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ARTICLE I.—PRELIMINARY STATEMENT.—*Explanatory Letter from Dr. J. W. Nevin.—Apology to the Alumni.—Character of the Work.—Contributors.*

It was announced in the Prospectus of this publication, that its editorial conduct would be in my hands. As it now appears under a somewhat different form, the case may be felt to call for a brief explanation.

So far as any engagement is concerned, I have considered myself exonerated in full, by the simple fact, that the general condition on which it was assumed, has not been fulfilled. My consent to edit the Review, was given with much hesitation, in the confidence that a certain number of subscribers would be secured and returned, according to determination, before it should be commenced. The very spirited movement made at the start seemed to carry in itself a guaranty, that what was proposed in this way would be accomplished without any difficulty. But there has been a disappointment. The time proposed for returns came and passed, without any such amount of available patronage being secured, as had been made the basis of calculation for the important experiment in the beginning. In these circum-

defend, and save it, that this conflict is silenced as the work of Satan. This being the case, whatever professes to be an organ of the theoretical part of this conflict, if it be at all true to its pretensions, will speak, not the tongue or dialect of a single family or tribe, but all the tongues and all the dialects of the whole Church. If any cry out that this will cause a chaos of sounds, let them know that, if they have no *chaos*, they can have no *cosmos*. It is because certain ones will have this latter without the former, that they get neither, but only a solitary voice, incestuously wedded to its own echo, and housed between the mountains of ignorance and schism, where it bloats on the stagnant pool of bigotry, and battens on the impudence that creams so richly there. *Nullum chaos, nullus cosmos.*

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## ART. II.—THE YEAR 1848.

WONDERFUL, and long to be remembered, has been the year 1848, now thrown into our rear. The outward end of much that is past, and the beginning, outwardly, of a great deal, that is to come. A year of revolution and change; of uncertainty, anxiety, and alarm; answering to the prophetic imagery of "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;" the powers of heaven shaken, and the order of the world thrown violently out of course. A year of mystery for the nations; involving a deep burden, which the whole civilized earth is concerned to hear and understand. Who shall pretend to fathom its sense? Who shall tell the mighty secret, that lies hid within its sybil leaves?

It is not for any age or period, fully to understand itself. While events are passing, they cannot, for the most part, be

fairly seen in their true proportions and relations. The part of history, which it is always most difficult to interpret, is that which is in the process of immediate actual evolution. The present throws light upon the past; while its own sense again, so far as it is in any measure original and new, can find its clear and sufficient commentary at last only in the life of the unborn future. We are in a much better position now, to comprehend the age of the Reformation, than were the men who themselves lived and acted in its stirring drama. We are better able than they were, to perceive the general force and bearing of the movement as a whole, to separate the merely accidental and transient from the necessary and constant, to reduce the tumultuating show of seemingly chaotic elements to system and reason. We are not overwhelmed and hurried along, as they were, by the wild tossing torrent of what was taking place at the time; but are permitted rather, as it were from some lofty height of observation afar off, to survey with full leisure, in a calm objective way, the entire tract of revolution, in its connections, both with the period going before and the period which has followed since. There are those, indeed, who do pretend still to exhaust the meaning of such an age, by looking into it under a purely separate view; as though history had no life of its own, extending forward perpetually from generation to generation, as the growth of a divine thought; but were made up of confused parcels only, each carrying its significance mainly in its own facts, and requiring no light besides, for its proper interpretation. But this is to insult philosophy and religion, in one breath. No man can possibly have any true knowledge of the sixteenth century, who sees not in it the product of forces long before at work in the bosom of the Catholic Church; and whose estimate of its meaning, at the same time, is not made to embrace also in one and the same view its historical consequences, as they lie exposed to observation now in the lapse of subsequent time. The history of Protestantism thus far, is the revelation of what lay hid, originally, in the great fact of the Reformation. So in the case of our own age. It can never be fully understood by itself, but only as it shall be seen hereafter, when its past and future connections are brought into view together, and made to explain

the whole in its interior sense and design. Now we see through a glass darkly.

Still, we see enough, to make us profoundly solemn and thoughtful. So much has become clear for all thinking men, that the age in which we live, is not one of the merely common sort. History moves not with continuously equable stream towards its appointed end. Its progress rather, is by vast cycloids or stages, each fulfilling a certain problem within itself, and accomplishing its course under a regular given form, only to open the way finally for the general process to go forward again in a new way under some similar form. It goes, as we are accustomed, indeed, ordinarily to speak of it, by eras and epochs. There is a difference then, of course, between one age and another as regards significance, according to the place they occupy in the order of the world's life. So long as this life continues to move in a direction already fully settled, carrying out and completing simply the sense of some tendency established in the time which has gone before, it may be expected to proceed with comparative regularity and quiet, and there will be nothing special or extraordinary in the age, to which it belongs. Not so, however, where two great eras come together, (*contact of ages*, 1 Cor. x. 11.) the old having finished its circuit, and a new one being at hand to take its place. Such going out and coming in are never accomplished, without more or less of commotion and struggle. The breaking up of the old, however gradually it may be brought to pass, involves necessarily a certain degree of violence and agitation; while the introduction of the new carries with it unavoidably also, the sense of exciting revolution. The age, within which such change falls, must ever, of course, be one of more than ordinary prominence on the field of history. It will stand out to view, through all succeeding time, as the revelation of a new epoch in the life of the world; and it will be attended, while it passes, with the consciousness of some such mighty birth, more or less clear, in the pangs and throes with which it is accomplished. So, we say, our own particular age is felt by all, who exercise any sort of earnest reflection, to be in this way of far more than common significance. Predictions and prophecies, for a long time past, as we are told, have been

looking towards it as a period of eventful crisis, and change. A very general presentiment of such world historical revolution, as something close at hand, has gained ground in our own day far and wide, even among those who exercise but little speculation on this subject, but are of such temperament only, as to sympathize actively with the general life that surrounds them, and carries them in its bosom.

Such wide-spread bodings that grow out of no clear ratiocination or reflection, but spring forth spontaneously from the inmost life, as it were, of the world itself, are always entitled to consideration and respect. They come not without reason; and they have been found, in fact, to attend all grand turning points in the progress of earth's history. In the case before us, moreover, they are seconded and backed by the most cool and far-reaching calculations of reason. The men who think most, and who, by their position, are best qualified to think to some purpose, are those precisely who, of all others, participate most decidedly, we may say, in the general impression of which we now speak. It is felt, that the lines and tendencies of history have been gradually working, for more than two centuries past, towards a common issue, which has now been reached; and in which they have gathered themselves into a sort of universal *knot*, that admits no further progress under the same form. The knot must be dissolved, whether with violence or without it, so as to make room for onward movement again, under some new and different form. One era is passing away, and another is on the eve of taking its place. Our age is emphatically the period of transition, in which the extremities of both are made to touch and meet. Such, at least, has become a very widely prevalent opinion; and we see no good reason for casting upon it any sort of doubt or discredit. The whole course of events rather, seems to be lending confirmation to it every year. Especially has this been the case with the developments of the year, *annus mirabilis* we may well style it, which has just been conducted to its close.

