

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

and vigorous Introduction to the New Testament. The German unbelief cannot now be successfully encountered without the help of the German learning. The antidote is scarcely to be found except where the poison grows. The climes which yield the most noxious plants, are the very climes which produce the most effective medicines, the sweetest fruits, the most luxurious vegetation.

[To be concluded.]

---

## ARTICLE V.

### THE KINGDOM OF CONGO AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES.

By Rev. John Leighton Wilson, Missionary in Western Africa.

No part of Western Africa is so well known to history as the kingdom of Congo. For this distinction, however, it is not so much indebted to any importance which it ever possessed itself, as to other causes of an incidental nature. It borders upon, and has given its name to, one of the finest rivers on the continent of Africa, and is therefore somewhat known merely from its geographical position. And the circumstance that has contributed to its notoriety, but not to its honor as a nation, is the fact, that from the earliest period of its discovery by the Portuguese up to the present moment, it has always borne the lead in the foreign slave trade, and in all probability, has furnished a larger number of victims for the markets of the new world than any other region of Africa whatever. Congos or their descendants may still be identified in many parts of the United States, throughout the West India islands, and in large numbers in Brazil, where they have not yet laid aside their vernacular tongue.

But the circumstance which, above all others, has contributed to give it interest in the eyes of the civilized world, is the fact that it has been the stage upon which has been achieved one of the most successful experiments ever made by the church of Rome, to reclaim a pagan people from idolatry. For more than two centuries, the kingdom of Congo, according to the showing of the missionaries them-

selves, was as completely under the influence of Rome, as any sister kingdom in Europe; so that if the inhabitants of that country are not now, in point of civilization and Christianity, what Rome would have them to be, or all that a pagan people are capable of being made under her training, the fault lies at her own door. In relation to the missions which she planted about the same time in India, China and other parts of the world, it has been alleged with some degree of justice, that her designs were thwarted in consequence of political changes in Europe, which placed protestant nations in the ascendant, and gave them a preponderant influence in those countries where her missions had been established. With no less justice it has been urged, that the failure of her efforts among the Indian tribes, both of North and South America, ought to be ascribed to the fact that these tribes have been overshadowed and borne down by the presence of more powerful races, without allowing sufficient time for the full development of her peculiar principles. But whether these things can be regarded as satisfactory explanations of the causes of failure in other parts of the world or not, nothing of the kind can be urged in relation to her missions in Congo. Here she has always had the field to herself; and for more than two centuries, enjoyed facilities and advantages for propagating her religion among this people, which she can scarcely ever expect to have again in any future efforts of the kind that she may make.

It is our intention in the present article to examine the character and results of this mission. But in order to render our views intelligible, we must give a hasty sketch of the civil as well as the religious history of the country, before entering upon the proposed investigation.

The kingdom of Congo, as also the great river of the same name, was discovered by the Portuguese about the year 1485.<sup>1</sup> It was not a new or isolated discovery, but an extension of those they had made some years previously higher up the coast. At the time, however, it was regarded as immensely valuable, and it awakened an interest in Portugal, in behalf of this people and country, that has not entirely subsided after the lapse of more than three centuries.

The kingdom of Congo lies entirely on the south side of the river, which forms its northern boundary; while on the south it is bounded by the Portuguese province of Angola, on the west by the Atlantic, and on the east by the mountains of Matamba, which separate it from

---

<sup>1</sup> By the natives of the country the river is called the *Zaire*, a name that is adopted also by most modern geographers.

the country of the savage and warlike *Giaghis*. It is of an oblong figure, extending along the sea-coast about 250 miles and interiorwards about 350. At the time of its discovery, or very soon afterwards, it was divided into six provinces, viz. *Sogno*, *Bamba*, *Pemba*, *Batta*, *Pango* and *Sundi*, to the chiefs of which the Portuguese gave the names of dukes, counts and marquesses, which they ever after retained. Of these provinces, *Sogno* and *Bamba* were the largest and altogether the most important. *Bamba* was said to have been about as large as *Sicily* or *Naples*, and bordered on the province of *Angola*. *Sogno* was still larger, and not only formed the frontier of the whole kingdom, but commanded the entrance of the river, and therefore acquired importance proportioned to the amount of commerce carried on with the civilized world. *San Salvador*, the capital and metropolis of the whole kingdom, was situated in the province of *Pemba*, about 50 Italian miles south-east of the mouth of the Congo, and about 140 north-east of *Loando St. Paul*, the capital of *Angola*. It was situated upon the summit of a high mountain, and not only enjoyed a magnificent prospect of the surrounding country, but was reputed healthful even for Europeans. It was not only the residence of the king, but was the head quarters of the missionaries, as also for a large number of Portuguese merchants, who resorted thither on account of the facilities it offered for trade. At the time of its greatest prosperity, which was probably the early part of the seventeenth century, it is said to have contained about 40,000 inhabitants. The palace was a large wooden building, surrounded in part by a stone wall, and was constructed no doubt under the direction of the Portuguese residents, and probably at the expense of the king of Portugal. For many years, a bishop and his chapter, a college of Jesuits and a monastery of Capuchins, were supported in *San Salvador* at the expense of the Portuguese government. Besides a cathedral of large dimensions, there were ten smaller churches, to which the ordinary names of *St. John*, *St. James*, *St. Michael*, *St. Anthony*, etc. were given, all of which contributed materially to beautify this otherwise barbaric city. It was accessible to the whites by the way of the river, but the more common route to the sea-coast was through the province of *Bamba* to *Loando St. Paul*. There were several fortified posts along this route, but none of them were places of strength or importance. The only other towns of any considerable importance were the capitals of *Sogno* and *Bamba*; neither of which, however, is supposed to have contained more than six or eight hundred houses. In both of these there were monasteries of Capuchins, and in *Sony*, the capital

of Sogno, there were six churches, the largest of which could contain five or six hundred people. Sony was situated upon a small creek, that emptied into the Congo a few miles from its mouth, and was the great seaport of the kingdom.

The history of Congo, civil as well as religious, commences with its discovery by the Portuguese, as little or nothing is known about it previously.

Diego Cam, the original discoverer, having entered the river and learned by signs from natives whom he found upon its banks, that there was a great kingdom in the interior by the name of Congo, was so much elated by the discovery, that he took very little time to verify these equivocal proofs, but made all speed back to Portugal to report his success. The interest which this discovery awakened in the mind of the king and people of Portugal, was scarcely less than that felt by Diego Cam himself; and he was sent back almost immediately with three Dominican friars. On his second arrival he had an interview with the king, and was treated with the utmost kindness and courtesy. Two of the friars that accompanied him, died soon after their arrival, probably of the effects of the climate; and the third was killed some years after by the Giaghis, while acting as chaplain to the Congolan army.

