

ARTICLE V.

THE PROGRESS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM IN ITS RELATION
TO THE SPIRIT OF THE PRESENT AGE.

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THE present age is scientific, and disinclined to acknowledge the supernatural. It is rationalistic, rather than believing; self-sufficient in the pride of virtue, rather than humble in the sense of sin; philanthropic, rather than spiritual; utilitarian and realistic, rather than sensitive to sentiment and enthusiasm. I propose to consider the progress of Christ's kingdom in relation to the characteristics of this age.

I premise that Christianity comes to every generation as new as to the first generation to which it came. When the mother tells the story of Jesus to her child, the wondrous story is as new to that child as to those to whom it was told in the days of Paul. It comes anew to every generation and to every man, a message fresh from heaven, and every one must consider it and receive or reject it for himself.

I premise, also, that Christianity remains unchanged. It is always God's love redeeming men from sin through the humiliation, death, resurrection, ascension, and continued reign and intercession of Christ, and the abiding presence and work of the Holy Spirit. As such, by the lapse of ages it never grows old. It rises on generation after generation, as day after day the morning rises in dewy freshness on the awakening world, and as night after night the evening reveals the unchanging glory of the starry sky. In these respects, one generation has no advantage over another.

Each generation has peculiarities which present peculiar obstacles to the gospel. We have no reason to believe that the peculiarities of this age are more formidable obstacles

than those of other ages. A careful study of the age of Luther or of Paul would exemplify this.

The general principle underlying the discussion is this: Christianity can prevail in any age, only as it meets the thought and life of that age. It must meet and satisfy the *thinking* of men respecting the problems of human life and destiny, and give repose to their intellects. It must meet the *life* of men, and give light, peace, wisdom, and strength for the work, the suffering, and the wants of the time. To have met and satisfied the thought and life of a previous age avails nothing to meeting and satisfying the thought and life of this generation. The manna which came down from heaven yesterday will nourish no soul to-day. Christianity must meet, help, and save men in the conditions and necessities of the age in which they are.

Two thoughts are involved in this general principle. The first is: It is *Christianity* which is to meet the thought and life of the age, not something substituted for Christianity. The second is: *Christianity must meet the thought and life of the age.* In the first, we have that which is permanent in Christianity; in the second, that which is transient.

The first of those thoughts is important, as meeting an existing danger. Whatever the thought and life of the age which Christianity is to meet, it is not by preaching progress, reform, and civilization that the work is to be done, but by preaching Christianity in its application to these. The "New Timothy" is not a sensationalist preaching to the times, but also preaching the times; he is a Christian preaching to the times, but preaching Christ and him crucified. This is the permanent in Christianity—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Through the confusion of the time, and all its diversified action and interest, always resounds the grand message of sin and redemption, as at the sea-side, through all the coming and going, the clatter and confusion of frivolity, passion, and business, resounds always the solemn roar of the ocean.

If this thought is allowed to lose its prominence, and the

permanent in Christianity is forgotten, the very attempt to apply Christianity to the times becomes fruitful in error and corruption. Men, in their eagerness to preach to the times, present what is of man and his conditions to save men, till they substitute the ethics and wit of the popular lecture for the gospel of Christ. Or they mistake the transient for the permanent, and insist that the peculiar prominence necessarily given to a particular Christian truth in one age, must be maintained in the next; that the peculiar application of Christianity needed in one age, and perhaps the very errors which incidentally accompanied it, must be carried over to another age when no such application is needed; and that the philosophies and speculations of one age be inculcated as permanent truth in the next; and so the church is compelled to stand dozing and ruminant on the thought and life of the past.

Reform and progress are always by going back to Christ, taking the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in him, and applying them fresh to the existing life. So he commands: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." We study the preceding ages only as helps to a better knowledge of Christ, and to a wiser and fuller application of his gospel to the exigencies of our time.