It would seem to form, in some sense, the very hinge of the vast and mighty world epoch, which is supposed to be taking place; not the beginning of its revolution, of course, and much

less in any view its end; but a sort of central revelation in the midst of the movement, suddenly disclosing the awful reality of its power, and determining in an outward way the absolute necessity of its going forward to its appointed consummation. In this respect, there has been no year like it, at least since the period of the Reformation. The world may be said, within the last twelve months, to have passed the Rubicon of a revolution, that is destined to turn all its fortunes into a new channel for centuries to come. History is brought to occupy the summit level of a whole vast continent of time, from which slope in opposite directions, behind and before, the retreating past and far prospective future, as two broad tracts of life, which might seem to have no bond in common, save the everlasting mountain barriers that fling them asunder. Whatever of uncertainty might have attended the opinion before, now at least, it may be confidently assumed, and boldly affirmed that old things are passing away, and that all things are becoming new. A true crisis has been reached, in the revelations of the past year. The plot thickens; events crowd, with ever accumulating momentum, towards their appointed end; a thousand signs conspire to show that the funeral pile is already lighted, where from the ashes of a dying era another is prepared to take its wondrous birth, more bright and full of promise than any which has gone before. So much of significance, awful and vast, is comprehended in the history of the year now registered as 1848.

The idea of such a grand crisis or revolution, in the world's history, as we have now mentioned, implies two forms of action unitedly at work for its accomplishment. There must be, in one direction, the violent breaking up of what is old and ready to pass away, in the order of life as it has stood before; and there must be, at the same time, in another direction, the working of an inward *nisus* and an outward providence jointly, towards the new form of existence, in which the process is required to become finally complete. On one side, the spirit is compelled to forsake the house of its former habitation as no longer suited to its wants; while on the other, it is carried forth, by inward longings, and outward beckonings, after the still unknown future, to which it is thus forced to look for help. In other words, the

preparation that serves to usher in a new era, is at once negative and positive; not negative simply, and not positive only, but both these in union; the old making room by its own dissolution for the birth of the new, and the new foreshadowed and prefigured in the womb of the old.

See, on the one hand, the late political revolutions in Europe. When, in any age before, has the world beheld such a succession of broad and mighty changes, compressed into the compass of a single year! It is still as it were but the other day, since the nations were electrified by the tidings of the revolution in France. It seemed to be an event large enough of itself, to occupy the attention and speculation of mankind for years. And yet, how completely has it been shorn of its stupendous singularity, by the earthquake shocks that have since rapidly followed in its train. Italy, Austria, Prussia, in a measure, we may say, all Germany, have been suddenly seized with the same spirit of commotion, and change; agitation has succeeded agitation, in all the great centres of political life; the pillars of the social system have been made to tremble, if not absolutely to give way, in almost every direction. Never before was the aspect of the civilized world so altered, within so short a time. It has been hard to keep pace with the movement, even in imagination and thought. Astonishment itself has been paralysed, by the overwhelming vastness of what has taken place; and we are apt to think of it still as a sort of dream or dioramic show, something which has come and gone in the way of inward vision, rather than as an actual part of the world's outward waking history. It costs an effort of reflection, only to see and feel where the nations now stand, as compared with their posture on the first of January, 1848.

And yet it were a false view of the case entirely, to conceive of it, for this reason, as a mere passing accident, that is to be followed with no deep lasting effect upon the course of history. Sudden and violent as it may seem, it is the product of forces and tendencies, which have been steadily working towards this result for whole centuries past. In this respect, it is fully analogous with the general moral explosion that startled the slumbers of Europe, at the opening of the sixteenth century. The causes, which produced the Reformation, had been in powerful

operation for a long period before, gradually, but surely, preparing the way for what was to follow. The political, commercial, social, and religious relations of the world, all pressed towards this result, as the necessary outlet of their force, and only proper and sufficient expression of their sense. Earnest men saw, and felt long before, that a great and mighty crisis was drawing nigh. So, too, it has been evident enough for men of this sort, and, in the way of dark presentiment, we may say, it has been vaguely felt also by the popular mind, for a long time past, that some such crisis as that, to which we now have come, was preparing to break over men's heads. Ideas, principles, tendencies, and powers, have been deep at work in the whole structure of society, which could not fail finally, to reach this very issue, by springing the bands with which they were held, and demanding new forms of existence more adequate to the scope of their action.

It is all important here, to distinguish properly between two widely different sides of history, the merely human namely, and the divine. It is carried forward in one view by the free action of particular men, or classes of men, ruled, more or less, always by private purposes and aims; while in another, it obeys altogether the action of a deeper, universal, and objective law, representing at every point the mind and plan of God. It amounts to nothing then, against the historical significance of the late revolutions in Europe, as now asserted, that the motives, and principles, and personal character, of those who have been most forward in bringing them to pass, may not commend themselves to our confidence, and respect. It is not by any such measure, that we can ever try truly the interior sense and weight of history as a whole. (Isaiah x. 5—7; John xi. 49—52; Acts ii. 22—23.)

With one of the boldest, and best, writers of our time, we are well persuaded that the very worst elements have been at work, and are at work still, in the whirlwind, which has been let loose in the old world.\* We see in it, not the true law of reason and right at all, as the animating soul of the movement, but, on the contrary, the spirit predominantly of human wickedness and

\* See an admirable tract entitled, *The Revolutionary Spirit, a Discourse*, by Taylor Lewis, Esq., New York, 1848.



passion. It is not possible to justify it, at the bar of Christianity. It is not to be marvelled at, that many good men in Germany should look upon it with dismay, as the coming, emphatically, of Antichrist, or the letting loose of Satan in the last days. Unprincipled radicalism, in no sympathy whatever with the mind of Jesus Christ, but inwardly full rather of diabolical hostility to all truth and righteousness, might seem to be the main force immediately concerned in what is going forward. The whole theory of revolution here, whatever may be said of the right of such violent change in other cases, is such as cannot for a moment bear examination. It goes on the assumption that a full reconstruction of society may be forcibly introduced at any time, when it is found practicable to bring it to pass. The right of revolution, is taken to be the right in full of any man, or set of men, to upset existing institutions from the bottom, to the best of their ability. "The claim comes fully up to the spirit of the word. It is the period of *revolution*, of *rolling over and over*; and this right of revolution or rolling over, has no place or principle at which it can consistently stop." That even the *Christian* world on this side of the Atlantic, should be so ready and forward to clap its hands, in joyful exultation, over the revolution in Paris, and other similar explosions, without the least regard to right or wrong in the case, as though the simple work of destruction were in and of itself something good and desirable, is, to say the least, a melancholy exemplification of human weakness.

But, after all this admission, we are bound, at the same time, reverently to acknowledge, as well as diligently to study, the presence of a deeper divine law in the whole movement, by which it is to be regarded as a sacred necessity in the progress of our general human history — a necessity also, intimately and vitally allied with the triumphant resolution, finally, of the great problem of Christianity itself. It is not enough, to resolve it pragmatically into all manner of bad motives and springs of action, on the part of the men concerned in it; we must see in it also the all-wise and infinitely glorious providence of God. Is it true that a sparrow may not fall to the ground without his notice and will? How then should cities and nations be thus thrown into commotion, and thrones tumbled into the dust, apart

from his eye and hand? But the providence of God involves necessarily the idea of counsel, connexion and plan. This in the end is the true sense of history, the evolution of a divine thought or purpose in the onward flow of human actions and events. In such view accordingly, we say, that sudden and abrupt as the late European revolutions may seem, they have not come by accident, and are not to be regarded as the product of mere momentary passion and caprice. No mob could hurry a whole nation into revolution, if the necessity of revolution were not already at hand historically in the constitution of the nation itself. It is only in such case the throat of a volcano, which seeks vent uncontrollably in this way. The stunning sound of this European explosion is but the outburst of pent up forces, whose action has been powerfully struggling towards this very issue for a long time past. The rumbling premonitions of its approach, for such as had an ear to hear, might be distinctly perceived many years ago. In one sense, the principles and tendencies which have led to it, may be said to have been at work since the epoch of the Reformation. It is no accident, no work of merely human hands, but the product truly of the inmost life of history itself, the result of an organic process which has been going forward for centuries in the very heart of the world's civilization.

