

ARTICLE IV.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROWTH OF CHRIST'S
KINGDOM.

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THE progress of Christ's kingdom is *extensive*, so far as it gains new converts and Christianizes new peoples; it is *intensive*, so far as it advances the sanctification of its converts, and develops a higher type of piety and a more Christian civilization. Some characteristics of this progress will now be considered.

I. It is Spiritual.

It is spiritual in the sense that it is the work of God's Spirit. God's redeeming love is not merely a bland accessibility if any choose to seek him — a mild rainbow over his throne, encouraging any who venture to brave the darkness and clouds that are round about him. It is an energy of redeeming grace, the Spirit of holiness, working in human history, enlightening, striving, life-giving, reproving, comforting. The progress of the kingdom is the constant product and manifestation of the ever-present and prevailing energy of the Holy Spirit.

It is spiritual, also, in the sense that it is the progress of spiritual life in men — the life of faith and love that centres on Christ and his cross.

Hence, so far as man's agency is concerned, the progress of the kingdom is by action in faith; and the life of faith is a life of inspiration and enthusiasm, rather than of prudence and calculation. The believer has courage to attempt whatever God has had grace to promise. In the words of Bishop Hall: "Faith is never so glorious as when she hath most opposition, and will not see it. Reason looks ever to the

means ; faith, to the end ; and, instead of consulting how to effect, resolves what shall be effected." The very obstacles become a stimulus to effort : " I will tarry at Ephesus ; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are many adversaries.*"

II. The Progress of the Kingdom is by the Instrumentality of the Gospel.

It is the historical gospel of redemption through Christ and the Holy Spirit, as distinguished from abstract truth. " I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Rationalism treats Christianity, which is a divine action redeeming men from sin, as if it were only a process of thought ; as if its whole aim were the analysis and systemization of truth to the intellect. It regards historical Christianity as the lantern, not as the light, and breaks the lantern that the light may shine more clearly. The result is that the light is blown out. The gospel must indeed be apprehended by the intellect. It presupposes the truths of religion and morals which men may know without revelation. Man, as a rational being, must interpret the facts of the gospel, and define their significance to his intellect ; must harmonize them with the truths of natural religion, with the principles of reason, and with all knowledge. This produces theology, which is the gospel interpreted, analyzed, and systemized by and for the intellect. But the gospel does not terminate in the intellect, nor exist only as a process of thought. It is addressed to the heart. It is thought transformed into life. And it is only in its historical origin and influence that it is rightly understood. Christianity is like the sun, whose warmth and light are dependent on being held in the earth's atmosphere and reflected from its surface. To rise above the earth's atmosphere in order to get nearer to the sun is to lose his warmth and light. So philosophy, rising above the historical and human to come nearer to God, finds, in the dizzy heights of speculation, darkness and cold.

While, then, it is necessary to man, as a rational being, to define and interpret the gospel to the intellect and translate it into systematic theology, there is inherent in so doing the danger of falling into a rationalistic habit, and regarding Christianity as a philosophy. Especially should there be caution against this danger in theological seminaries, in which the student is necessarily occupied in defining, interpreting, vindicating, and systemizing the gospel to the intellect. There is danger that he come to be interested in the mere intellectual investigation of truth, rather than in Christianity as the power of life to sinners; that a *dilettanteism* of interest in philosophy and literature displace the earnestness of Christian interest in men and Christian zeal to bring sinners to Christ; or, in a different direction, that the spirit of controversy and the eagerness of theological discussion displace Christian love to men and interest in the minister's appropriate work of saving men from sin. There is danger, also, that the student be entangled and held powerless in his own speculations; so many are the questions suggested in defining, interpreting, and systemizing the facts of Christianity, and so severe and protracted the intellectual effort in the process, that they become associated in the student's mind with the facts of the gospel; and the life-giving truths come to his mind not in the freshness, simplicity, and power of the gospel, but as the nucleus of questions and difficulties, of metaphysical distinctions and nice adjustments of thought; and he is entangled and held fast in the bristling *chevaux-de-frise* which his thinking has constructed around every truth of the gospel. There is danger that he be rationalistic, regarding Christianity only as a process of thought, and finding its whole significance in the definition of truth to the intellect. So, also, the history of Christianity must be studied as a history of doctrine. But there is danger in so studying it that the student come to regard the determination of doctrine as the great work which Christianity has accomplished in the past, as the entire significance of its history. In one age it determined the doctrine of the Trinity; in

