

science and civilization. I have already referred to the leading agents in the reformation from Popery. But there were other reformations and improvements that demanded and secured appropriate instruments. It is interesting to observe how the art of printing sprang up just at the right moment — at a time when the human mind was waking up from its long slumber. But its advancement must have been arrested soon, had not some one discovered — what it is said was known much earlier in China, viz. — how to print upon wooden blocks. Who the individual was that first brought out this happy thought, or rather applied it experimentally, it may not be possible to decide. But it was so rapidly improved that the original inventor was forgotten, and at least three German cities contend for the honor. The main point, however, which I wish now to present before you is the fact that these discoveries were made just at that juncture in human affairs when they were indispensable to bring on a high state of civilization.

In order to advance the same object, and others collateral with it, the time had now arrived when it was desirable that a new continent should be brought to light. But the great mass of men, even the highly enlightened, were ready to regard the suggestion that such a continent existed as a mere quixotic dream. To breast this strong current of popular opinion and feeling, it needed most extraordinary qualifications. But they appeared in Columbus. So strong was the principle of faith in his mental constitution, that he trusted even in a false theory — I mean his notion that there must be a western continent to counterbalance the eastern. He believed in this so firmly that he was borne through almost insuperable difficulties and dangers to an ultimate triumph — just as, in some parts of mathematics, an erroneous supposition leads to the