Thus springing from the life of the past, it carries in itself necessarily the deepest significance also for the future. Whatever of wrong on the part of men the movement may involve, it is not to be imagined that this is to be corrected by the simple negation or setting aside hereafter of what has now taken place. This is no merely outward and superficial change, of such nature that the course of the world can be expected to fall back from it again, in the way of wholesome reaction, to its old established channel. Clearly, it is a grand historical fact, that is destined to remain of force in all coming time. It is idle and vain to dream of so vast and startling a step as this, being recalled and taken back, and made to become as though it had never occurred, in the onward march of the world's life. Europe can never be again, politically, the same Europe, which it has been previously to the year 1848. Even if the old order of things might seem to be restored outwardly, the inward life would not be the same. But

it is not to be presumed that any such outward restoration itself, can take place. It is the disproportion of the old forms to the reigning spirit, which has at length caused their strength to give way, and no power or art can avail to reinstate them again in their ancient authority. This is a point, which deserves to be well understood and considered. The nations of Europe have been borne forward, during the past year, to new ground. A vast and mighty change has taken place in their whole constitution and posture; a change, involving a new order of political existence, and so, of course, a new period of history, for each of them separately, and for all of them collectively; a change which must affect, sooner or later, every sphere of their existence, the momentous solemnity of whose consequences no political wisdom can now measure or foretell; a change, from the power of which, in this form, there can be no recovery or retreat. Well may a thoughtful mind be filled with awe, as it looks out on the great and mighty sea of providence, here opened to its gaze, and ask to what unknown shore its waves and billows lead.

For the case will not allow us to feel, that the change has come to an end. Our faith in God rather, and 'in history, as God's work, requires us to be fully persuaded that it has only begun. It were no better than atheistic impiety, to conceive of the powers of history as working into the hands of the revolutionary spirit, now rampant in Europe, *for its own sake*. This, we have seen already, to be prevailingly radical, infidel, and ungodly, the very power of Antichrist, as it might seem, himself. As such it is doomed, of course, in due time, to pass away. Such salvation and help then, as the age needs, is to be reached, not by falling back to what is past, but by pressing forward towards something better, which is still to come. So far as there is hope in these overturnings, it is not, assuredly, in the overturnings themselves, (Luke xxi, 25—26,) but only in the sign they show of a new and better period at hand in the future, (v. 29—31). It is thus we may trust, that He, whose way is in the deep, who maketh the clouds his chariot and walketh on the wings of the wind, is leading the world forward, "with a mighty hand and an out stretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders," to a state of such spiritual freedom and prog-

perity as it has never yet known. The commotion and revolution now at work, are only the beginning of the end—the first convulsive shudder produced by the crisis which is passing. Other like spasms may be expected to follow. It is not without reason that some look for a general war in Europe, which shall turn throughout on the issue now joined between monarchy and republicanism, the principle of established authority on the one side, and the principle of subjective freedom on the other. “The present revolutionary period, it has been well said, “is in many respects *sui generis*. It is not so much resistance, even alleged resistance, to actual oppression, either foreign or domestic, as a war for abstract rights.” Here precisely lies its profound and terrible significance. It is this consideration, above all others, which clothes with portentous solemnity the memory of the year just fled. Here, however, comes into view also, the true encouragement it offers to the eye of faith. In proportion as we see and feel the greatness of the crisis which has come, are we prepared to hail from beyond it the glorious instauration it may be expected to usher in hereafter.

The convulsions in Europe are made still more significant and impressive, when we consider in connection with them the course of events on this side of the Atlantic. Every attentive observer must see, that the relative importance of our own country, as comprehended in the general system of the civilized world, has been greatly advanced during the past year. It has been plain for a long time past, that the character and state of the world at large were likely to be powerfully affected in the end, by the progress of society in America. But no adequate sense of the truth has existed heretofore, either in Europe or among ourselves. It is wonderful indeed, how slow the European world has been, for the most part, to acknowledge the prospective bearing of our American life on the course of universal history. Even well informed scholars, only a few years since, were ready to laugh at the suggestion of anything like a problem for the whole world, comprised in what has been going forward in these ends of the earth. And we have ourselves shared so far in this feeling, as to have at least no very full confidence in the originality and independence of our separate mission. With all our

self-glorification, we have been prone to lean on foreign authority, as if not entirely sure of our own stability and strength. The whole course of events, however, within the past year, has served powerfully to bring in a new sentiment on both sides. The vast significance of America has been made to loom into view, on the other side of the Atlantic, as never before. As the foundations of society are found to give way in the old world, men's minds are turned with increased attention and interest towards the new. In various ways, the unsettled state of Europe, involving as it does the failure of so much that has been trusted as permanently secure, is rapidly turning the scale of comparative promise and hope against itself, and in favor of our youthful republic. The rate of exchange, to speak in commercial phrase, has been suddenly reversed, by the terrible shock now given to all moral and political institutions in the trans-atlantic world; and both our credit and capital are made to rise, with the depreciation of so much spiritual property abroad. It has so happened besides, that the movement of history on our own side of the ocean, just at this juncture, has been such as wonderfully to justify and encourage such transfer of credit to our account. Never before has our country seemed to stand on so firm and solid a basis, as just at the present time. Never before have our institutions presented the same title to reverence and respect. Never before probably has the nation at large had the same sense of its greatness, the same consciousness of an independent world-embracing mission. The last year has done more than all years past, we may say, to emancipate the national spirit, politically and morally, from all foreign thralldom, in the way of true inward self-knowledge and self-possession. With this memorable year only, and not sooner, the American Republic might seem to have closed in full and forever the period of its minority.

It is not necessary to dwell in detail on the great and stirring events, which have passed in our history within the last three or four years, all resulting in the new posture which has now been settled and fixed in our territorial limits. Questions have come up, relating to Texas, to Oregon, to Mexico, that seemed to threaten in different ways the very existence of the Republic, filling the minds of sober men with apprehension, and seeming

to turn into mockery all our dreams of enduring prosperity. The wisest statesmen have felt, that the experiment of our government was called, in these circumstances, to pass through a crisis more trying, in some respects, than any which it had ever been subjected to before. It seemed not unreasonable to fear, that the vortex of excitement and agitation into which the nation was so suddenly drawn, and from which it had no power apparently, to make its escape, would end in desperate revolution, overturning our old established state, and carrying our destiny in some new direction. Had it been divinely foretold in 1845, that the revolutionary spirit was to be let loose as it has been since among the nations, without mention of the field it should traverse, the most sagacious politicians, probably, would have been ready to locate, at least its central catastrophe, in America rather than Europe. It must have been felt, at all events, that no such general convulsion could well take place in Europe, without communicating itself by sympathy and contagion to the predisposition which seemed to be already at hand, on all sides, for the same thing in this country. And yet it has not been so. Texas has taken her place quietly, in the circle of confederate States. The Oregon boundary has been peacefully settled. The Mexican war has been conducted through a series of brilliant victories, that have filled the whole world with admiration, to a triumphant well consolidated peace. While the European world seemed to be meditating only the proper time and way for interfering with our affairs, all its energies and thoughts have been suddenly called into requisition, by the universal crash which has fallen upon it, like thunder out of a clear sky, at home. In the very midst of this vast and fearful commotion, we have been enabled to bring our own troubles, as a nation, to the happy termination just mentioned, and to take our position, with calm dignity, on the same political ground we occupied before. The nation has resumed its ancient course, only with a field of action vastly more broad and free; and might seem, to have gathered fresh confidence and strength from its difficulties, coming out of them more recruited than exhausted, like a strong man girded for the race. It has indeed accomplished a change, that may be counted fairly parallel in

magnificent meaning with the change that has taken place in Europe, and that will be found to have just as much to do in the end, no doubt, with the world-historical epoch which has been reached at this time; but under what different aspect and form! We might seem authorised, by the contrast, to compare the epoch itself with the mystic cloud at the Red Sea, which was all darkness, we are told, on one side, and on the other full of light. Its significance, in this view, may justify us in styling it emphatically, the American epoch.