others, successively, the doctrines of sin, of atonement, of justification by faith, until, as an eminent living divine has said, there remains nothing to be determined by the church of the future but the Christian doctrine of the church itself. But the history of the church is not found merely in the history of doctrine, but also in ideals which in Christ have become powers in the world, in confessions and martyrdoms, in missions and charities, in self-denial and heroism, in Christian experience of penitence, faith, and love, in triumphs over death, in the progress of justice, and of Christian customs, laws, and institutions, in reformations and the growth of Christian civilization.

Accordingly, the gospel does not address itself merely to the intellect, and especially not to the observing, analyzing, and classifying faculties, which positive science exclusively addresses. It addresses itself to the faith, to the moral nature, to the spiritual necessities, aspirations, and intuitions. This Paul recognizes in his preaching: "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Jesus recognizes it: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." And the intimations of the moral and spiritual nature are as trustworthy as those of our observing and comparing faculties; for they are of the very core of our being; and if they are false, the whole being is vitiated with falsehood. There is, then, a philosophical basis for the answer of an unlettered candidate for the ministry, who, when asked at his examination for ordination: "What proof have you that Christ is divine?" answered, with tears: "Why, bless you, he has saved my soul." And if the keen definition and proof of truth by and to the intellect is separated from the knowledge and evidence of spiritual experience, and we are obliged to choose which of the two is the safer preparation for preaching the gospel, I should not hesitate to choose the latter: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

It follows that the effectual preaching of the gospel is more than the clear presentation of the truth from the intel-

lect to the intellect. Education is not only the impartation of knowledge and of intellectual discipline; it is also inspiration. And the effective preaching of the gospel is an inspiration to the hearer. But he who inspires another must live and breathe himself. All inspiration is vital. It is from the heart to the heart. The soul itself is the only vehicle which will convey spiritual truth from man to man. Even God, making his love a power in human history, brings it in a human soul. Preaching is not a mere intellectual process; it is not a mere thinking; it is an action — the action of the whole man on his fellowmen. Lecky notices “the extremely small influence of definite argument in determining the opinions either of an individual or of a nation.” It is faith, love, service, life, rather than argument, which convey the truth as a power of life to human hearts. Lord Bacon says: “Truth prints goodness.” One cannot easily read lead types; an imprint must be taken off. Goodness is the imprint by which truth is read. The power of the primitive church was not merely the power of convincing argument and eloquent speaking; it was rather the power of the Christian life of faith and love.

III. The Progress of Christ's Kingdom is not to be promoted by Force.

Our Saviour says: “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Institutions founded on force shall be overthrown by force. Institutions that are to be permanent must be founded on truth and right. Institutions resting on force must fall before superior force. If Christ's kingdom rested on force, it would be subject to the same law, and in some great convulsion of society would be sure to pass away. But it is founded on truth and love. Force moves in a different sphere from these, and cannot destroy them. Therefore it is a kingdom which cannot be moved. It can decay only when Christ's redeeming love falters, and justice and love die out of the heart of man. The history of the world has been a continuous demonstration of the

truth of our Saviour's words down to the overthrow of American slavery. There is no real progress except so far as truth establishes itself in men's convictions, and love rules in their hearts.

The state itself may not use force for the propagation of religion and good morals. Admit in any instance the duty or even the right of government to propagate religious and moral ideas by the sword, and you admit all that is terrible in persecutions and crusades.