On his third voyage to Congo, Diego Cam took with him twelve missionaries more, of the Franciscan order, who are regarded as the founders of the Christian religion in the kingdom of Congo. The count of Sogno and the king of Congo, his nephew, were among the first converts to Christianity. For a time the latter showed great zeal in promoting the new religion among his subjects; but as soon as he found that he was required to give up the multitude of wives and concubines with which he was surrounded, and be married to a single wife, he renounced it and returned to the religion of his fathers. His son and successor, Don Alphonso the First, felt no such difficulty. He not only embraced Christianity himself, but did all he could to promote its interests throughout his realms. His brother Pasanguitama was a man of a very different spirit, and finding there was quite a popular dislike to the new religion, availed himself of it to raise a rebellion against his brother. The armies of the two brothers had scarcely engaged in battle, when St. James was distinctly seen fighting on the side of the king; and victory, of course, soon turned in his favor. Pasanguitama was not only beaten, but was made a prisoner. He refused to ransom his life by embracing Christianity, and was accordingly executed. It fared differently with

his general, who was pardoned on the condition of becoming a Christian, but had to do penance in the way of bringing water for all who were baptized in the capital. Soon after this signal victory in behalf of Christianity, a large reinforcement of missionaries was sent out by the Society *de Propaganda Fide*, most of whom were from the Italian States; and in the course of fifteen or twenty years the entire population of Congo was gathered into the pale of the Roman Catholic church.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the labors of the missionaries met with a serious interruption in consequence of an invasion of the country by hordes of the warlike Giaghis. The Congolan army, though large and well disciplined, was scattered like chaff before these savage invaders. San Salvador was burnt to the ground, and the king and his people had to betake themselves to the "isle of horses," on the Zaire, for safety. In this extremity, the king of Congo appealed to Don Sebastian, king of Portugal, for help, which was promptly granted. Don Francis Gouvea was despatched with six or eight hundred Portuguese troops, and after having been reinforced by two or three hundred more, from Angola, he gave battle to the invaders in the heart of the kingdom. After several engagements, in which the Giaghis showed great bravery, he succeeded in driving them from the country, and restored the king to his throne. Don Alvaro the First, the king at the time, out of gratitude, engaged to make the king of Portugal an annual present of slaves, and offered to acknowledge him as his sovereign. This latter proposition the king of Portugal generously declined, preferring to regard Don Alvaro as a brother king. Don Francis remained in the country with a part of his troops three or four years, for the purpose of restoring order, and to prevent another invasion of the Giaghis.

The missionaries, who it is supposed retired to Angola during these strifes, returned to their labors, and having been reinforced by new recruits from Europe, not only reëstablished the Catholic worship in all the provinces of Congo, but extended their labors into neighboring districts over which the king of Congo had no jurisdiction. They crossed the Zaire, and were nearly as successful in making converts in Loango and Kakongo as they had been in Congo. In the mean time San Salvador was rebuilt, commerce was resumed on a more extended scale, and the country soon attained to a degree of prosperity and power quite beyond anything it had previously known. This period of peace and prosperity, however, was not of more than forty or fifty years' continuance.

In the year 1636, a civil war broke out between the king of Congo and the count of Sogno. The occasion of this war arose from an unjustifiable attempt on the part of the king to transfer the province of Sogno to the crown of Portugal. Having had need of the aid of the Portuguese of Angola to effect his coronation, he engaged to give them for their assistance two gold mines and the country of Sogno. For some time previously, the Portuguese had entertained the belief that there were valuable and extensive gold mines in the country back of San Salvador. The natives of the country, either from motives of policy or from that inherent love of the marvellous which characterizes the race, had studiously encouraged this belief, without, however, furnishing any information by which the Portuguese could identify the particular region in which they were to be found. At the same time it was quite obvious that these mines could be of no special value to the Portuguese, unless they could get possession of Sogno, which commands the entrance of the river, and prevent other foreigners from participating in the advantages of their discovery. To couple these two things, therefore, for the purpose of securing the assistance and coöperation of the Portuguese, showed great shrewdness on the part of the king; but so far as it concerned the welfare of the country generally and the stability of his own throne, it showed great weakness, as well as want of foresight. The proposition, as might have been foreseen, roused the indignation of the people as well as the count, to the highest pitch, and they soon placed themselves in an attitude of defiance. The count denied the sovereignty of the king of Congo, and not only charged the Portuguese with fraud in accepting what he had no right to give, but reproached them bitterly with ingratitude, inasmuch as only a few years before, when they were driven out of Loando St. Paul by the Dutch, he had given them shelter in his country and extended to them pardon that had never been requited.

The king of Congo raised a large army, and having been joined by about eighty Portuguese, he determined to force the count into submission. In the first engagement the Sognoese army was beaten and the count himself was slain. His son and successor, who was a man of equal energy and bravery, resumed the war, and in the first engagement the royal army was not only defeated, but the king himself and a large number of his Portuguese allies were made prisoners. The latter had the alternative of death or slavery submitted to them, and preferring the former they were immediately executed. The king, Don Alvaro the Second, obtained his own liberation by acknowledging the independence of the count and ceding to him an additional

district of the country. It was not long, however, before this treaty was denounced and hostilities were recommenced by the king, but with no better success. Finding it impossible to reduce the count to subjection, the king despatched an embassy with valuable presents to Prince Maurice, who at that time was acting as agent for the Dutch in Brazil, to ask his aid. The count sent another at the same time and probably by the same vessel, and with presents equally valuable, to beg his non-interference. The prince determined not to interfere, and wrote to the governor of Angola to take no part in the quarrel, as he would prefer to regard both parties in the light of friends. For a time hostilities were suspended, but the country of Sogno was never afterwards united to the crown of Congo. The part which the Portuguese had taken at the commencement of these troubles, made them ever afterwards intolerably odious to the Sognoese. The count indulged his resentment by persecuting the missionaries in his country. Several of them were ignominiously dragged out of his dominions and thrown among the savages on the opposite side of the river, where it was thought they would be put to death. It was not long, however, according to the statements of the missionaries, before this deed of violence recoiled with redoubled force upon the count's own head. The love which the people bore to their religious teachers, and the apprehension of some dreadful calamity from heaven, roused them to a state of phrenzy, and the count in turn was seized and drowned in the Zaire, near the spot where he had perpetrated this deed of cruelty against the missionaries. A more devout successor ascended his throne, and the missionaries were recalled to exercise more absolute authority than they had ever done before.