It is hardly necessary to say that our sense of the vast significance of the crisis, through which the nation has lately passed, is not conditioned at all by any opinion we may entertain of the right and justice of the measures by which it has been accomplished. With the political morality of the Mexican war, we have here nothing to do whatever; just as little as we found it proper to take our measure of history, in the case of the late revolutions in Europe, from any particular estimate of the actors immediately concerned in bringing them to pass. In this case, as in that, we must distinguish between what is human in history, and what is properly universal and divine. The first may be worthy of all reprobation, where we are still bound to adore the presence of the second. It is with the second only, the interior objective life of history, its true and proper world-sense, that we are concerned at all in our present contemplation.

Certain it is, in this view, that the great events which have occurred in our history of late, are just as full of significance for a thoughtful mind, as has now been represented. It is not easy, adequately, to express, how much is involved in the movement which has taken place, or in the general result which has been reached by its means. It has served to test the capabilities of the nation, and to make the world sensible of its resources and powers, beyond any other ordeal through which it has passed. The experiment of our republican institutions has been placed by it on a far more sure footing, than ever before. Much that seemed problematical has been settled and made sure. The mere fact of its being able to come so triumphantly through such a crisis, in the midst of so many disturbing forces at work on all sides, is an argument of utility and strength in the nation

beyond any which has been exhibited before. The sudden expansion of its territory, is only in keeping with the development of its inward greatness; the moral holding equal step with the physical; the genius of the country, especially as set in contrast with the revolutionary spirit across the Atlantic, towering to an independent height, which is answerable, fairly, to the gigantic measure of its new bounds. Never before was it so respectable in the eyes of the world, never so sure of its own strength at home.

The sense of what has now been said in a general way, seems to have impressed itself strongly on many persons, in connection particularly with the occasion of our late Presidential election. Coming, as this did, on the heels of the Mexican war, with all the new relations and exciting prospects which have grown out of it, after a most earnest political campaign, and in full face of the tumultuating agitations of the European world, it might have been apprehended that such an issue joined at this time between the two great parties of our country, would bring into jeopardy at least the interests of order and peace in every direction. These considerations could not fail, at all events, to place in strong relief the significance of the experiment and example the nation was called thus to present before the eyes of the civilized world; and when this took place under the most triumphantly successful form, it is not strange that the spectacle should have produced a feeling of moral sublimity, and a sentiment of faith in the destiny of the republic, such as no occasion of a like sort in its history ever wrought before. No more impressive commentary can well be imagined, on the spirit of our institutions; no more emphatic answer to all scepticism or scorn, as exercised at their expense. The whole world beside has no such spectacle to show; the very possibility of it can hardly be imagined in any land but our own. The following statement of the case by one of our secular papers, well deserves here to be repeated and kept in mind.

“Only consider it. In the short space of less than twelve hours, the dynasty of a great nation was to be changed. Four millions of people, representing the opinions, and the will, of nearly twenty millions, were, by a simultaneous act, to decide for them-



selves, amid all their own diversities of sentiment, to what hands they would commit the direction of their country's mighty energies. It must be a wonder to the millions of lookers-on, who are not imbued with republican influences, that the contest was decided so speedily, so quietly, with such an utter absence of unreasoning passion; in fact, it may be said to have been governed solely by the inspiration of pure reason. Imagine the attempt of a people living under a monarchy, to change, we will not say the principle of their government, but merely the dynasty, the human instruments representing or embodying that principle. Such attempts have been made in various countries, and with various success. And everywhere the struggle has been protracted, furious, anarchical, destructive; bringing into action the wildest and most ungovernable impulses of human nature, and filling the land with misery and desolation. Here, under the benign influence and inspiration of republicanism, through the wholesome sway of matured republican habits, not only was the great work accomplished between the rising and the setting of the sun, but so calmly, in such perfect order, that no uninstructed observer could be aware that it was in progress. The usual avocations, amusements, and enjoyments of every-day life were pursued without a visible interruption. All the marts of business were in their accustomed activity; carriages, public and private, went up and down the streets, as is their wont; fair women thronged the fashionable side-walks, gay in apparel, graceful in movement, giving themselves up to the pleasure or more serious purpose of the hour, as if utterly unconscious of the great political crisis ripening around them — of which, indeed, there was nothing to remind them. Not that the magnitude of the crisis was not appreciated; not that the thousands and tens of thousands practically engaged in it were careless or indifferent as to the result; but simply because their sense of its importance was regulated and controlled by a corresponding perception of the dignity and beauty of good citizenship, which demands, first, the observance of order and decorum in all great public acts, and, second, a cheerful and hopeful acquiescence in every determination of the people's will, lawfully manifested in due and proper form by a majority of the people."

The significance of what has taken place latterly on both sides of the Atlantic, lies not so much in the European or American movement separately considered, as in the relation which the one may be seen evidently to carry towards the other. It is not possible, if God be indeed at the helm of history, that the course of things in the old and new worlds should not be

comprehended, in some way, in a common plan, and have regard thus to a single universal end; and it might reasonably be supposed, that in proportion as the elements and powers at work in each direction should acquire force, and seem ready to precipitate themselves in their last result, the reality of this correspondence and the general form and bearing of it also, would rise more and more into view. Accordingly, it is just here, in fact, that the earnest and contemplative student finds most to fix his attention and engage his admiration. The simultaneousness of the two series of developments, which have burst so suddenly and with such apparently independent process, on the world's astounded sense, here and in Europe, may be said to show, beyond all else perhaps, the solemn meaning of the age. On one side, we have the breaking up of old institutions and forms, in which has been comprehended for centuries, the central power of the world's civilization; as though this order of life had now finished its course, and the time were at last come for it to be taken out of the way, in order to make room for another stadium under some higher and better form. On the other side, we behold suddenly springing into new importance and promise, after long years of comparatively silent preparation, what might seem to be here, in America, the very asylum that is needed, and the best theatre that could be found, for the accomplishment of so great a metempsychosis in the flow of universal history. All indications on either side, point negatively or positively, precisely in this way. It is, in the first place, the spirit of America, or if we choose so to call it, the genius of Protestantism, itself, as it has come to identify itself with our American institutions, that forms, however blindly and darkly, the propelling force in the revolutions of Europe. They carry in themselves, under all their whirlwind violence, the force of a deep hidden sympathy and affinity, on the part of the old world, with the political tendency which has come to such successful experiment in the new. This is well understood by European statesmen and princes generally. The bent and effort of all these agitations and throes, is not in any way towards what has been hitherto the life of Europe, as such, but only and altogether towards the new form which life is found to be assuming in America. This

itself speaks volumes in relation to the general nature of the crisis to which the world has now come. Then, along with this, we have the arms of America opening on all sides—her territory suddenly adapting itself to the emergency—to welcome into her bosom the emigration, if need be, of entire nations.\* With such opportunity and invitation, co-operate all sorts of difficulty and distress abroad, to make the emigration such as the world has never before beheld. Nay, the very experiments which are made in Europe itself to satisfy the struggling

\* It requires some effort of consideration, to have any tolerable conception at all of the territorial increase of our country latterly, and the field it now opens for the diffusion of our national life. Take the following statement, from the late Presidential Message :

