemn, and to place those who were thus set free more immediately and fully under the care of the same powerful and tender mother. The protection of freed slaves was looked upon as her special trust. Hence the custom was introduced of recommending slaves to her care, by will or otherwise, for the more effectual accomplishment of their emancipation either at once or at some future time. In this way she came to have a large property in slaves herself, and all pains were taken indeed to increase this title; but it was a tenure for their advantage rather than her own, and looked towards freedom as its ultimate purpose and aim. In the end a special regulation was introduced, forbidding them to be passed into the hands of other masters; they are regarded as consecrated to God, and if their state was to be changed at all it must be for freedom only, and not for any other bondage. The zeal of the Church again for the redemption of captives, must have contributed powerfully to the abolition of slavery. This we know was of the most extraordinary character, stopping at no sacrifices for the accomplishment of its object. "The influence of it was so much the more salutary, as it was developed precisely at the time when it was most needed, that is, in those ages when the dissolution of the Roman empire, the irruption of the barbarians, the fluctuations of so many peoples, and the ferocity of the invading nations, rendered wars so frequent, revolutions so constant, and the empire of force so habitual and prevailing. Without the beneficent and liberating intervention of christianity, the immense number of slaves bequeathed by the old society to the new, far from diminishing, would have been augmented more and more; for wherever the law of brute force prevails, if it be not checked and softened by a powerful element, the human race becomes rapidly debased, the necessary result of which is the increase of slavery."

We shall not pretend however to follow in detail the course of doctrine and action, by which the Church continued to wrestle with this giant evil from century to century, until it fell finally

beneath the strength of her arms. The general process is thus recapitulated by Balmes:

"First, she loudly teaches the truth concerning the dignity of man; she defines the obligations of masters and slaves; she declares them equal before God, and thus completely destroys the degrading theories which stain the writings even of the greatest philosophers of antiquity. She then comes to the application of her doctrines: she labors to improve the treatment of slaves; she struggles against the atrocious right of life and death; she opens her temples to them as asylums, and when they depart thence, prevents their being ill treated; she labors to substitute public tribunals for private vengeance. At the same time that she guarantees the liberty of the enfranchised, by connecting it with religious motives, she defends that of those born free, she labors to close the sources of slavery, by displaying the most active zeal for the redemption of captives, by opposing the avarice of the Jews, by procuring for men who were sold easy means of recovering their liberty. The Church gives an example of mildness and disinterestedness; she facilitates emancipation, by admitting slaves into monasteries and the ecclesiastical state; she facilitates it by all the other means that charity suggests; and thus it is, that in spite of the deep roots of slavery in ancient society—in spite of the perturbation caused by the irruption of the barbarians—in spite of so many wars and calamities of every kind, which in great measure paralyzed the effect of all regulating and beneficent action—we yet see slavery, that dishonor and leprosy of ancient civilization, rapidly diminish among christians, until it finally disappears. Certainly in all this we discover no plan conceived and concerted by men. But we do observe therein, in the absence of that plan, such unity of tendencies, such a perfect identity of views, and such similarity in the means, that we have the clearest demonstration of the civilizing and liberating spirit contained in Catholicity. Accurate observers will no doubt be gratified in beholding, in the picture which I have here exhibited, the admirable concord with which the period of the empire, that of the irruption of the barbarians, and that of feudality, all tended towards the same end. They will not regret the poor regularity which distinguishes the exclusive work of man; they will love, I repeat it, to collect all the facts scattered in seeming disorder, from the forests of Germany to the fields of Bœotia—from the banks of the Thames to those of the Tiber. I have not invented these facts; I have pointed out the periods, and cited the councils. The reader will find, at the end of the volume, in the original and in full, the texts of which I have given an abstract or synopsis; thus he may fully convince himself that I have not deceived him."——"We may now inquire of M. Guizot what were the *other causes*, the *other ideas*, the *other principles of civilization*, the great development of which in his own words was necessary, 'to abolish this evil of evils, this iniquity of iniquities.'—Where is the idea, the custom, the institution, which, born on the outside of Christianity, contributed to the abolition of slavery? Let any one point out to us the epoch of its foundation, the time of its development; let him show us that it had not its origin in Christianity, and we will then confess that the latter cannot exclusively lay claim to the glorious title of having abolished that degraded condition; and he may be sure that this shall not prevent our exalting that idea, custom or institution, which took part in the great and noble enterprise of liberating the human race."—*P.* 114, 115.

There is only too much force in the following apostrophe, which is made eloquently to wind up the whole discussion, as directed towards a certain style of Protestantism that is ever ready to put itself forward as the whole interest in its true form. But we consider it, as already seen, a prostitution of this name; for its sympathies are against the honor of the Church and in league with infidelity and rationalism. The true Protestant faith rejoices in the glorious achievments of the old Catholic Church, and has no wish to rob her of a single leaf that belongs to the full foliage of her praise.

"We may be allowed now to inquire of the Protestant churches, of those ungrateful daughters, who, after having quitted the bosom of their mother, attempt to calumniate and dishonor her, Where were *you* when the Catholic Church accomplished in Europe the immense work of the abolition of slavery? and how can you venture to reproach her with sympathizing with servitude, degrading man, and usurping his rights? Can *you* then present any such claim, entitling you to the gratitude of the human race? What part can you claim in that great work, which prepared the way for the development and grandeur of European civilization? Catholicity alone, without your concurrence, completed the work; and she alone would have conducted Europe to its lofty destinies, if you had not come to interrupt the majestic march of its mighty nations, by urging them into a path bordered by precipices; a path, whose end is concealed by darkness which the eye of God alone can pierce."

True Protestantism of course cannot agree to this last thought, that the Reformation served only to interrupt the onward march

of civilization. It claims to be itself rather the proper legitimate succession and continuation of this glorious march. The precipices indeed are not to be disputed, and the darkness that shrouds the future is just now sufficiently appalling; but who shall say that all this is not the necessary condition of the general movement itself, a crisis that must needs be met and overcome in order to its full and final mastery of all the elements required to make it complete? The dangers that beset growth form no argument in favor of a perpetual childhood, however full of promise.