About the same time, Don Alvaro the Second, sent to Pope Urban the Eighth, for a new recruit of missionaries. In compliance with this request, twelve Capuchins were sent; but having been detained on account of the war with Spain, they did not reach Congo until after this king's death. A part of this company remained with the count of Sogno, and the others found their way to San Salvador, where they were kindly received by Don Garcia the Second, the son and successor of Don Alvaro. The reign of Don Garcia was short, and he was succeeded by Don Antonio the First, who by his unparalleled wickedness and brutality, not only threw his whole kingdom into disorder and anarchy, but had nearly extirpated every trace of Christianity from the land. He not only behaved in the most despotic and brutal manner to his own subjects, but treated the Portuguese residents and the missionaries with so much indignity that they



were compelled to fly from his realms. It was not long, however, before the Portuguese of Angola determined to resent these indignities. An army of one or two thousand natives and four hundred Portuguese soldiers was raised, and they determined to give this impatient king battle in the heart of his own country. On this occasion, it is confidently stated by the missionaries, that Don Antonio raised the incredibly large army of 900,000 men. They say very little, however, for the bravery or discipline of this immense army, when they add that the main division of it was entirely routed by four hundred Portuguese musketeers. Don Antonio himself was killed, and his crown was taken to Loando St. Paul. Had the Portuguese been so disposed, they might have turned this victory to good account by subjecting the whole kingdom to the Portuguese crown. But this seems never to have been desired. The existence of gold mines was then known to have been a mere fabrication, and as they enjoyed a monopoly of the trade of the country, there was no object in making it a dependency of the crown of Portugal. There was also, it is probable, a religious motive which prevented the Portuguese from seizing upon the country. Congo had received the Catholic religion at a very early period after its discovery, and its sovereigns, with one or two exceptions, had always shown as much deference for the authority of Rome, as those of Portugal itself. All of her kings had been crowned according to the Catholic ceremonial, and the crown itself had been bestowed by the pope as a testimony of their loyalty.

After the signal defeat just mentioned, the country was left to recover from its disorders as best it could. It was not long, however, before order was restored and another king placed on the throne of Don Antonio, but who he was we are not informed. He signalized his reign by an unsuccessful effort to reunite the province of Sogoo to the crown of Congo. Father Carli, in 1667, saw the great duke of Bamba, who was always the leader of the royal forces, just after he had disbanded an army of 150,000, with which he had in vain attempted the subjugation of the count of Sogno. Twenty years later, and the great Duke himself had renounced his allegiance to the king, and cut off all intercourse between the capital and Loando St. Paul. The close of the seventeenth century may therefore be regarded as the termination of the national existence of the kingdom of Congo. From the moment that the Count of Sogno and the grand Duke of Bamba, through whose territories alone the inhabitants of San Salvador could have any intercourse with the civilized world, renounced their allegiance to the king, the capital lost all of its com-

mercial importance, and the king himself must have sunk down to an equality with the merest petty chief in the country. As far back as 1668, San Salvador had become a wilderness, and a pretender to the crown of the ancient realm, as a last resort, had applied once more to the Portuguese for assistance to place him upon his throne and reduce his revolted provinces to subjection. At that time, however, Portugal had enough to do to attend to her own affairs, and we hear no more of the kingdom of Congo.

The missionaries continued their labors in some parts of the country, especially in the province of Sogno, some time after the dissolution of the government. During the earlier part of the eighteenth century their authority in Sogno was nearly as great as it had ever been; so much so, that English vessels could not buy slaves in the port of Sony without first conciliating their good will. At what time precisely, or from what causes, they finally abandoned the country altogether, we are not certainly informed, and can therefore only conjecture.

Before the close of the eighteenth century, indeed, for anything we know to the contrary, before the middle of it, not only all their former civilization, but almost every trace of Christianity had disappeared from the land, and the whole country had fallen back into the deepest ignorance and heathenism, and into greater weakness and poverty than had ever been experienced even before its discovery.

According to Malte Brun, a company of missionaries left Nantes in 1768, and endeavored to reestablish the Catholic religion north of the Zaire, but on account of sickness, or some other untoward cause, they failed to accomplish anything. The effort was renewed by another set of missionaries from the same place five years afterwards, but with no better success. In 1777, according to Grandpere, four Italian priests embarked at Rochelle for the purpose of reestablishing the Catholic faith in Sogno. They took with them large presents for the chiefs, and adopted every precaution to render their mission successful; but they found that the inhabitants had sunk down to the lowest grade of paganism, and were so savage withal, that they could not travel in safety among them. Two of the four died soon after their arrival, as it was supposed by the survivors, from the effects of poison. The other two, finding their lives in great peril, had recourse to stratagem to extricate themselves from the country. Capt. Tuckey, who was sent by the English government, in 1816, to explore the Congo river, states that three years previously, some missionaries had been murdered in Sogno, and that a Portuguese pinnace had

been cut off by the natives at the same time. Who these missionaries were, or how many there were, we do not know, but they were no doubt agents of the *de Propaganda Fide*. During his sojourn in the country, he found no traces of Catholicism, except a few crucifixes and relics strangely mixed up with the charms and *feteiches* of the country, and were no doubt distributed by Portuguese slave traders, who still frequented the river. One man introduced himself on board as a priest, and said he had a diploma from the college of Capuchins at Angola, but was without education, and so ignorant of the usages of the church which he represented, that he unblushingly acknowledged that he had a wife and five concubines. At the present time, not even these fragments of Romanism can be found, except it be the crucifixes and pictures which the Portuguese and Spanish slave traders still continue to distribute; and so far as civilization, order and industry are concerned, we scarcely know another community on the whole coast of Africa, that will not compare to advantage with the poor, miserable and degraded inhabitants to be found along the banks of the Congo at the present day.