The second thought involved in the principle is as really important. Christianity must *meet the thinking and life of each age*. Christianity must be known experimentally. We must take Christ's yoke, in order to learn of him. We must be willing to do his will, in order to know the doctrine. Every one must both receive the truth as it is in Jesus, and not as it has been in other men, and receive it in his own experience and its adaptation to his own wants, and not in the experience of others and its adaptation to their wants. The food which one has eaten is necessarily excrementitious to another. The conditions and wants of different individuals and successive generations are varying and transient, and the applications of Christian truths to varying and transient conditions are varying and transient, though the

truth remains unchanged. In order to preserve the doctrinal purity of Christianity in the thinking of any age, and its power in the life, it must meet the thinking and life of that age. Christianity must bring the same unchanging Christian truth; but it must bring it not as Athanasius thought it for his day, nor as Augustine thought it for his day, nor as Thomas à Kempis, Calvin, and Edwards thought it respectively for theirs, but in the channels and methods of modern thought, and touching the topics on which modern thought is occupied. The Christian life produced is not the life of the ancient hermits and monks, nor of Calvin at Geneva, nor of the Puritans of the seventeenth century, nor of the Methodists of the eighteenth. It is the life of this age transfigured by Christian faith and love.

I proceed to consider the application of this principle to the thinking and life of this age. Time will permit, however, to consider only some of the characteristics of the age, and how Christianity is to meet them.

I. The Alleged Deficiency of this Age in Religious Susceptibility.

1. There are two types of thought on religious subjects. Paul selects the Jew and the Greek as their respective representatives: "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom."

In the type of mind of which the Jew is the representative, the intuitive or faith faculty predominates over the logical, and the mind is awed in the presence of the unseen, the incomprehensible, and the infinite; the moral predominates over the speculative and scientific, and the man is awed before the divine law, crushed with the sense of guilt and the expectation of punishment, terrified before the inexorable Judge to whom he must give account of every secret of his life. From these impressions with which his soul trembles, he passes to believe the reality of the infinite and the unseen, as easily as from impressions on the eye and ear he passes to believe the reality of the outward world. The world unseen

is real to him; he expects it to manifest itself supernaturally; he is prepared to hear voices from heaven, to see spirits and visions; miracles occasion no difficulty of belief; he regards them as the legitimate evidences of communications from the world unseen, and demands more. Nature itself he regards as a constant manifestation of the supernatural. It is God who thunders, who sends the wind and the rain.

The Jewish literature in the Old Testament contains little argument or speculative philosophy. It is mainly historical and prophetic pictures of God's action in history, with the legislation for a theocracy, with moral law, an order of worship, and devotional poetry.

In the Greek type of mind, on the contrary, the senses, the faculties of observation, and the logical powers predominate. Nature was so near to the Greek as to exclude the supernatural. His gods were the powers of nature personified. To the Jewish mind man is divine, and nature is for his use. The Hebrew literature opens with the sublime proclamation that man is above nature, appointed to possess and use its resources and powers. The thinking of the Greek scarcely rises to this grand conception. To him nature is divine, and man is its servant and worshipper. His thinking is a philosophy, elaborating by logical processes a system of the universe — starting, sometimes, with fire or water or some material principle. In this type of mind the aesthetic element predominates over the moral; the sense of beauty displaces the sense of obligation; and joy in the present displaces the sense of what ought to be, the consciousness of sin, and the foreboding of judgment. To this type of mind nature is all-sufficient. Miracles, instead of being helps to faith, are themselves its greatest difficulties. Accordingly, in the education of the race, the Greek has contributed philosophical inquiry and scepticism, logic, art, and, if not physical science, the type of thought from which science comes.

2. Christianity is to meet both of these types of thought, and to develop a higher type, in which both co-exist in completeness and harmony.

The characteristics of each type are found in all minds. The type is characterized not by the exclusion of either, but by the predominance of one. Complete culture must take up and develop both in the same age and the same mind.