IV. The Progress of Christ's Kingdom is without Observation.

The growth of the kingdom is not manifested merely in the organization. Statistical tables of the number of churches, of communicants, and of ministers are but imperfect indications of the extent and power of Christ's kingdom. Its growth is in the inward experience of the soul. Whenever any human soul is quickened to penitence for sin and faith in Christ, it is a growth of the kingdom of God. And in society, every Christian truth which establishes itself in human thought and begins to control the life, every removal of an unchristian custom, every elevation of human sentiment, every transformation of an institution into accordance with Christianity is an advance of Christ's kingdom. Thus the progress is in its nature without observation. Souls are born into the new life; Christian ideas take their place in human thought; and men, intent on their worldly schemes, take no note of them; just as the workman, plodding homewards his weary way, takes no note of the stars which come out, one by one, and take their place in the evening sky. The kingdom is in the world, transforming the world into itself, as the mustard-seed is in the soil, transforming it into its own substance, and organizing it into the silently growing life and beauty of the plant. Thus pass years, of the results of which the statistician can make but a meagre report; but when they are gone we are surprised at the extent and power of the advance of Christian thought.

V. The Progress of the Kingdom is Providential.

God does not leave his truth to go out alone to its conflict with error; he goes before it in his providence. Indeed, it is not merely that his providential working in history is parallel with his work of redemption; it is rather that his work of redemption is his work in human history, and what we call his providential action in history is only incidental thereto.

God goes before and with Christian workers now, in his providence, as he used to go before and with his people in miracles. The Christian may work in obscurity; but God notes his work with loving interest. He may be opposed by men; but he is a laborer together with God. A providence silent and unseen works with him while he works, and for him while he sleeps; corrects what he does imperfectly, and completes what he leaves unfinished, and so gives to feeble beginnings a strange success, to obscure endeavors a world-wide emblazoning, and on counsels of faith and love which had seemed foolish and rash brings out at last the stamp of a wisdom beyond the age; and schemes at which contemporaries had sneered, posterity honors as evincing insight and inspiration from on high. It is common for Christian workers to find the way strangely prepared before them through obstacles seemingly insurmountable, as to the Israelites through the Red Sea. Even the beast of whom it was said: "The Lord hath need of him," had its way strewn with garments and palm-leaves. Where there is God's work to be done, there is God to do it. A little church in Scotland, harassed by persecution and ready to despair, wrote to Rutherford for advice whether they should give up. He answered: "So long as there is any of the Lord's lost money in your town, he won't put out the candle."

God's providential action is a perpetual proof of his continued redemptive action. Even miracles are scarcely so decisive proofs of his presence, or so lasting in their influence. Elijah brought fire from heaven, and consumed the priests of Baal; but the fire had scarcely ceased to burn when the

idolatry was resumed, and Elijah fled in despair to Horeb. Luther did not bring fire from heaven; but the Protestant Reformation as really demonstrated the divine presence, and its influence has continued to this day. Moses opened the Red Sea to the Israelites. No miracle-working rod was stretched over the ocean when the Pilgrims came to Plymouth; but the presence of God with them working in the interest of his kingdom is scarcely less evident than at the Red Sea.

Equally significant God's providence in removing seemingly immovable obstacles. American slavery vanished like a cloud in the presence of the very generation who were declaring its removal impracticable. The temporal power of the Pope scarcely arrested attention when it passed away. The great men of the world do still, as a prophet declared of an Assyrian king, accomplish God's plans, though they intend it not: "He meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few"; but he is "the rod of mine anger and the staff in the hand of my indignation."

God's hand is revealed not merely in great epochs, but also in the quiet advancement of his kingdom. This is exemplified in the growth of what is called the spirit of the age; so that the leaders in any great historical movement seem not so much the authors of the movement, as the mouth-piece to utter the common thought, and the hand to execute the common purpose of the age. All history shows that the great epochs of history are not instantaneous in their origin. Though their coming is sudden and startling, yet it is the result of growth—the opening of a flower which for a century has been maturing—the bursting from its chrysalis of the winged Psyche which in all its transformations has been silently preparing its birth of beauty. Every great change attempted for which God's providence has not wrought a preparation will be but a new patch on an old garment. The silent preparation for the great epochs which burst on the astonished world is as decisive a proof of God's presence in history as the epoch itself; as the

growth of the bud reveals God's power not less than its opening into blossom.