It is not easy to say how much civilization there was in Congo in the days of its greatest prosperity. The statements of the missionaries, upon which we are in a great measure dependent for all the information we can get, are so deeply tinged with the marvellous, and are so grossly exaggerated withal, that they cannot be received without great abatement. They use language that would indicate great commercial prosperity and an amount of civilization of no ordinary grade for that age of the world. Father Carli states that when he arrived in Bamba about the year 1667, the great duke had just disbanded an army of 150,000, with which he had in vain tried to effect the subjugation of the count of Sogno. Professor Bitter, who had advantages for examining all that was written by the missionaries in relation to the kingdom of Congo, states upon their authority, that the great duke of Bamba could at any time raise in his own province alone 400,000 troops. The statement is not only made, but endorsed by several of the most intelligent and respectable missionaries, that one of the kings of Congo, who was no doubt Antonio the First, had raised an army of 900,000. But there is not one of the statements that does not strike us as utterly incredible. We seriously doubt whether the king of Congo ever did raise, or ever could have raised, an army of more than 20,000. To raise, equip, provision and direct an army of 900,000, implies an amount of population and a degree of civilization, of which there are no traces whatever at the present time,

and which is at variance with innumerable other statements incidentally scattered over the pages of the missionary journals. The system of government organization, too, which seems to have been a sort of an elective monarchy, to which the provincial chiefs were tributaries, bears strong marks of having been formed by the missionaries or Portuguese residents, and had but little stability of its own. And as the result proved, it stuck together and was rendered effective only so long as foreigners exercised a controlling influence in the administration of its affairs. The missionaries and the Portuguese residents no doubt did something to change the general aspect of the country. Wherever they went, they planted gardens, cultivated fruit trees, and built substantial houses both for private dwellings and places of public worship. The king and some of the chiefs followed their example; but the great mass of the people continued to live in the same kind of bamboo huts as their fathers had done; they cultivated only the indigenous vegetables of the country and were always clad with the scantiest apparel, while there were vast hordes of the poorer people who had no clothing whatever. They had no roads except the merest footpaths. The highway from the capital to Loando St. Paul was of this description, and so infested with wild beasts that it could not be travelled in safety without an escort of fifty or sixty armed men. They had no beasts of burden, no carriages of any kind; and their commerce, exclusive of the slave trade, which was somewhat considerable, was confined to a small quantity of ivory, copper ore and civet cats—less in amount perhaps than it is at the present day, which we suppose scarcely exceeds \$100,000.

It will no doubt occasion surprise, that the natives of Congo showed so little disposition to conform to the specimens of civilization that were set before them. But this is only another of the innumerable proofs that might be adduced to show that something more is necessary to secure the civilization of a heathen country than merely to set before them specimens of civilized life. The idea, that such would be the case, is natural enough, but is wholly unphilosophical. It implies the belief that the only hinderance to the improvement of a heathen people is ignorance; whereas the very essence of heathenism consists in indolence and an aversion to the exercise of those energies, which alone can secure the prosperity of any people. We look in vain for any upward tendencies in a pagan community, until their moral and intellectual natures are awakened; and as Roman Catholicism has no power to do this, we are not surprised to find that there are so few traces of civilization among the people of Congo.

But whatever may have been the character of the civilization of Congo, there is no doubt but Roman Catholicism was, for a period of at least two centuries, the ostensible, acknowledged religion of the realm. Paganism was interdicted by law; and the severest penalties were inflicted upon those who were known to participate in the observances of any of its rites. There were periods, too, in the history of the country, when it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find one adult in the whole kingdom, who had not in infancy or afterwards, been introduced by baptism into the church. It is impossible to say how many missionaries at different times were sent to Congo. Father Merolla incidentally mentions at least one hundred, among whom were Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, Capuchins, St. Augustines, Bernardians, Carmelites, and those of almost every other order in the church. The number of churches and other places of public worship was very considerable. In San Salvador there were eleven; in Sony, the capital of Sogno, there were six; and in the whole province eighteen. In the entire kingdom, it is probable, there were not less than one hundred consecrated churches, and perhaps two or three times as many other places where the priests were in the habit of performing baptism and celebrating the mass. The king and his chiefs always vied with each other in their attendance upon mass, and there was scarcely a single outward ceremony of the church, which they did not scrupulously perform. Wherever the priests went, it was the duty of the chief to send a messenger around the village to notify the people of his arrival, and direct them to come and have their spiritual wants attended to. If he failed to perform this duty, he was displaced from office, or compelled to do penance. Nor were the common people behind their chiefs in outward zeal for their adopted religion. They might be seen in long trains bearing logs of wood to the convents, or scourging themselves with unrelenting severity in the churches, as acts of penance. One of the missionaries states that the women, in one of the villages he entered, rushed upon him "like mad women" to have their children baptized. Another expressed great surprise when an adult woman presented herself for baptism, that there was one in the country who had neglected the ordinance so long; and at the same time he complained that he could find no children to baptize, because he had been preceded by a fellow missionary, who had done the work up so effectually that nothing was left for him to do. The authority of the priests, too, in matters political as well as ecclesiastical, was established on the firmest basis. There were no acts of penance or humiliation inflicted

upon the sovereigns of Europe, when Rome was at the zenith of her power, that these missionaries had not the satisfaction of seeing the humbler chiefs of Congo subjected to. And one can readily imagine with what awe it must have struck the simple minded Africans, to see the count of Sogno, the most powerful chief of the kingdom, prostrated at the church door, clothed in sackcloth, with a crown of thorns on his head, a crucifix in his hand, and a rope about his neck, while his courtiers were looking on, clothed in their most brilliant robes.

Nor was papacy established in Congo in a hasty or superficial manner. It was a work at which successive companies of missionaries labored with untiring assiduity for two centuries. Among these were some of the most learned and able men that Rome ever sent forth to the pagan world. It was a cause, too, that always lay near the heart of the kings of Portugal, when that nation was at the climax of power and wealth. The royal sword was ever ready to be unsheathed for its defence, and her treasures were poured out for its support without stint.

But what has become of this church, with all its resources and power? Where are the results of this spiritual conquest that cost so much, and of which Rome had boasted in such unmeasured terms of exultation? To answer these questions impartially, the friends of Rome must acknowledge, that they constructed a spiritual edifice in the heart of this pagan empire that could not stand in its own strength; the moment the hand which reared and for a time upheld it, was taken away, it fell to pieces. Nay more, to acknowledge the whole truth, not only has this great spiritual edifice crumbled to the dust, but it has left the unfortunate inhabitants of that country in as deep ignorance and superstition, and perhaps in greater poverty and degradation, than they would have been if Roman Catholicism had never been proclaimed among them. One thing at least may be affirmed without the fear of contradiction, that in point of industry, intelligence and outward comfort, the people of Congo, at the present day, cannot compare with thousands and millions of other natives along the coast of Africa, whose forefathers never heard even the name of the Christian religion.