After having shown that it was Catholicity that removed the fundamental obstacle to all social progress, by cleansing Europe from the foul leprosy of slavery, our author goes on to consider its agency in the erection of the magnificent edifice itself which is now known by the name of European civilization; summing up first in brief statement its principal perfections, as follows:—

"The individual animated by a lively sense of his own dignity, abounding in activity, perseverance, energy, and the simultaneous development of all his faculties; woman elevated to the rank of the consort of man, and as it were recompensed for the duty of obedience by the respectful regards lavished upon her; the gentleness and constancy of family ties, protected by the powerful guarantees of good order and justice; an admirable public conscience, rich in maxims of sublime morality, in laws of justice and equity, in sentiments of honor and dignity; a conscience which survives the shipwreck of private morality, and *does not allow unblushing corruption to reach the height which* it did in antiquity; a general mildness of manners, which in war prevents great excesses, and in peace renders life more tranquil and pleasing; a profound respect for man, and all that belongs to him, which makes private acts of violence very uncommon; and in all political constitutions serves as a salutary check on governments; an ardent desire of perfection in all departments; an irresistible tendency, sometimes ill-directed, but always active, to improve the condition of the many; a secret impulse to protect the weak, to succour the unfortunate—an impulse which sometimes pursues its course with generous ardor, and which, whenever it is unable to develop itself, remains in the heart of society, and produces there the uneasiness and disquietude of remorse; a cosmopolitan spirit of universality, of propagandism, an inexhaustible fund of resources to grow young again without danger of perishing, and for self-preservation in the most important junctures; a generous impatience, which longs to anticipate the future, and produces an incessant movement and agitation, sometimes dangerous, but which are generally the germs of great benefits, and the symptoms of a strong principle of life. Such are the great characteristics which distinguish European civilization; such are the features which place it in a rank immensely superior to that of all other civilizations, *ancient or modern.*"—*P.* 116.

"The mind, when contemplating European civilization, experiences so many different impressions, is attracted by so many objects, which at the same time claim its attention and preference, that, charmed by the magnificent spectacle, it is dazzled, and knows not where to commence the examination. The best way in such a case is to simplify, to decompose the complex object and reduce it to its simplest elements. *The individual, the family, and society;* these we have thoroughly to examine, and these ought to be the subjects of our inquiries. If we succeed in fully understanding *these* three elements, as they really are in themselves, and apart from the slight variations which do not effect their essence, European civilization, with all its riches and all its secrets, will be presented to our view, like a fertile and beautiful landscape lit up by the morning sun.——European civilization is in possession of the principal truths with respect to the individual, to the family, and to society; it is to this that it owes all that it is and all that it has. Nowhere have the true nature, the true relations and object of these three things been better understood than in Europe; with respect to them we have ideas, sentiments and views, *which have been wanting* in other civilizations. Now these ideas and feelings, strongly marked on the face of European nations, have inoculated their laws, manners, institutions, customs, and language; they are inhaled with the air, for they have impregnated the whole atmosphere with their vivifying aroma. To what is this owing? To the fact, that Europe, for many centuries, has had within its bosom a powerful principle, which preserves, propagates, and fructifies the truth; and it was especially in those times of difficulty, when the disorganized society had to assume a new form, that this regenerating principle had the *greatest influence and ascendency.* Time has passed away, great changes have taken place, Catholicity has undergone vast vicissitudes in its power and influence on society; but civilization, its work, was too strong to be easily destroyed; the impulse which had been given to Europe was too powerful and well secured to be easily diverted from its course."—*P.* 117–118.

We have no room to follow the argument, in its treatment of these heads. On the subject of the *individual*, Balmes takes up

Guizot's notion of the feeling of personal independence belonging to the Northern barbarians, as having been *one of the chief* and most productive principles of European civilization, and shows it to be a pure fiction. The barbarian sentiment, such as it was, far from being an element of civilization, wrought powerfully in favor only of disorder and barbarism. Neither is it true, that the ancient nations, and particularly the Greeks and Romans, as Guizot pretends, *had no taste for* personal independence, no sense of themselves as individual men. What they wanted was the *comprehension of the true and proper* dignity of man, the sense of human personality as it comes to light only by the Gospel. Among *the ancients the individual* was violently overwhelmed by society as the stronger body; thus the blindest submission and *annihilation was closely joined* with the spirit of insubordination and rebellion, ready to burst forth continually in the most *terrible explosions*. Christianity, by setting men consciously in a relation to God which was higher than that which *bound them to the State*, had a powerful tendency to promote the sense of personal responsibility and so of personal independence. To her influence therefore alone, to the glorious education of the Church, and not to any heritage of savage life, is to be ascribed beyond all doubt the new and vastly exalted conception of man's personal nature, that enters so largely into the modern civilization, and that forms in it so striking a contrast with all the civilizations that have gone before.

If the individual owes so much in this way to the influence of Catholicity, it is clear that the obligation is not less in the case of the family. The improvement of the last is necessarily conditioned indeed by the light in which the first is regarded. But it turns specially, we may say, on the proper elevation of woman. It is acknowledged now on all hands, that woman owes everything to Christianity. No one will pretend however, that the work accomplished by it in her favor dates only from the sixteenth century. It falls far back into those ages of darkness and disorder that went before. It forms part of the vast process, by which the structure of modern society was slowly raised out of the chaos of barbarism, centuries before Protestantism was born; and it is to be referred here plainly, not to any accidental agencies that may have had place on the outside of the Church, but altogether to her teaching and discipline, perseveringly maintained in opposition to the downward tendencies with which she was surrounded. It was her powerful authority in this way alone, which served to raise woman to her proper rank as the companion of man, to clothe the idea of marriage with its true

sanctity, to fix its necessary metes and bounds by excluding polygamy and divorce, and thus to place the *domestic constitution* on the high footing it is found to occupy in the modern world. "If we but read the history of the middle ages, of that immense scene of violence, where the barbarian, striving to break the bonds which civilization attempted to impose on him, appears so vividly; if we recollect that the Church was obliged to keep guard incessantly and vigilantly, not only to prevent the ties of marriage from being broken, but even to preserve virgins, (and even those who were dedicated to God,) from violence; we shall clearly see, that if she had not opposed herself as a wall of brass to the torrent of sensuality, the palaces of kings and the castles of seigneurs would have speedily become their seraglios and harems. And what would have happened in the other classes? They would have followed the same course; and the women of Europe would have remained in the state of degradation in which the Mussulman women still are." Guizot refers the improvement of the family to the feudal system, and it is fashionable with others, we know, to make the spirit of chivalry a main cause of the dignity to which woman has been advanced in modern society. But what power was it that brought this better sentiment to pass, in the bosom of the old barbarian life? "If the feudal lord, returning to his castle, found one wife there, and not many, to what was that owing? Who forbade him to abuse his power, by turning his house into a harem? Who bridled his passions, and prevented his making victims of his timid vassals? Surely these were the doctrines and morals introduced into Europe by the Catholic Church; it was the strict laws which she imposed as a barrier to the invasions of the passions; therefore even if we suppose that feudality did produce this good, it is owing still to the Catholic Church." Chivalry, instead of raising woman to the character of dignity it allows her, supposes her already raised and surrounded with respect. It has been attempted indeed to find the origin of its worship for her in the manners of the Germans, on the strength of some vague expressions used in regard to them by Tacitus. But even Guizot himself declares this to be of no force. Balmes shows it to be absolutely absurd. "I do not see," he says at the close of his examination, "why we should seek in the forests of the barbarians for the origin of one of the finest attributes of our civilization, or why we should give to those nations virtues of which they showed so little evidence when they invaded the countries of the south." And what heart that beats in unison with the only true religion, we ask, can wish to see it robbed of any portion of its proper credit in this way?