It is not true that the Jewish type belongs to the earlier stages of progress, and the Greek type to the later. The Jewish type is as high an order of mental culture as the Greek. Comte's hypothesis, that it is an infantile condition which the race necessarily outgrows, is contrary both to philosophy and to fact. The characteristics of the Jewish type are in all ages necessary to the highest development of mind, and to the completeness and harmony of human thought. They rest intellectually on those faculties of intuition and faith which are involved in and underlie all intellectual action, without which thought withers into words and reality fades into phenomenality; without which nothing can be explained in its rational ground, law, and end; the questions which reason necessarily asks it is unscientific to propound; the deepest wants of the human soul remain forever unsatisfied, and their existence without significance or explanation. Christianity offers a culture which takes up and develops both of these types. This is the explicit assertion of Paul—not that Christianity sets aside the demand of the Jew for signs, nor the quest of the Greek for wisdom, but that it meets and satisfies both. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jew a stumbling-block and to the Greek foolishness, so long as they reject him; but to all who receive him, whether Jew or Greek, Christ, the power of God satisfying the Jewish type of thought, and the wisdom of God satisfying the Greek.

3. In this age, which is commonly characterized as rationalistic and scientific, and supposed to belong exclusively to the Greek type of thought, the Jewish type survives, and the power of the world to come is felt. We multiply the evidences of Christianity, as if its continuance depended on logical proof. But it is a significant fact that the other religions of the world have been originated and sustained

without any discussion of their evidences. They address the spiritual capacity and wants of the soul, and they are received, and are believed, till they degenerate, and are superseded by some other religion more completely satisfying the spiritual intuitions and sentiments. As the strings of a viol respond with music to the touch of the bow, the spiritual in man responds to the presentation of spiritual realities. The basis of religious faith is in the constitution of man. When atheism sweeps away religious belief, as in the French Revolution, presently it re-appears, as verdure springs up spontaneously on burnt land.

This susceptibility exists in the nineteenth century, as really as in the first; for it is inseparable from the human soul. To this, in preaching, we safely address ourselves. Mere argument cannot bring men to Christ. By its very processes, dissecting the living body of spiritual truth, it deprives it of its power. It is the presentation of spiritual reality to the soul which moves it. The law of God burning on the conscience, God's redeeming love in Christ, the beauty of Christ's character — these and the like realities constitute the power of the world unseen, which every human soul must feel, if clearly before the mental vision.

In this so-called rationalistic and sceptical age, we find even the very error of the Jewish type of thought, the insatiable demand for sensible manifestations of the spiritual world. The belief in spiritual rappings is proof; meriting the indignant words of Professor Ferrier: "Oh ye miserable mystics, when will ye know that all God's truths and all man's blessings lie in the broad health, in the trodden ways, and in the laughing sunshine of the universe; and that all intellect, all genius is merely the power of seeing wonders in common things."¹

Thus, even in this age, there is occasion for our Saviour's rebuke of those who sought of him a sign: There shall no sign be given them, but the great facts which Jonah typified — the death, the resurrection, and ascension of our Lord.

¹ Institutes of Metaphysics, p. 225.

If this age be compared with the first centuries of the Christian era, — with their Epicureanism, Gnosticism, and New Platonism, — it will be apparent that its rationalism and scepticism are at least not more formidable hinderances to faith than the rationalism of those centuries of Christian triumph.

II. This Age is characterized by the Spirit of Free Inquiry, and by Love of the Truth, as distinguished from Religious Faith.