But how is all this to be accounted for? Has Romanism too little spirituality to bear transplanting to a pagan soil? Or is the African race incapable of being Christianized or raised to any considerable degree of civilization? These are questions in which others besides

Roman Catholics are interested. The friends of Protestant missions may well despair of the evangelization of the world, if their labors are to be as protracted and to be attended with as few permanent good results.

In accounting for this failure there is no necessity to suppose that it arose either from the want of vitality in Romanism itself, or from the want of religious susceptibilities on the part of the negro race. To maintain the latter assumption, would not only be at variance with abundant proofs to the contrary, but would be a serious impeachment of the power and sovereignty of Divine grace itself. It would be equally preposterous to say that Romanism has no vitality whatever. However much it may be encumbered with error and superstition, it has, nevertheless, vitality enough to maintain its own existence, as its own past history abundantly proves. Whether it has power to propagate itself among the pagan nations of the earth in the present age of the world, is a question that admits of serious doubt, and will become a subject of discussion in a subsequent part of this article.

In accounting for the downfall of Romanism in Congo, something no doubt is to be ascribed to the decline of Portuguese power. It was under her fostering hand that the church of Congo first rose to power and importance. She had been called upon in every emergency, and she was never called upon in vain. The time came, however, when Portugal had no more treasures to bestow upon the church, and as little power to control the political affairs of the State. Her sympathies were still with the church and the people; but something more substantial than mere sympathies, was necessary to keep up an interest in the church or to enforce order in political matters. Besides which it may be justly said, that if the church and government could not sustain themselves after two centuries of faithful and indulgent guardianship, there was no probability that they ever would; and it would be but a foolish waste of time and money to try to prop them up by artificial supports.

The insalubrity of the climate has sometimes been alleged as one of the chief causes which led to the suspension and overthrow of this mission. But we hear no complaints on this score by the missionaries themselves, and the fact that the mission was maintained in vigorous operation for two centuries, proves conclusively, that this was never regarded as an insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of Christianity in the country. The missionaries undoubtedly suffered from the effects of the climate, and not a few of them made their

graves in that land, because they chose to die in the scene of their labors. The sufferings which they endured, however, did not arise so much from the virulence of the acclimating fever, as the injudicious and extravagant mode in which it was treated. Their theory of acclimation was, that there could be no permanent health until all the blood which they brought with them from Europe, was taken away and replaced by other blood, formed from the indigenous products of the country. The lancet was almost the only prescription, and the freedom with which it was used would make a modern practitioner stand aghast. Father Angello died after fifteen bleedings. His associate, who was not a physician, fearing that he had overdone the matter, reported the case to a doctor in Angola, who replied, that if he had been bled thirty times, he would probably have recovered. Father Carlie, during his first attack of fever, was bled twice a day for twenty days in succession. He was taken to Angola in a state of great exhaustion, and was bled twenty-four times more by way of *revulsion*. During three years' residence in the country, he was bled ninety-three times, besides copious effusions of blood from his nose, mouth and ears.

But whatever blame may be attached to the unhealthiness of climate, there is one fact of an opposite character, which cannot be thrown aside by those who bring the argument forward. It is, that the number of foreigners who have continued to reside on the borders of Congo, notwithstanding the withdrawal of the missionaries, even up to the present day, is much greater than the number of missionaries that were employed there at any one time. And it may be said in relation to this, as has just been said in relation to the patronage of the government of Portugal, if the church of Congo could not live after having been nursed for two hundred years, there was no probability that it ever would.

One of the real causes, as we believe, which contributed to the extinction of the Roman Catholic religion in Congo, was the countenance which it always extended to the foreign slave-trade. We offer no discussion of the general subject of slaveholding — whether it be compatible or not with the practice of enlightened Christianity; in Africa, where men are seized for the first time and converted into property for the purpose of gratifying the avarice of their fellow-men, it assumes a character of aggravation, which it does in no other part of the world; and no enlightened man of the present day, who has had an opportunity to witness its degrading and disorganizing influence, will hazard his



reputation for common sense or humanity so far as to attempt its justification, on any principles whatever. In the earlier stages of this traffic, its victims were procured in wholesale numbers by war and violence; villages were surprised and the entire population seized and sold into slavery by their more powerful neighbors. But this system, in the very nature of the case, could not last long; and it soon gave place to another, which, though not attended with the same outward violence and bloodshed, has nevertheless proved more injurious to the country, in the course of time, than the one it supplanted. Few are now taken to the markets kept open along the coast, except those charged with some crime; and the most prolific source of accusation is the charge of witchcraft, a thing so subtle and indefinite that it may always be substantiated on the most precarious evidence, and so pliable, at the same time, that it may be made to cover the most barefaced acts of injustice and cruelty. The writer has more than once known a company of men, on the mere suspicion of witchcraft, to seize upon one of their own number, sell him to a slave-dealer, and divide the proceeds among themselves, when it was not only obvious to others, but acknowledged by themselves, that there was a strong probability that they would all within a short period be disposed of in the same way. And yet such is the insensibility engendered by this cruel traffic, that men can acknowledge and think of such a liability without emotion. He has known two friends (professedly so at least) come to a slave-factory, on a mere pleasure excursion, and while one was secretly negotiating for the sale of his companion, the intended victim has had the adroitness to escape with the money and leave the other to atone for his duplicity by a life of foreign servitude. These are not rare cases, but common occurrences in the vicinity of every slave-factory on the coast of Africa; and it must be seen, at once, that where such deeds of injustice are perpetrated with impunity, there can be no order, no morality, and no sound religion whatever. And yet these or similar deeds of villany must have passed under the notice of the missionaries of Congo almost every day of their lives; and as the whole nation was included in the pale of the Catholic church, these deeds were perpetrated by those over whom they claimed to exercise spiritual jurisdiction; and we have often wondered what kind of morality they must have inculcated, or what system of church discipline they must have enforced, to allow such enormities.