Centuries of laborious training enter into the constitution of our modern society. Here is opened at once to our view the beneficent agency of the Church, in the ages before the Reformation, on a scale of the most magnificent grandeur, the like of which, nay the most remote approximation to which, is nowhere else to be seen in the whole compass of human history. Superficial observers they must be indeed who cannot perceive this fact, or who fail to be affected by it with any sort of respect or admiration. It is something very wonderful, that the Church, through so long a series of centuries and in the midst of so much darkness and sin, should have handed down the work of theology, of christian doctrine, in so complete a form to modern times. That errors and corruptions should have gathered upon it, needing in the end to be set aside by wise reformation, is not strange; the only wonder is rather, that *all* fell not into hopeless falsehood and confusion. And yet every candid scholar knows that this was not the case. The grand lines and angles of the true christian faith, the foundations and columns of the temple of orthodox doctrine, however disfigured with the carvings and trappings of superstition, are a work wrought out and perpetuated for the use of the world before the Reformation; and the entire right which this has to be regarded as coming from God, rests on its being the necessary inward completion of that ancient faith and not its radical subversion. But the ethical work of the old church is full as grand and imposing, to say the least, as the dogmatic. Balmes refers here with great force to the "public conscience" of modern European society, so rich in sublime maxims of morality, in rules of justice and equity, in sentiments of honor and dignity; of which for the most part so little account is made, just because it flows around us on all sides like the air of heaven, but which needs only to be set in comparison with what we find in other orders of civilization, to give us an idea of its immense superiority.

"Modern society, it would seem, ought to have inherited the corruption of the old, since it was formed out of its ruins, at a time when its morals were most dissolute. We must observe, that the irruption of the barbarians, far from improving society, contributed on the contrary to make it worse; and this, not only on account of the corruption belonging to their fierce and brutal manners, but also on account of the disorder introduced among the nations they invaded, by violating laws, throwing their manners and customs into confusion, and destroying all authority. Whence it follows that the improvement of public opinion among modern nations is a very singular fact; and that this progress can only be attributed to the influence of the active and energetic principle, which has existed in the bosom of Europe for so many centuries."—*P.* 160.

It is easy enough to find disorders which this new civilization has never yet succeeded in bringing to an end; it is easy enough to find them in the bosom of the Church itself; but the true occasion for admiration is, that in such circumstances as we know to have attended her career she was not completely borne down and carried away by the tide of barbarism, that as a system her voice and arm were steadily exerted in favor of virtue and right, and that her power in this direction gradually brought to pass the magnificent moral result which we see accomplished at the close of these barbarous times.

Manners have been imbued in modern society with a certain gentleness and mildness, of which the civilization of the ancient world had no conception. Our author refers here to the public spectacles of the Romans, among other facts, in evidence of the brutal spirit with which they were animated; in which connection he is forced, as a Spaniard, to take some notice of the reproach cast upon his own country for her bull-fights. The practice is honestly condemned, whilst occasion is taken however to show that it is a very small abuse indeed as compared with the bloody tragedies of the old amphitheatre. Whence has the improvement of modern manners come? Manifestly from the Church. She was the fountain of order and law, when no conservative power besides could make itself felt. Age after age she wrestled with the wild passions of barbarous or half-barbarous men, laboring in all ways to subdue them to the idea of right and mercy, to put an end to violence, to make reason and justice of more force than blind self-will. Not only her doctrine, but her discipline also, was always powerfully turned in this direction. Ecclesiastical decrees and canons, passed by council after council, are still extant furnishing the most ample testimony to this fact. In all available ways, and at all times, we find this benign power, the genius of a new social creation, interposing its august sanctions on the side of the weak and defenceless against all sorts of lawlessness and wrong, offering itself as the asylum of the oppressed, and moulding the usages and sentiments of a barbarous period to the law of christian charity and peace.

"In what spirit," our author exclaims after glancing at some examples here in point, "must they read the history of the Church, who do not feel the beauty of the picture presented to us by the multitude of regulations, scarcely indicated here, all

tending to protect the weak against the strong? The clergy and monks, on account of the weakness consequent on their peaceful profession, find in the canons which we have just quoted peculiar protection; but the same is granted to females, to pilgrims, to merchants, to villagers travelling or engaged in rural labors, and to beasts of labor—in a word, to all that is weak; and observe that this protection is not a mere passing effort of generosity, but a system practised in widely different places, continued for centuries, developed and applied by all the means that charity suggests—a system inexhaustible in resources and contrivances, both in producing good and in preventing evil. And surely it cannot be said that the Church was influenced in this by views of self-interest: what interested motive could she have in preventing the spoliation of an obscure traveller, the violence inflicted on a poor laborer, or the insult offered to a defenceless woman? The spirit which then animated her, whatever might be the abuses which were introduced during unhappy times, was as it now is the spirit of God himself—that spirit which continually communicates to her so marked an inclination towards goodness and justice, and always urges her to realize by any possible means her sublime desires. I leave the reader to judge, whether or not the constant efforts of the Church to banish the dominion of force from the bosom of society were likely to improve manners."—*P.* 183.