“ Within less than four years, the annexation of Texas to the Union, has been consummated; all conflicting title to the Oregon Territory, south of the forty-ninth degree of north latitude, being all that was insisted on by any of my predecessors, has been adjusted; and New Mexico and Upper California have been acquired by treaty. The area of these several territories, according to a report carefully prepared by the Commissioner of the General Land Office from the most authentic information in his possession, and which is herewith transmitted, contains 1,193,061 square miles, or 763,559,040 acres; while the area of the remaining 29 States, and the territory not yet organized into States, east of the Rocky Mountains, contains 2,590,513 square miles, or 1,318,126,058 acres. These estimates show that the territories recently acquired, and over which exclusive jurisdiction and dominion have been extended, constitute a country more than half as large as all that which was held by the United States before their acquisition. If Oregon be excluded from the estimate, there will still remain within the limits of Texas, New Mexico, and California, 851,598 square miles, or 545,012,720 acres; being an addition equal to more than one-third of all the territory owned by the United States before their acquisition: and, including Oregon, nearly as great an extent of territory, as the whole of Europe, Russia only excepted. The Mississippi, so lately the frontier of our country, is now only its centre. With the addition of the late acquisitions, the U. S. are now estimated to be nearly as large as the whole of Europe.”

California and New Mexico, alone, surpass in extent the whole original thirteen United States, by an excess which is equal to more than three times all New England. Adding Texas and the Santa Fe country, the new territory, without Oregon, is about equal to the *whole* territory east of the Mississippi, from the British provinces, to the Gulf of Mexico; or to the united territories of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and Denmark. If inhabited as densely as Massachusetts, it would sustain 78,000,000 of inhabitants, or four times as many as the present population of the whole United States; or if as densely as England, it would sustain 232,000,000—nearly one quarter of the present population of the globe.

tendency of the age, seem likely, for a time at least, to turn attention only the more powerfully, through their own disastrous issue, to the shores of America, as presenting the only field which is fairly open for its own order of life. Especially is such likely to be the result, when the failure of such experiments comes to be placed in broad contrast with the self-conservative vitality, by which this life at home, and upon its own soil, is carried so triumphantly through its complicated trials; showing itself equal to all emergencies, maintaining its identity through all changes, and absorbing into its own constitution, with overwhelming assimilation, all elements and tendencies, however uncongenial before with its own nature, or incongruous among themselves. It would seem as if God were plainly showing, by this very relation, the true sense of what is taking place; and that nothing can meet the necessities of the time, but such a new period of history as requires for its development, the winding up in full of that which has gone before, and with it the shifting entirely of theatre and scene to make room for its transaction. Should the course of things in Europe continue to be, for any length of time, as little auspicious as it has been thus far, it is quite possible that this reflection alone may become in the end a more powerful stimulus to emigration than all other causes now at work in this direction. Altogether, with the increase of inducement here, and constraining force at home, and easy communication between, the transplanting process which has now commenced, may easily enough assume hereafter, and that too, in a comparatively short time, such a form as hardly any imagination yet has ventured to dream. The world may yet see, in new form, another *Voelkerwanderung*, that shall be recognised hereafter as parallel, in the history of Christianity and civilization, with that which overturned, in the fifth century, the old Roman life, to make room, through such chaos, for the new creation which has since risen in its place.

We wish to be rightly understood. When we read in the present state of the world, the approach of a new historical period, whose character and course are to be determined prevailingly by the new order of life which reigns in America, we are not so foolish as to conceive of this under the form of a simple

triumph of our national spirit, as it now stands, over the social and political institutions of the old world; as though all had been wrong on this last side, and all on the first side were wise, and right and good; so that the controversy between them must be considered a contest purely of light and darkness, the cause of God and human happiness arrayed in broad and open antagonism to the cause of Satan and human wickedness. To hear some persons talk, one might suppose the history of the world to have been without sense or reason, until men came to exercise some little intelligence here lately, in America. The social organization of Europe, as it has existed since the Reformation itself, even in Protestant countries, is regarded as a system of unmitigated abominations, which it is only strange the human mind should have been willing to endure for so long a time. In the vocabulary of this wholesale school, monarchy and tyranny are identical terms, while republicanism is only another word for freedom. The full civilization and proper happiness of the world, are supposed to demand the prostration of all monarchical institutions, as a corruption and abuse. Kings are to be hated, as usurpers of a power which has never been given to them of God. It is by a righteous retribution, accordingly, that, in the providence of God, they are now driven from their thrones, or made to sit upon them with fear and trembling. The salvation of the world turns upon its coming in this way to a just sense of its inborn rights and capabilities; and we may trust accordingly, that God is interposing at this time, in the revolutionary spirit of the age, to bring the whole civilized world into the true liberty of nations, as we have it here happily exemplified, under the most perfect form, in these United States. How far this way of thinking prevails, need not be said. We own, however, no sympathy with it whatever. As already intimated, the revolutionary spirit, as now at work in Europe, is entitled to no sort of confidence or respect. In its own constitution, it is from beneath rather than from above; and the work accordingly, which it is pretending to accomplish, may not be expected to stand. Its significance is not so much in itself, as in the yet undeveloped life towards which transitionally it points and leads. This lies in the direction which the course of history has already begun

to take in America, and may be expected to come to its central revelation finally, by means of the theatre here opened for its use. But we have no right to assume, in such case, that the ulterior life of the world, as it is to be reached in this way, will be simply our American state of society, as it now stands, substituted by universal exchange for every other political order; as though we had long since fallen on the perfect idea of both Church and State, and the rest of the world now were required only to throw away all its previous thoughts and habits, and come to our position. This would be a most weak and extravagant imagination. Of one thing we may be very sure. If America be indeed destined to introduce a new order of life for the world, and to open the way for a new period of universal history, it will not be by standing over against the whole previous life of the world, as something false and bad. History in any case, goes forward, not by the mere negation and exclusion of what is thrown into the rear, but by such a setting aside of this as serves, at the same time, to save its interior substance and sense under a higher form. So, in the case before us, the problem to be accomplished is not, simply, the triumph of one existing order of life over another, in an outward way. It is not America wrestling with the world, as Hercules overcame the serpent in his cradle; but it is the world itself rather, wrestling in its own inmost constitution, through the medium of American influence, towards a general and common end, which may be said to embrace the sense of its whole history for centuries past.

Nothing can well be more out of character here, than the sophomorical style of self-glorification with which we are assailed, in certain quarters, on this subject. It betrays always a narrow vulgarity of mind, which is as far as possible remote from the true genius of the dispensation, whose advent it affects to trumpet in this Pharisaic way. It is the exclusiveness of Chinese vanity, which dreams itself in possession already of the "celestial empire," and can only commiserate or despise the barbarian world that lies beyond; but which, for this very reason, is itself doomed to perpetual imprisonment in the treadmill of its own miserable pedantry and conceit. If America be called to mediate and bring about a new historical period for the world, as so many

signs seem to show, she must be the very opposite of China ; not walling out the life of the world in its other forms, but making room for it rather, and offering it hearty welcome in her broad and capacious bosom. She must be willing to receive and learn from all sides, as well as to communicate and teach. She must feel, not that she is the world herself, but that she is fast becoming the theatre on which the central power of the world's history is to be displayed. In proportion, precisely, as this comes to be more and more the case, she must cease more and more to appear as an isolated interest ; the substance of all previous history will be found pouring itself into the open channel of her life ; and only in this way will she be prepared, more and more, with proper inward qualification on her own part, to become the organ of a new universal life for the nations. The activity of the old world, for the last three hundred years, has not been without purpose ; and the results of it are not now to be set aside as null and void. Nor is it necessary, by any means, to suppose that the nations of Europe have yet completed their part in the great drama ; or that they are to save their importance, only by at once confessing their whole past life to have been a lie, and consenting to take a fresh start politically, in the footsteps of the American republic. The case calls for no such wild extravagant supposition. Europe is not to be set aside as a grand failure. The true wealth of her past life will be carried forward to the new state, in which her institutions are to be finally perfected in their own form, by means of this crisis ; only to become thus more valuable, by growing accumulation, always for the service of the world at large.