Another example is the growth of interests, customs, and institutions incidentally favorable to the growth of the kingdom. When the first American missionaries went to India, the British power seemed the greatest obstacle. But it has exerted influences essential to the missionary work which it was entirely impossible for the missionaries to exert. It is said that Constantine embraced Christianity for reasons of state polity; but how had it come to pass that it was politic for him so to do? It is said that Luther could not have succeeded without the aid of the German princes; but how came it to pass that the German princes found it expedient to aid him? As the lictors with axes and staves went before the Roman consul to open a way for him, and to enforce his commands, God in his providence compels princes and all secular agencies to open the way for Christian truth. It has been said that the Puritans came to New England not for religious interests, but to engage in fisheries. Suppose the allegation to be true, what then? Then God in his providence disclosed valuable fisheries in the interest of his kingdom to bring to New England a Christian, Protestant, and republican civilization; "the earth helped the woman"; providence worked with redemption. Then these Puritans, while intent in all simplicity on getting an honest livelihood by fishing, were so full of Christian truth and life as to send out incidentally, as sparks fly from hot iron simply because it is hot, the education, political liberty, and religion of New England. It would enhance our estimate of their piety and intelligence, if they were so full of spiritual light and life that these were but the unpremeditated and spontaneous results of their living and working for secular ends, and so the salvation of the world was a second time connected with fishing; just as it would enhance our estimate of the fulness of miraculous power in Peter to know that his shadow would heal the sick on whom it fell, when he without thought of exerting that power was going to the baker's to buy his

daily bread, as really as when he purposely determined to work a miracle.

It has been said that modern progress is due to the fact that science, since Bacon, has been directed to practical ends, and thus has multiplied inventions; that the sentiment of brotherhood and opposition to war is due to commerce, steamships, and telegraphs; that the opposition to slavery and the honor given to labor are due to the industrial movement which is so remarkable a characteristic of modern civilization. But the question recurs: How has it come to pass that Christian civilization has produced a Bacon, stimulated invention, created an industrial movement, and in every line of action concentrated thought on human welfare; while heathen civilization has never produced such results, or shown any tendency to produce them? Was it not the fresh figs which commerce brought from Carthage which fired the Romans to destroy that city? Why does commerce in Christian civilization create the sentiment of brotherhood, and discourage war, when it had no such influence, and even a contrary influence, in ancient times? The answer must acknowledge Christianity as the cause, and not the effect. These facts disclose God's providence working with redemption, and bringing secular interests, customs, institutions, and agencies to aid in the advancement of his kingdom.

The fact of God's providential action in subserviency to redemption teaches two practical lessons. One is that when God's Spirit rouses a people to any Christian work, it is a reasonable presumption that in his providence he will open the way for them to do it. When his Spirit say: "Go forwards," his providence will divide the sea. The history of any signal enterprise of the church is found to be full of signal interpositions of providence. The history of missions, of God's church in America, of Christianity everywhere, is a continued verification of God's providential action in the interest of his kingdom. The same is remarkable in the lives of individuals eminent in piety. The attempt has been made to explain the frequency of provi-

dential interpositions in the lives of such men by saying that they who look for providences will not fail to find them. A sufficient explanation is found in the harmony between God's Spirit and his providence. When God by his Spirit rouses a man to work, by his providence he opens the way for him. He that will work for God will be permitted to work with God.

The other practical lesson is, to concentrate missionary labor on fields where God is providentially preparing the way for it. We must not waste our energies toiling all the night and taking nothing, but must let down the net on the right side of the ship. He that believeth will not make haste to outrun the providence of God, nor will he dare to lag behind it.

VI. The progress of Christ's Kingdom is by epochs.

There is a certain rhythmical movement attendant on the exertion of physical force. When force is at its greatest tension, the quivering or vibration is apparent to the sense. Something analogous appears in the exertion of spiritual power, pulsating in waves through the life of humanity. Even revelation has its epochs. There are epochs of miracles — one more, at least, yet to appear in connection with the second coming of the Lord. There are epochs of prophetic inspiration. The same is true of all spiritual life. The Christian reverts to memorable epochs in his own experience — conversion; subsequent to conversion, epochs when he has risen to higher planes of thought and action. A church grows by revivals. The advance of Christ's kingdom in the world and the progress of Christian civilization is by epochs memorable in history.