The amelioration of manners is closely connected with the spirit of public beneficence. This was unknown among the ancients. Individuals may have been beneficent in some instances, but all public charity was wanting. No regard was had by society as such to the unfortunate. Hence, among other abuses, infanticide and slavery prevailed on all sides. The Church set her face steadily against these evils. But the case required far more than this. A vast system of charitable sentiment and charitable action was to be formed in the bosom of society, directed towards the relief and support of all classes of the indigent and wretched. Our familiarity with this now prevents us from seeing its greatness and difficulty. Let us however transport ourselves in thought to the time when all was unknown, when there was not even the first idea of beneficence in any such form, and we may then be able to do some justice perhaps to the merits of that mighty spiritual agent through which so great a work was brought to pass. "It is one thing to found and maintain an establishment of this kind, when a great number of similar ones already exist—when governments possess immense resources, and strength sufficient to protect all interests; but it is a very different thing to establish a multitude of them in all places, when there is no model to be copied, when it is necessary to *improvise* in a thousand ways the indispensable resources—when public authority has no *prestige* or force to control the violent passions that struggle to gain every thing on which they can feed. Now in modern times, since the existence of Protestantism, the first only of these things has been done; the second was accomplished centuries before by the Catholic Church; and let it be observed, that what has been done in Protestant countries in favor of public beneficence, has been done by acts of government, acts which were necessarily inspired by the view of the happy results already obtained from similar institutions."

Hospitals, and other kindred institutions, come into view from the earliest times, under the charge of the bishops, and as an object of special canonical legislation. The learned know what the ancient *diaconies* were—places of charity, where poor widows, orphans, old men, and other unfortunate persons, found refuge and support. The irruption of the barbarians tended to overthrow all previous provisions for the relief of the poor, while it multiplied misery and want in every direction. Did the Church succumb to this torrent of desolation? By no means. She only girded herself with new zeal to the task she had before assumed. She proclaimed herself continually the guardian of the poor and needy. She made every effort to save the property which had been before consecrated to their use, and set herself to devise new means and ways for their relief, answerable always to the new forms of want with which she was surrounded. The evidence of this abounds in the canons of councils, held in the most unsettled and barbarous times. In the sixth century, we find regulations requiring every town to maintain its own poor. Lepers are placed under the special care of the bishops, who must see that they were provided with food and clothing out of the church funds. "Zeal for improving the condition of prisoners, a kind of charity which has been so much displayed in modern times, is extremely ancient in the Church. In the sixth century there was already an inspector of prisons; the archdeacon or the provost of the church was obliged to visit prisoners on all Sundays; no class of criminals was excluded from the benefit of this solicitude. The archdeacon was bound to learn their wants, and to furnish them, by means of a person recommended by the bishop, with food and all they stood in need of. This was ordered by the 20th canon of the council of Orleans held in 549." These are only hints of what was done by the Church in the service of charity, through the long night of the

Middle Ages. Errors and abuses may have attended the work in some of its details. But it is a miserable spirit that can be blinded by these to the majesty that belongs to it as a whole, or that is hindered in this way from seeing and acknowledging the stupendous result to which it has led in the sum total of what we call modern civilization.

A truly beautiful and sublime exemplification of the benevolent spirit of the Church, is presented to us by the religious orders for the redemption of captives instituted in the thirteenth century. Through all previous ages, as we have before seen, this object was one that lay specially near to the catholic heart. In the period now mentioned however it acquired a peculiar prominence, by reason of the long wars in which the Christian world had come to be involved with the Infidels. "In consequence of these, a very great number of the faithful groaned in fetters, deprived of their liberty and country, and often in danger of apostatizing from the faith of their fathers. The Moors still occupied a considerable part of Spain; they reigned exclusively on the coasts of Africa, and proudly triumphed in the East, where the Crusaders had been vanquished. The Infidels thus held the south of Europe closely confined, and were constantly able to seize favorable moments, and procure multitudes of christian slaves. The revolutions and disorders of those times continually offered favorable opportunities; both hatred and cupidity urged them to gratify their revenge on the christians taken unawares. We may be sure that this was one of the severest scourges, which the human race had to endure at that time in Europe." If charity was to be anything more than a mere name, here was a case certainly which it had no right to overlook; and rude and dark as the times were, we find the spirit of religion spontaneously setting itself in motion on a grand scale for its relief. It gives birth to the idea of a vast association, which reaching through different countries might become a general repository for the alms of such as wished to assist in so good a work, while it should have in its service a certain number of persons always ready to traverse the seas, and brave every danger, for the redemption of their brethren in captivity. Such was the want, such the idea of what was needed to meet it; and, lo! the "Orders for the Redemption of Captives," the holy institutes of Mercy and of the Trinity, as they were called, make their appearance. Devoted men are seized with the idea of consecrating, not only their property, but their entire persons, to the service of christian charity in this great work. Around them rally others of similar spirit. "The religious who embraced these orders bound themselves by vow to the work for which they were formed. Free from the embarrassments of family relations and worldly interests, they could devote themselves to their task with all the ardor of their zeal. Long voyages, the perils of the sea, the danger of unhealthy climates, or the ferocity of the Infidels—nothing stopped them. In their dress, in the prayers of their institution, they found a constant remembrance of the vow which they had taken in the Divine presence. Neither repose, comfort, nor even their very lives, any longer belong to them; all are become the property of the unhappy captives, who groan in the dungeons or wear heavy chains in the presence of their masters, on the other side of the Mediterranean. The families of the unhappy victims, fixing their eyes on the religious, required of him the accomplishment of his promise; their groans and lamentations continually urge him to find means, and to expose his life if necessary, to restore the father to the son, the son to the father, the husband to the wife, the innocent young girl to her desolate mother."

Must we obstinately close our eyes to the loveliness of this whole picture, because it belongs to the "dark ages," because it rests under the full shadow of the Papacy, because it is linked with the idea of celibacy and monastic vows, because we find it enveloped historically in a nimbus of superstition? God forbid. We hail it rather as a glorious commentary on the power of Christianity; we feel ourselves spiritually moved and quickened by the evidence it affords of the Saviour's presence among his people, the argument it supplies thus for the truth of his religion. Why should we make less of it in this view than we make of the zeal of the early martys—which, we know well enough, was by no means pure and perfect always in its associations? Why should we make less of it even than we make of the sacrifices and efforts of modern Protestant benevolence; which in the shape of Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, &c., is regarded by many as completely eclipsing in liberality all that the world has ever known of charity through all ages before? How many of our Tabernacle orators after all, who fill the land every second week in May with the glorification of this theme, are willing themselves to become missionaries to the heathen even as the world now stands; and yet where are the cases now, in which the sacrifices and perils of the missionary life, all deserving of honor as it is, can at all be compared with what was involved in the service of those who gave themselves up, in the way here shown, to the work of rescuing their fellow christians from captivity in the thirteenth century!