1. In the outset, I must point out the inadequacy of this spirit of free inquiry to realize the highest results. Freedom of inquiry and love of the truth are conditions of thought, not principles of action. The attitude of inquiry is an attitude of weakness. It implies uncertainty, doubt, therefore irresolution, inaction, inefficiency. The action of the soul must be internal to resolve its own doubts and answer its own questions. It wears itself out in inward friction. Such were Sterling and James Blanco White, passing from one belief to another, unable to rest in any; the whole action of life like that of a man lost in a dismal swamp, leaping from one shaking tussock to another, unable to stay his foot on any, and sinking at last in the smothering quagmire. So Paul describes the Greek as seeking wisdom, rather than finding it — “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” On the contrary, action, energy, power come from faith. Men do not go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, they do not rebuke wickedness nor demand the reform of abuses and the removal of oppression, merely as inquirers after truth. A missionary does not go to the heathen as an inquirer, as ready to receive Brahma as Jesus, and the Vedas as the Bible. The very idea of prophet and apostle, of missionary and reformer, implies intense, overmastering faith. When Lecky and writers of his school exalt the spirit of inquiry above faith, they take a position which would make scepticism universal, as the highest condition of human thought, would make missionaries, reformers,

martyrs, and prophets impossible, and condemn mankind always to inquire and never to believe.

But it is not possible for man to remain a mere inquirer. Scepticism in its primitive and philosophical sense, as the spirit of inquiry and investigation, must either lead to established belief, or else pass over into scepticism in its bad sense, as the spirit of denial. It begins to dogmatize. And when it begins to dogmatize, it ceases to be scepticism in the philosophical sense; it becomes dogmatic and arrogant; it demands that its negations be received as knowledge; it transforms its questions into negations, and then its negations into affirmations, and propounds as positive knowledge the proposition that knowledge is impossible. One of the French Encyclopaedists said: "I am as sure that there is no God in heaven as I am that Homer is a fool." Of such Jacobi said: "They believe that their opinibn is reason, and that reason is their opinion."

In its further development, the spirit of inquiry becomes irreverent, revolutionary, and destructive. The anatomist cannot reverence the body which he dissects. The inquirer gradually comes to regard everything as only an object of inquiry, therefore to be questioned, analyzed, dissected. Hence the spirit of inquiry becomes revolutionary and destructive. It accepts nothing as established. It doubts if the old can be true. It becomes arrogant, coarse, and terrible; saying, as did the French Revolutionists: "With the guts of the last priest we will strangle the last king."

2. Free inquiry and the love of the truth presuppose the reality of truth and the possibility of knowing it. They are, therefore, consistent with faith, not destructive of it. It is only when inquiry, which is a condition of the enlargement of knowledge, is exalted into the essence of knowledge, and scepticism becomes dogmatic, that it is in antagonism to faith. After the investigations of ages, it may be assumed that some truths are established, and are no longer open to doubt. The human mind, being in its nature knowing, may be assumed to know something beyond the possibility of

question. It is a total misconception of free inquiry to suppose that it implies an abiding indifference to opinion and an equal readiness to believe every proposition. On the contrary, free inquiry presupposes the possibility of knowledge, and is compatible with belief of a truth so strong as to make the believer willing to die for it.

3. Christianity does not acknowledge the love of the truth as the ruling principle of action. Life does not culminate in thought, but in action. Man's business is not to seek after wisdom, but to do the work of love. The love of truth is a ruling principle of investigation, not the supreme law of action. Christianity presents as the supreme law, love to persons, — to God and man, — not love to truth.

Bacon consecrated scientific investigation to the uses of man. From this consecration naturally followed the adoption of the right methods of investigation and the largest scientific discoveries. This is in accordance with Christianity. The love of truth is subordinate to the love of God and man; and this subordination is essential to insure the right methods of investigation, the largest knowledge of truth, and its most effective application.

Rationalism presents the love of the truth as the pre-eminent and ruling principle of all action. The evils resulting have been indicated. Candor, exalted to independence and supremacy, becomes an equal indifference to all doctrines, degenerates into *persiflage*, and at last into dogmatic denial. If a Christian exalts the love of truth to supremacy, the results, though analogous, are different. By his exaltation of the love of the truth, he accepts the principle of the rationalist; but, since he is a confirmed believer of the truth, his zeal for the truth is exalted above his love to God and man; and his danger is of bigotry and intolerance — of becoming even an inquisitor and a persecutor — of sacrificing the man needing salvation in zeal for the truth, instead of using the truth in the supremacy of love to save the man. There is danger, also, that he gradually substitute zeal for opinion instead of zeal for truth; and thus,

while the exaltation of the love of the truth degenerates in the rationalist into destructive denial, it degenerates in the Christian into persecuting and destructive intolerance. The subordination of the love of truth to the love of Christ and of all for whom Christ died is the security at once against the belief of error and intolerance in zeal for truth. He who most loves like Christ will most think like him.