But the missionaries are chargeable with more than the mere toleration of these things. They participated in this traffic themselves;

and if not from the same motives of avarice which influenced the mass of the people around them, they at least gave the full force of their example to countenance all the enormities which are inseparably connected with it. By an arrangement with the civil authorities, all persons convicted of celebrating the rites of the ancient religion, were delivered up to the missionaries, and by them sold to the first slave vessel which entered the river, and the proceeds were distributed to the poor. The number of individuals thus convicted was very considerable; so that vessels engaged in transporting slaves to Brazil, could always depend upon the missionaries to give them material aid in making up their complement of slaves. The missionaries, too, seemed to have no scruples in occasionally presenting a few of their domestic slaves to such captains or supercargos as had done them favors. Father Merolla mentions that he had once given a slave to a Portuguese captain in consideration of a flask of wine that he had given him to celebrate the sacrament. Indeed, the missionaries seem to have felt that there was no serious harm in consigning any number of the inhabitants of the country to foreign servitude, provided only that they were baptized and were not permitted to fall into the hands of heretics. Allowances are to be made, of course, for the age in which these missionaries lived. The whole Christian world, protestant as well as papal, stands implicated in the charge of having countenanced this trade which is now so universally denounced. Still, however, it may be said in extenuation of the conduct of the great mass of the Christian world, that they never saw the worst side of the picture. They have contemplated the evils of the slave system only in countries comparatively enlightened, and where it has always been regulated, less or more by Christian principle. Of its baneful and desolating influence upon society in Africa, they have known little or nothing, except as a matter of conjecture, or what they have learned from the reports of others. But the missionaries were eye-witnesses of the worst results of this traffic, and we are more than surprised that they did not interpose all their influence to save the inhabitants of Congo from its destructive tendencies. They ought, from the circumstances of the case, to have been in advance of the rest of the Christian world in denouncing it, whereas they were greatly behind their own church when public sentiment began to set in an opposite direction. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, Cardinal Cibo, on the part of the sacred college, wrote to the missionaries, complaining that the "pernicious and abominable abuse of selling slaves was still continued," and exhorted them to use all

their influence to put it down. The missionaries assembled to consider this letter, but concluded that the advice was impracticable, inasmuch as the people of Congo had little or no trade, except in slaves and ivory. They resolved, however, to do all they could to prevent them from selling slaves to the heretics, by whom were meant the Dutch and English, but more particularly the latter. This one-sided morality did more harm than good. The people had too little discernment to see any essential difference in the case; and as the English always gave better prices, and furnished them with guns and ammunition, which the Portuguese from motives of policy would not, they always preferred the English trade. The attempt on the part of the missionaries to enforce this resolution, brought them on several occasions in conflict with the authority of the count of Sogno, and more than once they had nearly secured their own expulsion from the country. They ultimately succeeded, however, in securing to the Portuguese traders a sort of monopoly of the trade, and much the greatest proportion of slaves shipped from Congo were taken to Brazil; so that if any praise is due for keeping them out of the hands of heretics, the missionaries are entitled to the whole; but in the same proportion are they responsible for the ruin of that country, to whose welfare they had consecrated their lives.

There were other causes, however, which contributed still more efficiently to the overthrow of Christianity in Congo than the foreign slave trade. Had this been left to itself, and allowed sufficient time to work out its own natural results, it would, with the utmost certainty, have obliterated every trace of civilization and Christianity. But there were other causes that intervened and did the work more summarily. We allude to the character of the religion the missionaries introduced into Congo; the manner in which that religion was propagated; and the unjustifiable measures that were adopted to uphold it after it became the established religion of the country.

One would naturally suppose, that going among a people so deeply debased, and so utterly ignorant, of course, of everything pertaining to Christianity, as the inhabitants of Congo must have been when they were first discovered by the Portuguese, the missionaries would have taken special pains to instruct them in the principles of the Catholic religion before introducing them into the church. It is but natural to suppose that they would have translated the word of God into their language, established schools for the instruction of the youth, and employed all the ordinary means for diffusing Christian knowledge among the people, in connection with the preaching of the

Gospel. But the world knows that such a course is no part of the policy of Rome. In all parts of the world where they have attempted to establish their religion, whether in earlier or later times, the baptismal seal has been looked upon as the only thing necessary to convert any heathen into a *bona fide* member of the Romish church. They pretended, it is true, to catechize their candidates for baptism, but the ordinance, according to their own statements, was administered with so much rapidity and in such wholesale style, as utterly to preclude the idea of anything like thorough catechetical instruction. None but those who have had some experience in training the heathen mind, can understand how slow it is to receive religious instruction. The Divinely appointed mode of "giving line upon line, and precept upon precept," and this persevered in for a long period, is indispensably necessary to impart to their minds the first and the simplest principles of revealed religion. But the Congo missionaries made no allowances whatever for the sluggishness of the heathen mind. They either misapprehended its true character, or regarded religious knowledge as a matter of only secondary importance. Their chief ambition seems to have been, to drag as many into the church as possible, and if their merit is to be measured by the number of their converts, they are the most meritorious and praiseworthy men that ever lived. Father Carli states that during his residence in the capital of Bamba, he seldom baptized less than eight or ten children a day, and not unfrequently fifteen or twenty. During a residence of two years he baptized 2,700. One missionary in Chiovachianza is reported to have baptized 5000 children in a few days. Another missionary baptized 12,000 persons in Sogno in less than a year. Father Merolla states that he had baptized as many as 272 in one day, and in less than five years, he had baptized more than 18,000. He mentions the case of a brother missionary who had baptized 50,000; and of another who during a residence of twenty years had baptized more than 100,000.

The missionaries however did not confine themselves to the single ordinance of baptism. They introduced, as far as they could, all the rites and ceremonies of the Romish church. The mass was celebrated with all due pomp; the confessional was erected in almost every village; penances of all grades and kinds were imposed; children and adults alike were required to perform the rosary, and the people *en masse* soon learned to make the sign of the cross, and most readily did they fall into the habit of wearing crucifixes, medals and relics. There were certain heathenish customs, however, which the missionary fathers found much difficulty in inducing the people to abandon;

and they were never entirely successful until they substituted others of a similar character, which the natives regarded as a sort of equivalent for those they were required to give up. One of the missionary fathers has very ingenuously placed the customs which were abolished, and those which were substituted in their place, side by side in his journal, little imagining how forcibly others would be struck by the family likeness of the two. The limits of this article will not allow us to extract extensively from his journal, but a brief reference to a few of these customs will be quite sufficient to justify the remark just made. It was a custom of the country, for example, to bind a cord of some kind around the body of every new-born infant, to which were fastened the bones and teeth of certain kinds of wild animals, which was regarded as a sort of a charm to preserve the health and life of the child. This practice was regarded by the missionaries as an offence of high grade, and the mother who had the temerity to present her child for baptism with one of these heathenish cords about it, was scourged in public and in the severest manner. In the place of this, the missionaries enjoined, "that all mothers should make the cords with which they bound their infants of palm leaves that had been consecrated on palm Sunday; and moreover guard them well with other such relics as we are accustomed to use at the time of baptism."