It is fashionable to charge the Church with having been, before the Reformation, the enemy of science and civil liberty. To listen to some, we might suppose that she was no better than an organized conspiracy against the most precious rights of mankind, under this form, from the sixth century down to the sixteenth. Had she only been out of the way, so that men might have been left simply to the guidance of the Bible and private judgment, whole centuries of darkness and confusion, it seems to be imagined, might have been happily avoided, and the course of modern civilization hastened perhaps a thousand years. The writer before us shows we think very triumphantly, that the common slang of Pseudo-protestantism on this subject, is fully as much at war with the voice of true history as it is with the spirit of true religion. It is simply slanderous and false, to say that the Church has been during the middle ages the enemy either of knowledge or of freedom, or that her influence was exerted systematically and intentionally to keep back the progress of light and civilization. She was the guardian emphatically of all the higher interests of society. The state of the world, and her relation to it, made it necessary indeed that she should assume powers and exercise an authority, which were not to be measured exactly by any ordinary rule. This however proceeded not so much from any spirit of usurpation on her part, as from the mere presence of a social void and want that could be filled from no other quarter and in no other way. "The temporal power of the Popes was strengthened and extended at a time, when no other power was as yet really constituted. To call that power usurpation therefore is not merely an inaccuracy—it is an anachronism. In the general confusion brought upon all European society by the irruptions of the barbarians, in that strange medley of races, laws, manners and traditions, there remained only one solid foundation for the structure of the edifice of civilization and refinement, only one luminous body to shine upon the chaos, only one element capable of giving life to the germ of regeneration that lay buried in blood-stained ruins; Christianity, predominant over and annihilating the remains of other religions, arose in this age of desolation like a solitary column in the centre of a ruined city, or like a bright beacon amid darkness." The barbarians bowed to the authority of this power, as the only one that carried in it any principle of order, or that offered any promise of stability. "Wars succeeded to wars, convulsions to convulsions, the forms of society were continually changing; but the one great general and dominant fact, the stability and influence of religion, remained still the same: and it

is ridiculous in any man to declaim against a phenomenon so natural, so inevitable, and above all so advantageous, designating it a succession of usurpations of temporal power." Where all was chaos, there could be properly no usurpation. The right to rule fell where there was ability to rule. It is dishonest to try such times by the standard of a settled and well ordered social state. The power to regenerate society, in the middle ages, lay wholly in the Church. On her devolved accordingly, as by Divine commission, the sovereign care of society and the duty of training it for its proper destiny. Was this providential trust then abused in its actual administration? Did the Church exercise her guardianship over the infant nations of Europe, in such a way as instead of assisting to repress their upward tendencies, in such a way as to retard rather than to advance their progress in true civilization? We have seen already that she was a fountain of order and law; that she brought society into regular and settled form; that she caused the wilderness to become a fruitful field; that she curbed the passions of men, and set bounds to their violence; that she led them to dwell in families, and to cultivate the domestic virtues; that she inoculated manners with a new spirit of gentleness and peace; that she raised the standard of morality, and purified the public conscience, far beyond all that was known in the ancient world; that she established a reign and fashion of benevolence, such as had not previously entered the wildest dreams of philanthropy. We have seen all this, and have felt that a power so employed could not well be at war with the best interests of humanity. But was it after all the power only of a humane and well disposed master towards his slaves, or say even of a father towards his sons, who at the same time is bent on holding them always in full subjection to his own will, and so takes care that their education shall not be allowed to lead them either to the knowledge or to the free use of their personal rights? Did this Holy Mother, in the midst of all her wonderfully powerful and salutary educational activity, still show herself faithless and selfish in the whole trust, by resisting the general diffusion of knowledge and the legitimate progress of freedom? The supposition is in its own nature most unnatural and improbable, and to compare it with history, as already said, is at once to find it absolutely false. The Church has never been the deliberate enemy either of liberty or of letters.

Here naturally rises at once the thought of the religius intolerance so often charged to the account of the old Catholic Church, the persecutions she has allowed against heretics and

infidels, the horrors in particular of the Inquisition. "It is only *necessary to pronounce the word intolerance,*" says Balmes, "to raise in the minds of some people all sorts of black and horrible ideas." Institutions and men of past times are condemned without appeal, the moment they come under the sound of this reproach. No pains are taken for the most part to understand the real posture of the past, or to judge it according to its own connections and relations. And yet what can be more unfair than this? How easily may any institution be covered with disgrace, if only its inconveniences and evils are brought into view and every consideration suppressed that might speak in its favor. By fixing on certain points only in the annals of the human mind, the history of science may be made the history of folly, and even of crime. So in the case before us. "The spirit of the age, particular circumstances, and an order of things quite different from ours, are all forgotten, and the history of the religious intolerance of Catholics is composed by taking care to condense into a few pages, and to paint in the blackest colors," cases of cruelty and severity diligently collected from different countries and centuries. Events wide apart are made to unite in a single impression, without the least regard to intervening scenery. It is easy in this way to bring out wholesale judgments. But such judgments are of small account in the end for the cause of truth. This question of toleration too, as all thinking men know, *is in its own nature by no means of so easy* settlement as this summary way of looking at the matter implies. Without entering into it here however, it is enough to know that a wide difference in regard to it has come to exist between the present time and the past. A spirit of toleration now prevails, *right or wrong, which in former ages was unknown.* But is this due to Protestantism, or as is sometimes said to modern philosophy? Not at all. It is a fact slowly brought to pass by the force of circumstances. "The multitude of religions, infidelity, indifference, the improvement of manners, the lassitude produced by wars,—*industrial and commercial organization,* which every day becomes more powerful in society,—communication rendered more frequent among men by means of travelling—the diffusion of ideas by the press; such are the causes which have produced in Europe that universal tolerance which has taken possession of all, and has been established in fact when it could not be by law. These causes, as it is easy to observe, are of different kinds; no doctrine can pretend to an exclusive influence; they are the result of a thousand different influences, acting simultaneously on the development of civilization."