The historical significance of America thus far, lies mainly in this, that the substance of its life, as it is to be hereafter, is *not* yet fixed, but in the process only of general formation ; under such conditions and relations as are needed to bring it finally to a character of universal wholeness and completeness, beyond all the world is found to have produced before. We cannot speak of our American nationality as a settled and given fact, in the same way that we may speak of the nationality of England or France. The nation is ruled indeed by its own independent genius, and carries in itself a certain inward law or

type, that may be expected to determine permanently the leading form of its history. But all is still in a process of growth; and the circumstances of the country make it impossible to bind this process to any outward lines or limits. Even if the idea might have been entertained in any quarter hertofore, that some certain form of thought and life had acquired the right of stamping the country forever with its own image and superstition, to the exclusion of all besides, every such conception is in a fair way of being effectually exploded by the course of things at the present time. No pent up Utica of this sort, which might have been tempted before to make itself the measure of the whole world, can well fail to be put out of countenance now, by the continental size of our territory, and the rolling tide of emigration, with which it is coming to be so rapidly occupied and filled from the other side of the Atlantic. The day for "Nativism," in all its forms, is fast drawing to an end. Whether for weal or for woe, the life of Europe is to be poured in upon our shores without restraint or stint, till it shall cause the ancient blood of the land to become in quantity a mere nothing in comparison. God is fast showing, by the stupendous course of his providence, that this American continent was designed from the start, not for the use of a single race, but for the world at large. Here room has been provided, with all the outward necessary conditions, for the organization of a new order of life, that may be as broad and universal as the soil it shall cover; and now the material out of which it is to be formed, the elements that are needed for such world embracing constitution, are made to flow together from every side, for the purpose of being wrought into a new nationality which shall at last adequately represent the whole. What will be the form precisely in which this nationality shall become complete, the historical substance in which it shall come finally to proper harmony and consistence within itself, in art, manners, literature, science and religion, it is impossible now, of course, to foresee or predict. We know only, that the social and moral character of America is not yet settled, and that the greatness of the country and its true promise, are comprehended in this fact. Its inward history is quite as young as its outward history; having but just passed, as it were, the



stage of childhood, in its onward progress to mature life. It has been emphatically styled the land of the future ; and so it is in truth. Its true significance, since the days of Columbus, has lain in its relations to coming time ; and with all the actual importance now belonging to it, the full measure of its greatness is still comprehended in what it is soon to become, rather than what it has become already. All signs unite to show that a new order of world history is at hand, and that the way is to be prepared for it centrally in America. Here a theatre is already secured, sufficiently broad for the process ; the conditions required for it are showing themselves to be more and more at hand ; the elements to be used in it, are wonderfully brought together from all sides ; while all the indications of God's providence are conspiring towards the grand result, in which it is to become complete.

It were a most arrogant presumption, contrary to all history and all true philosophy alike, to suppose that the new historical period required by the world, is to proceed from the life of this country, just as it now stands, in an outward mechanical way. The country offers simply the necessary basis and room, for the elaboration of what is wanted, a properly universal spirit, in which the contradictions of the past shall be made to pass away. All particularism is excluded from the process, by its very conception. It must involve the reciprocal action of manifold tendencies and powers. The result must be, not abstract Americanism over against the rest of the world, but such an incorporation of the true substance of history from all sides into the American character, as may fairly and fully qualify it to become the type of the world's life universally. It is not enough that the outward material of the nation be gathered from all lands ; it must take up into its inward constitution also, what is of worth in the mind and heart of all lands ; so as to be, not merely a mixture of the several reigning nationalities, but an inward reproduction of their true sense under a new organic and universal form. How much remains still to be accomplished for this purpose, in our literature and culture generally, it is not necessary to say. But the forces are already powerfully at work, whose vastly accumulated strength may be expected to prove fully sufficient in due time, for the accomplishment of so great an end ; while the pal-

pable destiny of the nation, in the view now under consideration, forms in itself, at the same time, a certain guaranty that it will not fail to be reached.

Did our limits allow, it might be interesting to notice in detail, some of the more striking indications or signs, in the form of single scattered facts, which go to confirm the general anticipation now presented. It lies in any just conception of the world, as the evolution of a divine plan, that every great change in its history, must be preceded by a certain amount of preparation in its whole system, revealing itself in many new facts, apparently unconnected, which serve, in different measure, to foreshadow what is coming. A number of such facts are known to have led the way for the great epoch of the Reformation. Among them may be mentioned, the fall of Constantinople, the invention of printing, the discovery of America, the revival of classical learning, and various changes to which the social and political systems of Europe had come in the process of their own action. These and other facts, were of force, not on the ground simply of any direct bearing they may have exercised on the event of the Reformation itself, but much more as their ultimate necessity and sense may be said to have lain far forward in the new period which was to follow. Their *significance* was in the future; and in such a future as the world could not then rightly comprehend. And in the same way, precisely, we may read the advent of the great period now in prospect, in many most significant facts of the present time, the full power and meaning of which, look plainly beyond the whole constitution of the world, as it now stands.

Here belong the wonderful discoveries and inventions of the age generally, which have been following each other for some time in such form as never before, and whose action is already undermining the existing order of things, quietly but surely, at so many different points. We are apt to lose sight of the broad difference that is coming to exist more and more in this way, between our own circumstances outwardly considered, and those in which the world has stood in former times; and we seldom appreciate properly the bearing of such change on the structure of society or the progress of history. It needs no great reflection,

however, to see that this cause alone is carrying the world forward, with uncontrollable necessity, to a social and political state, in which our present modes of existence are likely to become as fully antiquated before long, as are to us now the social relations and forms of the period before the Reformation. The cause is one, moreover, which may be expected to grow continually upon itself, and to multiply its own powers indefinitely. The rate of improvement is accelerated by its own progress; every new invention but paves the way for another; and the first effects of the change also, in each case, are no adequate measure at all of the long train of results to follow. Only think of what has been already wrought by the agency of steam; and yet how small a part of its mission, in all probability, has it yet accomplished? The mastery of mind over matter, has been amazingly advanced within the present century. The resources and powers of nature have been brought into subjection and made subservient to the purposes of civilization in a way which it would have been madness to dream of in former times. Especially worthy of note is the conquest gained more and more over time and space; by which the different parts of the world are brought continually nearer together, and made to verge from all sides towards the idea of a truly universal life. Mountains fall, seas shrink, rough places are made plain, and crooked places straight, in preparation as it might seem, for the most free intercourse and union among the nations. The ends of the earth are contracted, and its most retired and inaccessible regions are laid bare and open. Old barriers and divisions are fast falling away. With the entire change of relations which is coming upon it in this way, the world as it has been is plainly ready to vanish away; and it is equally plain that its history hereafter must show such a character of consolidation and universality as it has never known before.