Another custom that was regarded as not less objectionable by the missionaries, was the practice of handing over every new-born infant to a native priest or sorcerer to tell its fortune, which they pretended to be able to do by examining its form, its limbs and countenance. In the place of this, they enjoined "that all mothers, after the birth of their first-born, should carry it to the church and perform the ceremony of entering into the holy place; and if it be sick, we order its mother to recommend it to the Lord, together with some sort of a vow."<sup>1</sup>

Another custom in Congo, which excited the displeasure of the missionaries, was the habit of interdicting to every person at their birth some one article of food, which they were not, through life, upon any consideration, to put into their mouths. This practice was regarded as specially heathenish, and was unconditionally interdicted. In the place of it, however, they commanded "that the parents should enjoin their children to observe some particular devotion, such as to

---

<sup>1</sup> The vow, in all such cases, was an engagement on the part of the mother, that the child, for a specified period, should not eat a certain kind of food, wear clothes of a certain color — or something of a similar character. •

repeat many times a day the rosary or the *crown*, in honor of the blessed virgin; to fast on Saturdays; to eat no flesh on Wednesdays, and such other things as are used among Christians."

Another custom of the country at the root of which the axe was laid, was that of guarding their fruit-trees and patches of grain with *feteiches*, which were supposed to possess themselves the power of punishing all trespassers. The practice was interdicted, but the people at the same time were recommended, "to use consecrated palm branches, and here and there in their patches of corn to set up the sign of the cross." These details might be extended to almost any length, if it were necessary. A Roman Catholic of discernment may possibly see an essential difference between these heathenish customs that were abolished, and those that were substituted in their place; but we seriously doubt whether the simple-minded people of Congo were ever conscious of any material change in their code of superstitious rites, or derived any essential advantage by the exchange. At the same time, wiser heads may well be excused for doubting whether the one is more conformed to the spirit of enlightened Christianity than the other; or whether it is worth the trouble and expense of sending the Gospel to the pagan nations of the earth, if it produces no better results, or lays no surer foundation for salvation. It was the great error of the missionaries, perhaps we should say the grand defect of Romanism, that they presented the benighted inhabitants of Congo with a system of superstitious observances so nearly allied, both in spirit and form, to the one which they aimed to extirpate. It was utterly impossible that one of two systems so nearly related could ever have supplanted the other; and all therefore for which the inhabitants of Congo were ever indebted to the missionaries, was for a burdensome accession to those superstitious ceremonies that had already crushed them almost into the dust. The new religion had no more to do with their moral and intellectual natures than the old one. It imparted to them no clear views of the sublime truths of the Gospel, and left them in as great ignorance of the true gospel plan of salvation, as it found them. It limited their attention almost entirely to a few drivelling expedients to preserve themselves from the evils and accidents of life, without attempting to impart any glimpses of that glorious immortality, brought to light in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Instead of relaxing the cords of superstition and conducting them into a wider space and greater freedom, it only drew them the more closely, and chained them down to a heavier burden of idolatrous rites than they or their fathers had ever known. Knowing this to

be the case, we are not surprised that this corrupted religion found no permanent lodgment in their hearts, and produced so few beneficial changes in the state of society.

The fact that the people occasionally showed great zeal for the outward observances of their adopted religion, is no proof whatever that they ever possessed any sincere attachment for it, or that they had in the least relaxed their hold upon the old. It was their interest, or they thought it their interest, to make a display of zeal. It was important for them to enjoy the favor of the missionaries, and they had no fears that their own religion would be contaminated by contact with Romanism, and no danger of its being lost from occupying a subordinate or less conspicuous position. If they showed all due reverence for the rites and ceremonies of the Romish church in the presence of the missionaries, they were not less punctilious in performing the rites of their own, in their absence. As but few of the missionaries ever made themselves acquainted with the language of the country, the natives had special advantages for playing off this double game. If the missionaries had studied the character of the people more thoroughly, and adapted their instruction to their wants, instead of endeavoring to make everything bend to the lifeless and frigid demands of Romanism, the probability is that they would have done them real good, and would not themselves have been so easily duped by their dissimulation. The natives were perfectly aware of their ignorance in this respect, and they did not hesitate to turn it to good account, in acting out one of the most remarkable farces that has ever been recorded. It cost them no effort to appear easy and natural in a character foreign to their own — to maintain their own private views and principles inviolate in strict consistency with the outward exhibition of views and principles of the very opposite character — in other words, to appear to be zealous Roman Catholics, when in reality they were but the most besotted pagans on the face of the earth. The missionaries themselves seem occasionally to have had some misgivings about the sincerity of their converts; they repeatedly expressed apprehensions that they might, at some time, revert to the pagan worship of their forefathers.

The attempt which they made to brace up their authority and enforce the demands of Romanism, by practising upon the credulity of the people, did not tend materially to avert this dreaded result. They naturally supposed they were in possession of a field wonderfully promising for the exercise of miraculous powers. What they could not effect by the bare exercise of authority, or by the ordinary powers

of persuasion, they hoped to accomplish by the exercise of their pretended miraculous gifts; and great were the marvels they performed in this hidden corner of the world. Devils fled at their approach; trees withered away under their rebuke; the rains descended or held back as they wished; sorcerers fell down dead at their feet in consequence of taking a false oath upon the mass book; if a comet appeared in the heavens, it was there in obedience to their call, and all were threatened with immediate destruction who would not obey the priests; if the small pox made its appearance among the people, it was sent to chastise the obstinacy of their chiefs, and great would be the clamor if they did not at once perform the appointed penance. If the eloquence of a holy father was insufficient to draw tears from the eyes of his audience or wring from them expressions of sorrow for their sins, a curtain is suddenly drawn aside and an image of the virgin in *relievo*, with a dagger thrust through her breast, is revealed to their wondering gaze.

These things, doubtless, had a momentary effect upon the minds of the people, but they exerted no lasting influence. The missionaries forgot that the sorcerers, whom they persecuted with so much virulence, not only pretended to work the same kind of miracles, but others so much more wonderful, that their own would appear exceedingly tame by the side of them, and at the same time supported by proofs quite as good as any that the missionaries could adduce. In fact, the imagination is such a predominant element in the mental constitution of the negro, that he cares very little about proofs in such matters; he will more readily accredit a pretended miracle by one of his own countrymen, provided only that it is sufficiently gorgeous to suit his taste, than he would one by the missionaries, which must always have some decent reference to credibility and truth.