4. Free inquiry and love of the truth, when acknowledged as conditions of investigation which imply the reality of knowledge and faith, and which are subordinate to love, are accepted by Christianity, and are auxiliary to its progress. The mind is delivered from the enforcement of opinion and the oppression of authority, and aroused to its most vigorous action. Opportunity is given for the detection and removal of errors and abuses, and the ground is prepared to receive new seed and to bear new harvests of Christian truth. Candor and docility prepare for a consideration and acceptance of the claims of the gospel. The critical scrutiny of all arguments demonstrates anew all Christian truth that abides it. The Christian believer himself receives truth not blindly and traditionally, but on conviction; he is better able to defend it; he is more in sympathy with others who find difficulty in believing; he does not denounce doubt as a sin, nor quench the smoking flax. The very process of argument and rationalistic speculation brings the church back to the simplicity that is in Christ, brings anew into prominence the spiritual part of our nature on which Christian faith rests, and enables us to appreciate the meaning of the Saviour's blessing on those who have not seen, and yet have believed.

5. The quest after wisdom which characterizes this age will ultimate in the recognition of the true rationalism which Christianity carries in it. In other words, this type of mind will find its complete satisfaction and rest in Christianity itself.

Christianity teaches that, whatever may be known by reason, that is not sufficient to save man from sin, but that

he also needs the redemption wrought by God through Christ and the Holy Spirit. It finds this fact of redemption to be accordant with reason. It finds in it the rational solution of man's condition and destiny, which without this fact is impossible. It finds in it the only complete and satisfactory philosophy of history. The unbelieving rationalism is irrational in assuming the sufficiency of human reason to save man from sin. It therefore necessarily ceases to be a religion, and degenerates into an unbelieving philosophy. But I affirm that the facts of Christianity are the data for interpreting and vindicating to the reason the phenomena of man's moral and spiritual life. Ultimately this interpretation and vindication will be complete. Ultimately, it may be after long struggles, Christ will become the Saviour from intellectual perplexity and doubt, not less than from sin. He is 'the rest for the intellect, not less than for the heart.

Christianity, therefore, is to meet the quest for wisdom by satisfying it. Because man is rational, he must interpret and vindicate to his reason the facts of his moral and spiritual being. Rationalism cannot be put out of the way by being suppressed. To suppress inquiries of this sort would be to suppress reason itself. We can meet the rationalistic spirit of the day only as we show that "in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" — that "he is made unto us wisdom," as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

This process is far from complete; but it has advanced far enough to exemplify its nature. Science, by its speculations on force, admits what necessitates the admission of a First Cause of force; and thus the last word of science is the first word of theology. Christianity, in the doctrine of a personal God whose will is the source of all power, gives the complete reality which science obscurely intimates. Science insists on law, and tends to establish a uniformity of necessity. But Christianity recognizes a moral order, a uniformity of perfect reason and perfect love, as complete as

the uniformity and order of necessity. The action of nature is the power of will expressing evermore the thoughts of reason and the purposes of love. And this alone meets the true scientific idea of order and law; for blind necessity is but another name for chance, and gives no rational principle of order nor basis for either its universality or perpetuity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is acknowledged by some who do not accept it as an article of religious faith, as satisfying as no other doctrine does the necessities of the most profound philosophical thought respecting the being and personality of God.

In the atonement we find the fact which alone can harmonize immutable morality with divine mercy, and set forth as elements of one all-embracing love the mercy that pardons and the justice that condemns.

