

make it easy to corrupt the Christian religion.

Second, the effect of that age of ease, wealth and luxury which came to the Christian ministry and the church generally when the Emperor Constantine, changed Christianity from a despised and persecuted religion to that of the state religion of the empire, and loaded its ministry with wealth and worldly honors, and by the insidious influence of this patronage made it possible to effect that co-mingling of pagan philosophy with Christian doctrine, that forever after that the simple religion of Jesus of Nazareth is no more to be found in the elaborate ceremonial and ever increasing dogmas of the church.

Third, the history of the actual changes that took place in the doctrines of the Christian church may be historically traced out, showing wherein there was a departure from the beautifully simple religion of Jesus Christ. Of one may take up the present teaching of the Christian churches, Catholic or Protestant, and compare their doctrines with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, and may easily arrive at the conclusion that you have reached, that the churches are in an apostate condition, and "that the clergymen of today have no notion of the word of God, and that they stoop to please an unregenerated people."

Fourth—One may trace through the melancholy pages of ecclesiastical history, not only the departure from the doctrines of Christ, but also the departure from the moral precepts of the Gospel which took place, and the decline in spiritual life which culminated in the ignorance, intolerance, cruelty, bigotry, superstition, wickedness and abominable spiritual darkness of the middle ages, which even an apologist admits was an iron age, barren of all goodness; a leaden age, abounding in all wickedness; and a dark age, remarkable for the scarcity of writers and men of learning. Christ is represented as in a very deep sleep, the ship as covered with worms, and there were no disciples who by their cries might wake Him, being themselves asleep. One has only to read this account of moral depravity and spiritual degeneracy to gain an assurance that the spiritual light of the Gospel of the Blessed Redeemer had been taken from men.

Fifth. Prophecy is history reversed; that is, events by prophecy are recorded before they transpire, and there is abundance of such prophetic history to prove that in the latter days men would depart from the Gospel covenant, and as a consequence the severe judgments of God would sweep over the earth. Hear the words of Isaiah for example: "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth is also defiled under the inhabitants thereof." Here we may pause and ask why is all this calamity and distress predicted. Let the prophet answer, for continuing right on he says, "Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath a curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are

burned and few men are left." (Isaiah xlv.) This judgment referred to in the last clause of the quotation is one that still hangs over the inhabitants of the earth. It is a calamity that has never yet overtaken the world, but it will overtake it, it must do so or the Word of God will fall to the ground unfulfilled; and we have the divine Master's assurance that not one jot or tittle of the Word of God shall fail to the ground unfulfilled. An examination of the following passages will show that that the new testament also is burdened with prophecy of the apostasy you have discovered. Acts xx; 27-30. II Tim. iv: 1-4. II Peter ii; 1-3. II Thess. ii; 1-12.

I do not know, of course, which of these lines of fact and argument led you to your conclusion, whether it was one or more of them or all of them combined, but I am sure that any one of them would conduct you straight to your conclusion. Or there is still another means by which you could arrive at your conclusion, and, judging from the tone of your remarks, perhaps that is the one which influenced you most, viz., the state of the Christian religious world today after nineteen centuries of supposed Christianity. That condition cannot be better described than by quoting what James Anthony Fraude has said of his said of the religious condition existing in Rome in the closing years of the Old Republic, just previous to the founding of the first Triumvirate:

"Religion, once the foundation of the laws and rules of personal conduct, had subsided into opinion. The educated, in their hearts disbelieved it. Temples were still built with increasing splendor; the established forms were scrupulously observed. Public men spoke conventionally of Providence, that they might throw on their opponents the odium of impiety; but of genuine belief that life had any serious meaning, there was none remaining beyond the circle of the silent, patient, ignorant multitude. The whole spiritual atmosphere was saturated with can't—can't moral, can't political, can't religious; an affectation of high principle which had ceased to touch the conduct, and flowed on in an increasing volume of insincere and unreal speech. The truest thinkers were those who, like Lucretius, spoke frankly out their real convictions, declared that Providence was a dream, and that man and the world he lived in were material phenomena, generating by natural forces out of cosmic atoms, and into atoms to be again resolved."

Let one try how he may, he cannot more truly describe the religious state of the world in the closing decade of the nineteenth century than by quoting this picture of religious conditions in the old Roman republic. And when such conditions prevail no one will attempt to say that here true Christianity is flourishing. Something must be wrong; and since it is beyond question that the pure religion of Jesus Christ was established by the personal ministry of the Son of God and His own chosen apostles, that something wrong must be that men have departed from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or, in the language of Isaiah, "they have transgressed the

laws, changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant, therefore hath a curse devoured the earth and they that dwell therein are desolate."

Yes, sir, you are undoubtedly right. Christendom is in an apostate condition. So far as the Protestant division of Christendom is concerned it is admitted. The very fact that the sects which make up Protestant Christendom exists, is evidence that it is admitted. That is, their existence proclaims that Christendom at one time became apostate and hence that sixteenth century revolution mis-called a reformation. The only justification for that sixteenth-century revolt against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church is the fact that that church was in a state of apostasy. This is the whole ground and defense of the so-called reformation. The Church of England on her authoritative homily on the Perils of Idolatry says, at page three, "Laitie and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages and sects and degrees have been drowned in abominable idolatry, most detested by God and damnable to man, for eight hundred years and more." While the learned and devout John Wesley emphatically said that the reason why the spiritual gifts of the Gospel were not enjoyed after the first three or four centuries of the Christian era was because the Christians had turned heathens again and only had a dead form left.

As for the claims of the Catholic church, that it is the very church organized by Jesus and His apostles, and that it has continued without intermission, without a break in its line of succession to the authority and mission of the apostles from the days of Peter to those of Leo XIII.—how can it stand before the combined evidences of the apostasy which I have pointed out?

But it was not my purpose to dwell upon this part of the subject at such length. What I intended in this writing was to call your attention to the fact that since Christianity is and has been in a state of apostasy for many centuries, the only way there can be a restoration of the Christian religion, including the necessary divine authority to preach the Gospel and administer in its ordinances, is by the introduction of a new dispensation thereof, by which new apostles shall be called and sent forth to again call men to repentance and establish anew the Church of Christ on the earth. This, sir, is what I desired to call your attention to, that having arrived at one great truth you might not make the mistake which Protestant Christendom is making by thinking that men called reformers can of their own volition and without authority from God, and without revelation from Him, re-establish the Christian religion, and restore the Church of Christ. Divine authority once lost to men on earth, can only be restored to them by a new revelation from God in which men shall again be commissioned with authority to speak and act for God. Men are not authorized to take it upon themselves to act for men in things pertaining to God except they be called of God as was Aaron (Heb. V.) "Ye have not chosen me,"