The negro feels, that in energy of character, in scope of understanding, in the exercise of mechanical skill, and in the practice of all the useful arts of life, he is hopelessly distanced by the white man. Any suggestions of rivalry here never fail to provoke his unbounded mirth. But whenever you enter the precincts of the unknown and the mysterious, the realms where the imagination alone can travel, there is no place where he feels more at home, and the endless variety of fantastic images which he brings forth from these mysterious regions, shows that here he has no rival. The missionaries, therefore, when they addressed themselves to the task of working miracles, little knew how egregiously they were to be outstripped; and perhaps they could not possibly have adopted any



course that would more certainly bring themselves and their religion into contempt.

But notwithstanding the multiplied ceremonies imposed upon the people of Congo by the church of Rome, for a time and to a certain extent, they did not feel it to be burdensome. So long as its requirements were confined to the ordinance of baptism, to saying the rosary, wearing crucifixes and doing trivial acts of penance, they submitted to it without any symptoms of serious discontent. But in the course of time, when the missionaries set themselves more earnestly to work to root out all traces of the old religion; when they commenced a more vigorous persecution of the priests of that religion; and above all, when they determined to abolish polygamy throughout the land, they assailed heathenism in its strong hold, and aroused hatred and opposition which astounded themselves. In this emergency, when priestly authority and miraculous gifts were of no more avail, they had recourse for aid to the civil arm, that never-failing resource of Rome. And this they could command without any difficulty. The king and the chiefs, who were indebted to the missionaries for alms and all the power they possessed, could well afford to exert that power in enforcing the commands of the church. The missionaries could any time pledge the assistance of the king of Portugal to maintain them in authority, and it was as little as they could do in turn to support the spiritual authority of the missionary fathers. And from the moment the missionaries had recourse to the civil arm for aid, they threw aside every other means of promoting the interests of religion. The severest laws were enacted against polygamy; the old pagan religion, in all its forms and details, was declared illegal, and the heaviest penalties denounced against all who were known to participate in celebrating its rites; sorcerers and wizards, by whom were meant the priests of the pagan religion, were declared outlaws; at first the penalty denounced against them was decapitation or the flames, but it was afterwards commuted to foreign slavery. For a time the missionaries entrusted the execution of the laws to the king and his chiefs. But if they showed the least dilatoriness or reluctance to punish their subjects, they took the law into their own hands and administered it with unsparing severity. The count of Sogno was required on one occasion, as an act of penance, to compel three hundred of his subjects to be married after the Christian manner; and it is mentioned as a proof of the sincerity of his piety, as well as the excellence of the ordinance, that he became so zealous in the cause of the church, that he did not stop until he had compelled six

hundred. Corporeal punishment was the favorite instrument of discipline, and it was administered without restraint. The slightest deviation from the prescribed rules of the church was punished by public flogging, and it was not uncommon for females, and even mothers, to be stripped and whipped in public. Sometimes these castigations were inflicted by the missionaries themselves. Father Merolla relates with no little glee, how he had once belabored a wizard with the *cord of his order*, calling upon St. Michael and all the rest of the saints to participate in the sport. He mentions the case of a Father Superior who had boxed the ears of one of the magnates of the land for having expressed some doubts about the efficacy of baptismal regeneration. This had nearly proved a serious matter, however, and it required all the sophistry that Merolla could command, to convince the chief that it had been done in love, and was intended only to rescue him from the snares of the devil.

These acts of tyranny could not fail to awaken hatred and resentment in the minds of the people against their religious teachers, and especially so, as it was done to enforce the observance of a religion for which they felt no attachment. These wrongs were endured, however, with wonderful forbearance, so long as it was apparent that the authority of the missionaries could not be resisted with impunity. But as soon as it became manifest that Portugal could no longer interfere with the internal affairs of the kingdom, the true state of feeling, both among the chiefs and the common people, began to show itself; and it was not long before the tide of persecution began to set in the opposite direction. The count of Sogno was among the first to resent the indignities that had been heaped upon him, by persecuting the missionaries in the most shameless manner. The common people revenged themselves in several instances by abandoning the missionaries, with whom they were travelling, in the gloomiest woods, with the expectation that they would be devoured by wild beasts. In several instances of severe sickness, the people refused to let them have anything that would administer to their relief. In the province of Bamba, once one of the strongest holds of Christianity, six Capuchin missionaries were poisoned at one time; and an unsuccessful attempt of the same kind was made upon the life of another missionary who was sent there to get the effects of the deceased brethren. Philip da Salesia, another of the missionary brotherhood, fell into the hands of banditti in the character of sorcerers, and by them was killed and devoured. Father Joseph Mariæ da Sestu was poisoned, and Merolla himself was brought to the verge of the grave in the same

way. Indeed, the apprehensions of the missionaries became so much excited in this way, that they seldom travelled without having an antidote for poison. And it was not long before they had to abandon travelling altogether and confine themselves to a few localities where the people were more friendly. Ultimately they had to leave the country altogether, and we need be at no loss to account for the almost simultaneous disappearance of all the religion they had propagated in that country. We have no certain information of the process by which it ceased to be the religion of the country. It is not probable, however, that it was abolished in any of the provinces by a formal enactment of government. It is pretty certain that it did not require the force of a political revolution to overturn it. It is quite as improbable that it was rooted out by persecution, for there were none that loved it enough to be persecuted for its sake. We can only compare it to a magnificent edifice that fell to pieces because it had no foundation upon which to rest; or to a beautiful exotic that withered away because it had taken no root in the soil of the country.

---

## ARTICLE VI.

### THE THEOLOGY OF RICHARD BAXTER.

By George P. Fisher, Resident Licentiate, Andover.

No one of the eminent English divines of the seventeenth century is more widely known than Richard Baxter. There are many who prize the accuracy and learning of Owen, and many who admire the calm strength and fertile imagination of John Howe; while dissenters as well as churchmen render homage to the genius of South, of Barrow and of Jeremy Taylor. But neither of these, and indeed few of the illustrious persons of that age, prolific of great men, can claim a reputation so extensive as that of the Pastor of Kidderminster. And yet it is not as a theologian that Baxter is chiefly known. He is least indebted for his reputation to those works on which he most relied for fame. The volumes which are the fruits of his most severe toil and were written "chiefly for posterity," repose, in dust and