In the incarnation we have an entrance of God into human history and relations — a union of God and man which all religious thought of the East and of the West has known as necessary to the realization of religion, and in different directions has groped to find.¹

In the fact of Christ's kingdom on the earth, we have the principles which underlie all human progress and the realization of the social well-being and complete civilization of man. Christianity, lovingly studied, reveals within itself the true philosophy on which modern thought must rest, and by which modern civilization must advance.

Thus philosophy itself, rightly understood, becomes the ally of Christianity. In the words of Lord Bacon: "*Philosophia obiter libata abducit a Deo, penitus hausta reducit ad eundem.*" Thus Christianity is at last received as satisfying the reason, as well as renewing the heart, both by philosophy and by faith, as Augustine enthusiastically exclaims: "*Certissima scientia et clamante conscientia.*"

III. This Age is characterized by Positiveness and Vastness of Scientific Knowledge.

There is no antagonism of science to religion, so long as

¹ See Dorner's *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*; the Introduction.

science defines its sphere to be the observation of phenomena, their classification by common characteristics, and the determination of their uniform sequences, and does not dogmatically deny the reality of other knowledge. Philosophy is then distinguished from science, as the interpretation and justification of phenomena to the reason by showing their rational grounds, principles, laws, and ends; and philosophy and theology are both acknowledged as legitimate spheres of thought. But when science denies that any knowledge is possible, except of phenomena of nature and their common characteristics and uniform sequences, it becomes dogmatic unbelief, and stands in direct antagonism to Christianity. It must then be opposed as error, and exposed as, in the name of science, denying and repudiating reason itself. In this attitude science is opposed to the Greek quest for wisdom, not less than to the Jewish demand for signs.

It is thought that the vastness of human knowledge overpowers faith. But, in reality, the greatness of the universe is not so much its bigness as its varied manifestations of mind. The three-storied or seven-storied heaven of the Jew, with the throne of God above it and the love of God filling it, and redemption wrought in it, and earth beneath it opening out into the grandeurs of immortality, is a grander universe than the immeasurable masses and spaces of Astronomy, in which no God is, no love reigns, and only unconscious force acts under blind necessity evermore.

And, so long as science remains within its distinct sphere, the enlargement of scientific knowledge does not hinder faith. It was a great enlargement of knowledge when the Copernican system of Astronomy was received; yet it neither magnified nor lessened the creations of mind. The works of Homer and Virgil remained the same. The ideas of God, of sin, of redemption, remained unchanged. The increase of scientific knowledge may even be a help to faith. Faith feeds itself on all knowledge, manifesting in new aspects the wisdom and love of God. It expatiates through the vast distances of the universe in wonder and adoration. At the

same time, innumerable puerilities, which once crept into the place of the true objects of faith, and degraded the soul, instead of elevating it, are swept away. The wonder of knowledge is greater than the wonder of ignorance, and a greater help to faith.

IV. The Age is Realistic and practical, as opposed both to Philosophical Inquiry and to Sentiment and Enthusiasm.

Even this presents advantages to Christianity. Thought for the sole end of seeking truth, with no reference to its uses, is liable to degenerate into verbiage or frivolousness or intolerance. Zeal for truth is never safe, except when vitalized and controlled by love to God and man.

The great objection to the practical character of modern thought is that it concerns itself mainly with material interests. But, even so, it is better than merely speculative inquiry, with no reference to the welfare of man.

It is not true, however, that the age is occupied exclusively with material interests. The great questions which agitate modern society are largely moral and religious. And, however realistic the age may be, it is certain that this century has witnessed as marked instances of the uprising of whole peoples in enthusiasm for ideas as were ever witnessed in the "ages of faith."

We differ, to our advantage, from the primitive churches in this, that they had Christian ideas to create in the midst of heathenish corruption, in which the very ideas of Christian purity, of philanthropy, of human rights and brotherhood were wanting. But now many of the great principles of Christianity are generally accepted and practically applied; they are axioms of reform and of social progress, and powers in civilization. Especially all thinking and all great movements which lay hold of the heart of the people, take on a philanthropic character.