We are glad to see, that while our author protests against the *injustice of trying* the opinions and institutions of past ages by the altogether different order of thought that has come to prevail in our own, and finds a relative apology *even for the tribunal of* the Inquisition itself in the social circumstances under which it appeared and prevailed, he does not feel himself bound at all to *make common cause* with the crimes that have been perpetrated in the name of christianity against supposed heretics. "The Massacre of St. Bartholomew," he tells us, "*and other atrocities* committed in the name of religion, ought not to trouble the apologists of religion. To render her responsible for all that has been done *in her name, would be* to act with manifest injustice. Man is endowed with so strong and lively a sense of the excellence of virtue, that he endeavors to cover the *greatest crimes* with her mantle; would it be reasonable to banish virtue from the earth on that account? There are, in the history of mankind, terrible *periods, where a fatal* giddiness seizes upon the mind; rage, influenced by disorder, blinds the intellect and changes the heart; evil is called good, and good evil; *the most horrible attempts* are made under the most respectable names. Historians and philosophers, in treating of such periods, should know what ought to be *their line of conduct*; strictly accurate in the narration of such facts, they ought to beware of drawing from them a judgment as to the prevailing ideas end institutions. *Society then* resembles a man in a state of delirium. We should ill judge of the ideas, character and conduct, of such a man, from what he says and does *in that deplorable* condition. What party, in such calamitous times, can boast of not having committed great crimes? If we fix our eyes on the period just *mentioned,* do we not see the leaders of both parties assassinated by treason?——Let us throw a veil over these catastrophes, over these afflicting proofs of the misery *and perversity of the human* heart."—*P.* 204.

It is noted as a curious fact, well worthy of serious consideration, *that the charge* of being hostile to the right political progress of society has been brought against Catholicity, at different times, from directly opposite points of view. *Formerly the* fashion was to represent it as the enemy of kings, because it made the seat of power to be primarily in the people, and taught that temporal *sovereigns* may be resisted if need be, in certain circumstances, even to the extent of revolution itself. But since the revolutionary spirit has come to be in the *ascendant, that old* tone is found to be widely changed; and the very same power that was held before to be at the bottom of a conspiracy against

all other thrones, in favor of the universal supremacy of the Pope, is now declared to be in league with the general cause of monarchy to crush and kill every motion of liberty among the people. The radicals of Europe, we know, are full of this cry; and among ourselves also it may be said to be a reigning opinion, that the religious power in question is constitutionally opposed to everything like republicanism, and it is easily taken for granted accordingly that it has entered into an infamous pact with kings to oppress, enslave, and degrade the unfortunate human race. We pretend not here to try at all the true merits of this latter judgment. We refer to it simply as something curiously in contrast with the other reproach of an earlier time.

But whatever may be the actual spirit of Rome as it now stands, it is perfectly certain that the reigning influence of the Church, in the ages before the Reformation, went in favor of sound political liberty throughout, and that it was under her auspices mainly and especially that this interest gained ground continually more and more in the onward course of modern civilization. This is very successfully shown, we think, in the latter portion of Balmes' work; and we only wish that these chapters in particular might be read and studied by those, who without any historical knowledge whatever so flippantly pretend to settle the whole subject in just the contrary way. Here are facts, which these wholesale revilers of religion would do well at least to look in the face, if it were only to set aside the force they *seem* to have, and thus show their own zeal to be intelligent where it is now so deplorably blind.

The great problem in politics, is to determine the proper relation between authority and freedom, the idea of duties in one direction and the idea of rights in another. This connects itself again closely with the question, *What is the origin of civil power?* It so happens that a good deal of attention has come to be fixed on this subject, just at the present time in our own country, by the late action of the General Government in regard to slavery. In one direction, we hear views maintained, in the name of individual conscience, that go to upset civil authority altogether. These proceed openly or tacitly on the assumption, that government is a mere social contract on the part of the people, to be set aside by them at their own pleasure. On the opposite side it is more soundly contended, that government comes from God, and that obedience to it is a duty for its own sake; though it must be confessed that this doctrine, in the hands at least of some of its republican advocates, is pressed so far as to sound very much like a revival of the old "divine right" theory

of kings, (commonly taken heretofore to have gone to the tomb of the Capulets,) and savors strongly of being the fruit of Political Economy, rather than the genuine outbirth of Political Ethics. But now, be this as it may, one thing is certain. This whole better doctrine, of which the *New York Observer* for instance has been making a merit over against the *too* consistently Puritan tendency of the *N. Y. Independent*, and for the defence of which more than one eloquent preacher has succeeded in winning golden compliments from Daniel Webster and other distinguished civilians, is one that belongs in all its fulness to the old Catholic Church of the middle ages, and that was applied by her to the development of the present civilization of Europe, we may say from the very start, not in a blind and clumsy form, but with a depth and breadth of discrimination the like of which is not to be found anywhere in the best of these modern efforts.

The Church has ever disowned the idea of a social contract, as lying at the foundation of government. Civil power, she tells us, comes from God, and is to be obeyed from a regard to his will. The old writers are full of the most clear instruction in regard to all this. Aquinas in particular, it would seem, has explained and guarded the subject on all sides in the most masterly way.

On the other hand however, this divine right of government is not taken to be the special prerogative of a class, rulers separately considered, but is made to spring from the political body in its general character. The common doctrine of the church has been, that such power resides in the community directly and by natural right, but in kings and other rulers merely indirectly and by human right, unless God has given it to particular persons by his own direct nomination. No mistake can be greater, than that by which the exaggeration of the authority of rulers, at the cost of popular rights, is held to be the natural and necessary doctrine of Catholicism, as distinguished from the genius of Protestantism. History plainly teaches a different lesson. It was Protestantism in the beginning of its career, that stood forward strangely enough as the flatterer and helper of kings. In its opposition to the Papacy, it was led naturally to exalt to an incredible degree the pretensions of the civil power. This was appealed to against the religious power, and encouraged to usurp the supreme control of ecclesiastical affairs. The regal authority was thus assisted powerfully in the direction it had already begun to take, through the decline of the feudal system and the still unripe character of the popular element, towards an undue absorption into itself of all other political forces. It became the

fashion to insist on the divine right of kings, as coming directly from God without the intervention of society. How far this theory was carried in Protestant England, we need not be told; the influence of it however was felt throughout Europe generally; and it is easy enough to see that it stood in close connection everywhere with the protest which was now made against the supremacy of the Church. We find the Catholic theologians accordingly vigorously opposing it as dangerous and false.