And it needs no very active imagination certainly, to see in these conquests over nature and time and space, a peculiar prophetic bearing on the mission of this country, as manifestly ordained of Heaven to lead the way in the new order of things which is thus at hand. The processes of improvement and culture, are thus made answerable to the vast scale of our resources

and opportunities. The work of years is accomplished in as many days. The multiplication of wealth and power goes forward as by magic. Cities and states spring up like the creations of romance. And still this vast growth of the nation brings with it no unwieldiness or want of strength. On the contrary, with its increasing volume, it is becoming always only more and more compact. It is more present with itself in all its parts now, than it was at the time of the Revolution; and there is good reason to believe that, when its population shall reach from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the bond that holds it together will be still more close and sure than it is at the present time. Space and distance are more and more annihilated as they are brought into the way; and the horizon of the country falls in dynamically upon its centre, in proportion as it recedes from it, in the way of outward vision, on every side.

Who can estimate prospectively the bearings of the *Electric Telegraph* on the course of coming history? It is sufficient of itself, in time, to change the entire order of the world's life. Shall we dream of it as an accident only, in the economy of providence? Or are we not bound rather to see in it a prophetic intimation of what is near at hand in God's plan, a new historical period, namely, in which full room shall be found for its widest use? Does it not point to such concentration and universalness in the coming civilization of the world, as men have had no conception of in ages past? Its main significance undoubtedly lies, not in the present, but in the future. Like the art of printing, it carries unborn revolutions in its womb. Those silent posts and wires mean more than all the thunder of Napoleon's artillery. A thousand mobs of Paris or Berlin, are but as the drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance, in comparison.

One other American improvement, still only in theory, but destined, soon, we may trust, to pass into magnificent effect, deserves to fix for a moment, our most earnest attention. It is *Whitney's* project of a *railroad*, to span the entire continent, from Lake Michigan to the shores of the Pacific. We hardly know how to trust ourselves in speaking of this vast and stupendous design. Thought is confounded, and the very imagination

itself is made to stagger, in looking down the long vista of results which it opens to our gaze, more like the tales of the Arabian Nights, than the sober realities of experience as it now stands. And yet the whole thing lies as much within the range of plain rational calculation, as any Yankee economist could desire. The practicability of the measure is clear for all who choose to make it a subject of examination. It is equally clear, that all providential signs are urging at this time towards its accomplishment. The sense of our late acquisition of territory, can be made complete in no other way. Oregon and California can be held for the nation, only by this road. Thus the true significance of America for the world, would seem to hang upon its construction. Let no one say that this is making too much of the merely outward and physical, for human history. The outward and physical, here, are the force of mind itself, yoking nature to its chariot wheels. Who that knows anything of history, can be ignorant of the power which has been exercised upon it in all ages, by the course of commerce? A new channel opened for trade, has ever been sufficient to throw the kaleidoscope of nations into new form. Kingdoms rise and fall with the change of mercantile routes and marts. Tyre, Alexandria, Palmyra, Venice, what a lesson do they not read on this subject! But of all levers that have ever been applied in such way to the course of civilization, none can be named as fairly parallel with this railroad to the Pacific. Its consequences must be boundless for the entire globe. By no possibility can the world after its accomplishment continue to be the same. Europe and Asia must join hands across the American continent. We will be in truth the centre of the world; and not simply its centre in an outward view, but the great beating heart we may say of humanity itself, through which shall circulate the life blood of its nations, and that shall serve as a common bond to gather them all into one vast brotherhood of interest and love. New York will be brought within twenty-five days travel of China. The commerce of the whole earth will fall under our command and control. We shall become thus a thoroughfare for the world, and its treasures will be laid at our feet. At the same time, in thus connecting continents and oceans, we shall bind our own republic together with

such a bond as we can have under no other form. This bridge of nations will form also the arch of the American union, and the world's weight always passing over it will serve only to render it continually more solid and firm. It is utterly impossible to calculate at present the immense results that must flow from the accomplishment of this single work, for America and for the earth at large. All social and political relations, art, literature, science and religion, in one word, the universal course of history must be brought by means of it to assume an entirely new form.

While Europe and Asia are in the way thus of coming together in the bonds of a new commerce mediated by America, it is most interesting to see the door opening apparently for a similar junction of our American life with the dark continent of Africa. Liberia is still an infant experiment; but the proportions of a Hercules already begin to show themselves in its limbs.— The experiment has proceeded so far, that prejudice itself is forced to look upon it with respect, as carrying in itself now every guaranty that could well be asked of an ultimate success, whose measure shall equal or perhaps transcend the largest calculations of its friends. It is no chimerical dream at present, to look forward to the day as by no means remote, when a flourishing and powerful nation, politically sprung from the American republic, and in close, active correspondence with its life, shall be found spreading far and wide along the shores of Africa, and carrying the blessings of civilization and religion towards its benighted interior. The results of this for Africa itself and for the world, it is not necessary that we should here pretend to foretell. Every one may see that they must be immense. What is mainly interesting, however, and worthy of note, is the concomitance in which this prospect stands with the signs of coming vast revolution in the entire order of the world's life on other continents, and the way in which it conspires with these signs from every side, to indicate prophetically the central relation of America to the period of universal history which is to follow. The world is fast coming together from the four ends of heaven; it is urged from all sides towards a new system of existence, under such a character of consolidated universality as it has never yet known; and it would seem plain that the organic law by which all this is

to be reached, is to proceed from the United States mainly, as the land through which, in God's plan, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. In such view it is that we feel ourselves authorised to speak of the present crisis as emphatically the AMERICAN EPOCH.

It has become an established maxim in the philosophy of history that the culture of the human race moves with the course of the sun, from east to west. "Westward the star of empire takes its way." Art, literature, science, politics, philosophy and religion started in Asia, and their inward development from the beginning has been accomplished by means of a corresponding outward emigration ever since towards the setting sun. Now they are in the process apparently of entering upon a new stadium on this side of the Atlantic; which, by analogy, may be expected to be more complete than any which has gone before. But, with the completion of our American civilization, the circuit of the globe will be fulfilled, and the end brought round once more to the beginning. Will the old movement then be gone over again under a higher form? Hardly. The world will be brought so together as to leave no room farther for the idea of any such successional cycle. All betokens rather the abrogation of this law, as one that shall have finished its necessary course, by making room for the integration of all stages of the world's life ultimately into the conception of its proper *manhood*, as this is to be revealed in the new universalized culture, towards which so many signs are pointing and so many powers struggling at the present time. But we venture here on no farther speculation.

Let no one think, however, that we make too much of the outward progress of the age, in inferring from it the approach of a new order also of culture and civilization. We know very well that the triumph of mind over matter is not of itself an advance in morality and religion; that a supreme devotion to material interests is at war with the higher ends of the spirit; that there may be a titanic mastery over nature, which is at last in league only with the powers of hell against the law of heaven. But we know too, that this is not the true constitution of our life. Man is formed to rule the world in the image of God and for God's glory. The great problem of morality is to be fulfilled by the complete subjugation of nature to its high behests. The

last sense then of all outward improvements in the state of the world, lies necessarily in their final subserviency to its moral culture. It is not possible thus, with any faith in God, to look upon the signs of revolution with which we are now surrounded, as either without meaning altogether for man's spiritual history, or as significant only of coming evil. It is not by accident, surely, that so many new powers and resources are coming to be developed at this time, or that the outward relations of the world are so rapidly passing into new shape. All these things belong to a divine plan; and this, in the nature of the case, has regard to the highest end of humanity as comprehended in the religion of Jesus Christ. The victory of Christianity will be no Vandal barbarism, exercised at the cost of all outward civilization; but the free and willing homage rather of all art and science at its feet. However adverse then, under any particular aspect, the present course of things may seem to be to spiritual Christianity, we are bound to see in it notwithstanding, not negatively only, but positively also, a glorious preparation for such a reign of the Spirit as has not yet been known. Indeed, there is no alternative here for Christianity, but conquest or defeat. It must keep pace with the onward movement of the world—a movement that cannot be put back; or else stand openly exposed, as impotent altogether for the accomplishment of its own mission. The accelerated, concentrated, consolidated action of the world's outward life, must lead in some way to a corresponding energy in its moral organization. Otherwise it must perish titanically, through the wanton exercise of its heaven-climbing powers. How all is to come to pass, it may be hard for us now to see; but in the end, the physical or merely natural maturity of our race, will bring along with it also a parallel ripeness in its spiritual constitution. Such a new order of things as we see to be at hand, is at once the argument and guaranty of a new advance to be made in universal civilization.