In such an age Christianity has an eminent advantage in its beneficent character, as the redemption of the world from sin. And so far as the age is realistic and practical, it

meets its thinking and its wants by the manifestation of its quickening and saving power. And if each successive age of the Christian era has had some specific doctrine of Christianity to develop, that which is given to this generation to study and unfold is the Christian doctrine of Christ's kingdom as the reign of righteousness and love over all the earth in the life and civilization of men.

V. It remains to consider the Industrial and Social Condition of Christendom in its Relations to the Progress of Christ's Kingdom.

Time permits, however, but a glance at this great subject.

Through the art of printing each age has all the ages past in its presence, and is instructed both by their failures and their successes. The progress of Christ's kingdom, therefore, need no longer be lineal, partial, and one-sided, but rounded and complete. Christianity, instructed by the life of the past, may be expected to become broader and more complete in doctrine, character, and life.

Through commerce and the facilities of intercommunication the existing nations live in the presence of each other, and by travel and emigration the peoples are interfused. The time is past when the nations were in ignorance of each other; when their natural relations were those of enmity; when the thought and life of one nation had no influence on another; and progress in one locality was without effect elsewhere. The earth is practically smaller, its countries nearer together, its nations in constant communication, serving each other by their industry. Whatever effects a change at one point extends its influence to all. For these reasons and by the necessities of industry and commerce, the nations are coming to recognize that they are members of one family. The idea of nations confederated to preserve universal peace and to secure the common welfare has ceased to be chimerical; has become already a possibility, the realization of which, not the enthusiasm of Christian love only, but the wisdom of sound statesmanship predicts. And

the settlement of the great questions which divide the nations is more and more sought and attained by peaceful methods, and made in the interest of the peoples and not of the dynasties.

The Christian nations are characterized by energy, progressiveness, and expansiveness. The close connection of the nations brings this superiority home to the heathen and Mohammedan nations and makes it a constant influence upon them. Idolatry cannot live by the side of steam-engines and telegraphs.

These characteristics also distinguish Protestant nations from Catholic. They seem always to be most marked where Christianity is purest and most effective. The most christianized nations are those which are gaining the preponderating influence in Christendom. Particularly noticeable is the spread of the English speaking race, and the immense extent of the world's surface in which that language is spoken. De Tocqueville, speaking of the spread of the English-speaking people in America, says: "This gradual and continued progress of the race towards the Rocky Mountains has the solemnity of a providential event; it is like a deluge of men rising unabatedly and driven by the hand of God. . . . This is a fact new to the world, a fact fraught with such portentous consequences as to baffle the efforts even of the imagination." To this must now be added other immense regions in which the English language is spoken. A wonderful contrast this to the anticipations cherished not very long ago. Lord Bacon published his great works in Latin, saying that "English would bankrupt all our books." And Alexander Pope in his preface to an edition of his poems, contrasts the limited use of English with the universal use of Greek and Latin: "They writ in languages that became universal and everlasting, while ours are exceedingly limited both in extent and duration. A mighty foundation for our pride! when the utmost we can hope is to be read in one island, and to be thrown aside at the end of one age."

God has always acted by chosen peoples. To the English-speaking people more than to any other the world is now indebted for the propagation of Christian ideas and Christian civilization. It is a remarkable fact in this day that the thinking of the world is done by the Christian nations; that the enterprise and energy of the world are mainly theirs. They alone are colonizing, and by their commerce and enterprise pushing their influence throughout the world. So also the political condition of the Protestant nations is that of constitutional government, popular education, and a growing regard for the rights and welfare of the people.

These are conditions more favorable to the advancement of Christ's kingdom than have ever before existed. And in view of both the thinking and the practical life and character of the age, I believe that no preceding age has presented conditions so favorable to the advancement of Christ's kingdom and so encouraging to faithful Christian effort.