"Political power," says Bellarmin, "emanates from God alone; for being necessarily annexed to man's nature, it proceeds from Him who has made that nature. It resides primarily in the body of the people. The divine right has not given it to any man in particular. The people transfer it to one person or more by natural right. Particular forms of government accordingly are by the law of nations, and not by divine law, since it depends on the consent of the multitude to place over themselves a king, consuls, or other magistrates, as may seem best; and for a legitimate reason, they can change royalty into aristocracy, or into democracy, or *vice versa*, as it was done in Rome." To King James of England this doctrine sounded monstrous in the extreme. He said to his parliament: "that God had appointed him absolutely master; and that all privileges which co-legislative bodies enjoyed were pure concessions proceeding from the bounty of kings." Against Bellarmin's doctrine he showed himself all on fire, contending that kings hold their power *not* from the people, but *immediately* from God; for all which his supple courtiers proclaimed him a second Solomon. This called out the learned Spanish Jesuit Suarez, in his "Defence of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith against the Errors of the Anglican Sect," with special reference to *the most serene James, King of England*—addressed to the most serene Kings and Princes generally of the christian world. In this work the view of Bellarmin is ably supported as true and just, whilst the English doctrine is treated as new and singular, and as having been invented apparently to exalt the temporal over the spiritual power. The whole case furnishes a curious illustration of the political bearings of the Catholic and Protestant systems at the time in question, so different from what is often taken to be their respective necessary tendencies and affinities.

The separation of the temporal and spiritual powers, and the independence of the latter with respect to the former, have had much to do no doubt with the formation of that spirit of liberty which is characteristic of modern civilization. "Ever since the foundation of the Church, this principle of the independence of

the spiritual power has at all times served, by the mere fact of its existence, to remind men that the rights of civil power are limited, that there are things beyond its province, cases in which a man may say, and ought to say, *I will not obey.*" Strange that the advocates of equilibrium and counterpoise, who make so much of the policy of dividing powers to prevent tyranny, should not have felt the profound wisdom of this old church doctrine even in a simply political view. But we find, on the contrary, that all modern revolutions have shown a decided tendency towards the amalgamation of the civil and ecclesiastical powers; "a convincing proof," as Balmes shrewdly observes, "that these revolutions have proceeded from an origin *contrary* to the generative principle of European civilization, and that instead of guiding it towards perfection, they have rather served to lead it astray."

It is historically certain, that European society as a whole, in the period before the Reformation, was steadily advancing in the direction of a rational safe liberty. The problem by which the several interests of the throne, the aristocracy, and the mass of the people, were to be rightly guarded and carried forward in the onward movement of civilization, so as by just harmony to serve and not hinder the true welfare of all, was one of vast difficulty, which however in the face of manifold disturbing forces we may see still approximating at least more and more towards its own full and proper solution. The simple position of these several elements relatively to each other, at the going out of the middle ages, is of itself enough to show how false it is to represent the old Catholicity as the enemy of popular liberty; for we see that European civilization at this time, after having been for so many centuries under the sole guardianship of that power, presented no one of these interests as exclusively predominant. "Survey the whole of Europe, and you will not find one country in which the same fact did not exist. In Spain, France, England, Germany, under the names of Cortes, States General, Parliaments, or Diets; the same thing everywhere, with the simple modifications which necessarily result from circumstances adapted to each people. And what is very remarkable in this case is, that if there be a single exception it is in favor of liberty; and strange to say, this exists precisely in Italy, where the influence of the Popes is immediately felt. The names of the Republics of Genoa, Pisa, Sienna, Florence, Venice, are familiar to all. It is well known that Italy is the country in which popular forms at that period gained most ground, and in which they were put in practice when in other countries

they had already abandoned the field.——These forms of government were attended indeed with grave inconveniences; but since so much is said of *spirit* and *tendencies*, since the Catholic Church is reproached with her affinity to despotism, and the Popes with a taste for oppression, it is well to adduce these facts as suited to throw some doubt on the confident assertions oftentimes paraded as so many philosophico-historical dogmas on this subject."

We have no room to say more than a word on the other current topic of reproach, the alledged unfriendliness of the church before the Reformation to the cause of literature and science. No one who has any knowledge of history will deny that a very active interest had begun to be taken in the general cause of knowledge before this time. The movements of it enter largely into the whole culture of Europe as it now stands. But will it be imagined in any quarter, that this spirit came from the outside of the Church, and prevailed against her pleasure and in spite of her authority? To ask the question is to show its absurdity. The intellectual development of modern Europe started under an exclusively theological form. Religion formed the element, out of which it sprang and from which it drew all its activity and force. Whatever we find to be then its advancing history, it must be regarded as the product of this power, and the merit of it must be placed to its account. There were indeed tendencies almost from the beginning of the movement, that set themselves in more or less direct opposition to the Church, and on which accordingly she laid to some extent her restraining hand. But it is notorious that these were of no value comparatively for the cause of true learning. What was done for it by all the unchurchly sects of the middle ages? Who believes seriously that *they* had any power whatever in themselves to be helpers truly to such a cause, under any circumstances? Guizot quotes John Erigena, Roscelin, and Abelard, as the representatives of a reaction of the individual reason against the authority of the Church, which is supposed to have commenced in their time and to have reached forward to the age of Luther, as a sort of new and separate power exerted in favor of knowledge and free thought. But this comes to mere idle declamation in the end. What actual result of real lasting account for the progress of mind can be shown to have proceeded from any such quarter, as compared with what was accomplished by the action of the proper church life itself in favor of the same interest? The greatest scholars in these ages of waking intelligence, the men whose influence contributed most to the progress of all

sound science, were at the same time the most faithful sons of the Church, and such as owned the most dutiful allegiance to her authority and power.

It is a most childish fancy certainly, to suppose that the revival of learning began properly with the sixteenth century. It dates at least from the eleventh; and there is abundance of evidence that the progress made between that and the age of the Reformation, was quite as real and important as any that has taken place since. All sorts of learning were in active exercise before Protestantism came in, to share their credit with the Roman Church. So in the case of criticism, controversy, and the learned languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. "Anthony de Nebrija, Erasmus, Ludovicus Vives, Laurence Villa, Leonardus Aretinus, Bembo, Sadolet, Poggio, Melchior Cano, and many others too numerous to mention; were they trained in Protestantism? Did not the Popes, moreover, take the lead in this literary movement? Who patronized the learned with greater liberality? Who supplied them with more abundant resources? Who incurred greater expenses in the purchase of the best manuscripts?"——"In Italy the study of Greek was first seriously commenced; from Italy it spread to France, and to the other European States." Reuchlin and Picus de Mirandula, the great promoters of a taste for Greek and Hebrew, were Catholics. As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century indeed, Pope Clement V., had ordained that Greek and Hebrew, and even Arabic and Chaldee, should be publicly taught, for the benefit of foreigners, at Rome, at Paris, at Oxford, at Bologna, and at Salamanca.[1]