As our article is already too long, we conclude with some general reflections, rapidly and briefly thrown together, in the way of hint merely, and stimulus for farther thought to such as know how to think.

1. There is a woe pronounced in the Bible, on those, (Isaiah,



iv. 12,) that "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." And surely it must be taken as the mark of an irreligious and brutish mind, at this time, not to be affected by the tokens of God's presence with which we are surrounded, or not to be roused by them to some earnest and profound thought. For the judgments of God are not merely to be gazed at with passive animal stupefaction. They are instinct with the light of reason, and are so many challenges to the exercise, first of faith, and then of manly, vigorous speculation. It is a poor thing, to be so immersed in material interests and forms, as to have no eye for the far more magnificent realities of the spirit. It is a sad business to be so occupied with the mere outward sound and show of history, as to have no sense for the divinity it enshrines within. To believe in God truly, one must see him in nature and history; and this implies an earnest apprehension of both, as full of infinite wisdom and love. To look upon history as chaos, without form and void, is such a sin against faith, as it were to banish in thought all order and reason out of nature in the same way. And yet to this it comes at last, where men either deny openly and at once the idea of a universal plan and process in the course of the world's life, or at least deride all endeavors to understand it, as idle, if not presumptuous mysticism. From all such rationalistic *frivolousness* of the common understanding, deliver us, good Lord!

2. One great cause of such unbelief is found in the general selfishness of our nature, which prompts us to subordinate the general and universal to our own petty particularities. We are bound accordingly, in the case before us, to widen our thinking and interest, as much as possible, into some correspondence with the universal character of the crisis to which the world appears to have come. One great advantage of such a crisis is, that it naturally tends to produce this spiritual enlargement. Our constitution is such that universal interests are fitted to move us more deeply than any that are merely private, lying as they do indeed more intimately near the proper foundation of our life, It behooves us then to make room for their action in our souls, and not to shut it out by the stubborn egotism of our thoughts. We must not dream of bringing the course of universal history

into subserviency to *our* particular interests and aims as such, as though God were concerned, in all the revolutions of the age, only to play into our hands, and were pleading the cause of American politics, American opinions, &c., as such, against all the rest of the world. In religion, for instance, we have no right to assume that all the truth of universal Christianity is gathered up into our particular sect or system, Methodism, Puritanism, or any other like narrow interest, and that all variant systems, past or present, are to the same extent false, needing simply to be perfected by an unreserved translocation over to *our* ecclesiastical camp. All such pedantry is ridiculous, and directly at war at the same time with the true sense and meaning of the age. 'The first condition, we may say, for understanding or fulfilling our duty is, that it should be fully laid aside. So in the case of literature, science, and philosophy in general.

3. As the present course of things invites to wide and comprehensive thinking, so it is also eminently suited to confound and put to shame all narrow theories and schemes. Mere insular traditions must give way; not only such as belong to the old world, Germany, France, England, &c., but those also which have already begun to assert their tough life in the new. The idea that the form of existence which is to rule the world hereafter, is at hand here, as a given fact, in some corner or section of America, under this or that phase of thought and life, however it may have been able to keep itself in countenance heretofore, is in a fair way now of being effectually put to rest. Outward formulas, hereditary notions, mechanical stereotype rules of any sort whatever, will not answer for the time that is now at hand. Only living intellect and waking will, may be expected to carry with them any force.

4. And still the revolution which is coming will not be radical, in such a way as to break with past history. In bursting the bonds of particular forms and traditions, it will yet seek to incorporate into itself the sense of the universal past. This is implied by the way in which it is coming to pass. All particularism is excluded for the very purpose of securing for it a universal character; and the powers of the world's life are made to flow together in its service, from every quarter. Not as an abrupt

rupture with the previous civilization of Europe, but only as the true historical continuation of it under a higher and more world embracing form, will it be entitled at all to confidence and respect. Radicalism may mix itself with the course of history—is doing so at this time largely in Europe; just as blind traditionalism may mix with it also in a different direction. These two, indeed, are apt to be coupled closely together, and strangely enough involve at bottom very much the same falsehood. But history itself is neither radical nor traditional. It always moves away from the past, and still at the same time, never leaves it behind.

5. In the midst of the general revolution which is coming, the *Church* will be brought to assume a new form. The year 1848, has done more to shake the outward organization of the Church, than any year before or since the time of the Reformation. Romanism is made to tremble in the very heart of its own empire. Its ancient pillars seem ready to give way. The Church of the Reformation, on the continent of Europe, is threatened with universal dilapidation. It must pass through a process of reconstruction, in order that it may at all continue to stand. Just now the pressure of political interests weighs down the question of the Church. But it will come forward in due time, with overwhelming interest. Nor can the posture of the Church in this country, be considered by any means as settled and complete. Our sect system is not the normal form of Christianity. No intelligent man is willing to stand forward openly in its defence, under any such view. In some way, sooner or later, it must come to an end. The *Church of the Future* cannot be the same in this respect with the Church of the Present.

6. In what form the Church will surmount finally her present trials, in the new period which appears to be at hand, we may not venture now of course to predict. The tendencies of the age seem on first view, it must be confessed, unfavorable to the idea of any outward catholic organization. But this is not at once to be taken for granted. What we see may be only the negative side of a process, whose ultimate sense is very different. One thing is clear. The way is opening for an universal consolidation in the general life of the world, far beyond all that has been seen in previous ages; and this of course must embrace

Christianity and the Church as well as other interests. Is it to be supposed that the Church, in these circumstances, will be less united and compact within itself than it has been heretofore? Or will it be imagined that its unity is to resolve itself into a mere invisible sentiment? And yet the *idea* of the Church seems to involve unity, catholicity, and visibility, as its necessary elements wherever it has come to be felt as an object of faith. To God we commit the mighty problem. May he resolve it soon in his own glorious way.

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### ART. III.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

THE great interest taken of late, in subjects supposed to have been fully settled ages ago, has been a source of no trifling embarrassment to some of our Protestant theologians. Having no faith in the historical development of theology, they are half tempted to suspect that the ecclesiastical chronometer must be in advance of time by a few centuries. At least the awkward attempts occasionally made, to account for the "alarming fact" that one of these subjects, the Authority of Tradition, or the Rule of Faith, has called forth, within a few years past, so many books\* and so much discussion, indicate a considerable degree

\* The following to the writer's knowledge:—In England—1. *Tracts for the Times*, Oxford;—2. *Keble's Sermons*, Oxford;—3. *Palmer's Aids to Reflection*; 4. *Newman on Romanism*;—5. *The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*, by Wm. Goode, Cambridge;—6. *Not Tradition But Scripture*, by Dr. Shuttleworth, Oxford;—7. *The Authority of Tradition in Matters of Religion*, by George Holden;—8. *Tradition Unveiled*, by Bader Powell, Oxford;—9. *Essay on Omissions*;—and 10. *The Kingdom of Christ Delineated*, by Archbishop Whately, Dublin. In Germany—11. *Philipp Melancthon der Glaubenslehre*, Von F. Del-