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[1] "One of the causes which contributed the most to the development of the human mind was the creation of great centres of instruction, collecting the most illustrious talents and learning, and diffusing rays of light in all directions. I know not how men could forget that this idea was not due to the pretended Reformation, seeing that most of the universities of Europe were established long before the birth of Luther. That of Oxford was founded in 895; Cambridge in 1280; that of Prague, in Bohemia, in 1358; that of Louvain, in Belgium, in 1425; that of Vienna, in Austria, in 1365; that of Ingolstadt, in Germany, in 1372; that of Leipsic, in 1408; that of Basle, in Switzerland, in 1469; that of Salamanca, in 1200; that of Alcala, in 1517. It would be superfluous to notice the antiquity of the universities of Paris, of Bologna, of Ferrara, and of a great many others, which obtained the highest renown long before the advent of Protestantism. The Popes, it is well known, took an active part in the establishment of universities, granting them privileges, and bestowing upon them the highest honors and distinctions. How can any one then venture to assert, that Rome has opposed the progress of learning and the sciences, in order to keep the people in darkness and ignorance."—*Balmes, p.* 415.

The whole object of our Spanish author, as we have before said, is to bring out an argument against Protestantism, from a comparison of its influence with that of Catholicism, as both have been felt in the work of modern civilization. In this comparison however the book is extremely onesided and incomplete; not by the exaggeration of the merits of Catholicism as this stood before the age of the Reformation, but by the want of a correspondingly full and thorough analysis of the actual results of Protestantism. It seems to be assumed throughout, that whatever tells positively in favor of the course of things before Protestantism appeared, must be taken to tell negatively for this cause since; as though both orders of life might not contribute, in different periods, to the progress of one and the same movement. Then the eye of the writer is ever on the *excesses* into which the protest against authority is running, particularly in Europe at this time, in the form of rationalism and political radicalism; which are indeed just now sufficiently alarming, but still do not at once amount to a philosophical solution of the whole meaning and value of the general movement from which they incidentally spring. They *may* be, (God grant it), a crisis only, opening the way into a brighter era beyond. And might it not have been necessary to meet and overcome the same, in some other form, even if the progress of modern culture could have gone forward without the church rupture of the 16th century? Our American society, and so of course also the new "American Epoch" which is dawning on the history of Protestantism by means of it, Balmes may be said entirely to overlook. His vision is altogether engrossed with the social difficulties and dangers of Europe.

It is easy enough, of course, to place the comparative influence of the two systems in question, on the progress of civilization, under a very different historical view, that shall be felt to tell powerfully in favor of Protestantism and against Rome. This does not require us to vilify and disparage the Church of previous ages. We allow it rather all the merit here claimed for it, as the founder and builder of modern society on to the sixteenth century. The question regards the *continuation* of the work since. Protestantism, in its true form, proclaims itself, not the destroyer of the older work, but its proper finisher, or at least its necessary helper towards completion. It is to be taken as itself, in such view, the greatest birth of the Latin Church, (such as the dead Greek communion never could produce,) and so the truest and best succession also of its old life; by the power of which palpably the main stream of history has gone forward, since the age of the Reformation. Under such view, and within such range, the historical parallel between the two systems, we say, may very easily be turned impressively in favor of Protestantism.

Who can well help feeling the force, for instance, of the following picture of the influence of the Church of Rome, from the eloquent pen of Macaulay: "During the last three centuries to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has every where been in the inverse proportion to her misguided power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude and intellectual torpor; while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what four hundred years ago they actually were, should now compare the country around Rome with the country around Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of Papal domination. The descent of Spain, once the first among monarchies, to the lowest depths of degradation; the elevation of Holland, in spite of many natural disadvantages, to a position such as no commonwealth so small has ever reached, teach the same lesson. Whoever passes in Germany, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality; in Switzerland, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant canton; in Ireland, from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant county, finds that he has passed from a lower to a higher grade of civilization. On the other side of the Atlantic the same law prevails. The Protestants of the United States have left far behind them the Roman Catholics of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. The Roman Catholics of Lower Canada remain inert, while the whole continent around them is in a ferment with Protestant activity and enterprise."[1]

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[1] Compare with this a fine passage to the same effect, in Schaff's *Principle of Protestantism*, p. 96–98. "Traverse the lands in which Protestantism has fixed its seat," says the author, "from the northern boundary of Sweden to the Sandwich Islands, from the southern declivities of the Himalayah to the banks of the Mississippi; almost everywhere you may find theologians victoriously contending against infidelity and superstition; preachers, who like Paul are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ Crucified, but hold all the glory

The force of this comparison would seem to be very plain; and we can only wonder therefore, when we find such a man as Brownson treating it as a nullity, or worse still insisting that the social state of Protestant countries is less sound and promising than that of Spain for instance, or Austria, or France. "In all Protestant nations," he tells us lately, "faith is gone, morality is gone, and principle is gone. The least depraved among them may vie not unsuccessfully, in immorality and unnatural crimes, with the more depraved nations of heathen antiquity" (*Review for Jan.* 1851, *p.* 106). To talk at this rate is not to argue but to rail. Mere material prosperity, we grant, is no sure sign or proof of true social improvement; and it is plain enough that the forces which at present make up the reigning power of what may be called our Protestant civilization, in Europe and in this country, will never be able with such form and direction as they now have to bring society to its right end. The higher power of religion, the moulding and controuling agency of the Church, in a way not now known, must come in to save the whole process from confusion and defeat. Protestantism itself needs a mighty regeneration, a new creation we may say, to fulfil in the end its own most critical and perilous mission. But all this may not blind us to the clear fact, that a real onward impulse has been communicated by it notwithstanding to the life of the modern world. This in itself considered is a gain, however much may be wanting still to make it complete; and as far as it goes may be justly quoted always, as a fair and legitimate argument in favor of the Protestant cause.

J. W. N.

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of the world in contempt for its sake; a strict moral order; a blooming domestic life; a familiarity with the Bible; an inward freedom and joy of faith; such as you may seek in vain in the very centre itself of the Church of Rome. There is still sufficient salt in the system, with all its diseases, to save it from corruption.——Only blindness itself can deny, that Protestantism still continues the great moving power of the time; holding the helm of the world's political and spiritual history; whilst every other form of action comes to have deep significance only as standing with it in either hostile or friendly relation." If the cause of Protestantism is to be successfully maintained at all, it must be on the general ground taken in this tract; than which, we hesitate not to say, no more *honest* or able plea for it has ever yet appeared in our country.