This accords with the Saviour's analogy — first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The growth of grain is continuous; but it is also by epochs — the blade, the ear, the full corn. In maize, for example, is first the blade, then the stalk marked by its successive joints, the tasselling and silking, the setting of the corn, its ripening, and the opening of the husk from the full ear.

1. The epochs are not themselves the growth of the kingdom, but are the results of the growth by which it is signalized.

The grain grows continuously. The successive epochs of the blade, the ear, the full corn, are not the growth, but the result and manifestation of growth. They are the new forms in which the advancing life must manifest itself. They are the crises which mark the growth. So the continuous vital growth of a Christian or a church will manifest itself in new and higher forms of Christian life, and thus will create epochs. Epochs, therefore, are crises incidental to growth; but they are not the growth, nor is the growth confined to them.

2. An epoch is not necessarily by violence. When an apple-tree bursts into blossom, and covers itself with sweetness and beauty, that is an epoch in its growth. When this beauty passes away, and the fruit sets, that is an epoch; in this case attended with the falling of the blossom, cast off because its work is done. But these epochs are peaceful, because all the organic forces in the tree are subject to its life and in harmony with each other, and the crises of its growth come peacefully, as the natural expression of the life. So in the kingdom of God, if the spiritual life is full and unobstructed, its epochs come quietly, as the blooming and fruiting of a tree. The old falls away because its work is done, and peacefully gives place to the new. The change is not less, the epoch not less glorious, because it is peaceful. Revolutions and convulsions are not essential, nor desirable, in the great epochs of human progress. And in the individual, the spiritual life may blossom into the glory of a higher Christian experience, or, dropping the blossom, may concentrate itself on perfecting the fruit, without an attendant spiritual convulsion driving to the verge of despair. In general, the more completely the spiritual life possesses the soul, the more peaceful will be its successive epochs of growth; and the more completely Christian ideas rule society, the more peaceful will be the successive epochs of advancing Christian civilization.

3. Christ's kingdom is not responsible for the violence and revolution which are incidental to the epochs in its progress, and are occasioned by the opposition of the kingdom of darkness.

The kingdom of darkness is always in antagonism to the kingdom of light. It is founded and perpetuated in selfishness, and therefore powerful interests become enlisted in perpetuating its abuses, and in resisting the progress of the truth. Hence any epoch in the progress of Christ's kingdom is liable to encounter violent and bloody opposition, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom may be in the midst of revolution and convulsion. In reference to this our Saviour said: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." But the responsibility for the evil rests not on the progress of Christ's kingdom, but on the opposition to its progress and the selfish endeavor forcibly to perpetuate error and wrong. Vigorous maintenance of Christian truth and right, and opposition to prevailing error and wickedness provoke opposition; and the opposition is intensified, for the time being, as the vigor of Christian action increases; but truth and righteousness and love are not responsible for the opposition which they occasion.

It must be added, however, that if Christian fidelity is constant and uniform, as well as vigorous, there will be less danger that the opposition culminate in violence; for it will not have opportunity to gain strength and enlist the interests of society in its behalf. Negro slavery, for example, might easily have been excluded from the American colonies in the outset, if Christians had been clear-sighted to discern its evil, and decided in opposing it. Lack of spiritual discernment, unfaithfulness, and spiritual declension make Christians remiss in exposing and resisting evil, and thus the liability to violence and convulsion in the epochs of Christian progress is increased. The wicked are God's sword to punish the community which connives at their wickedness, or is negligent of Christianizing the people. Every ignorant person whom the community has neglected

to educate, every drunkard who poisons the air with his breath, every debauchee who corrupts the young, is a sword in the hand of the Almighty to punish the remissness which has taken no pains to train them aright. Every blasphemer who hardens the young in irreverence, every worldling who stupefies men's nobler sentiments and accustoms them to honor successful sordidness, every knave who blurs the sharp line between right and wrong and makes fraud familiar and respectable, every oppressor who gilds tyranny with prosperity and deadens the sensibility to human rights, every pretender who reconciles men to shams and weakens the sturdiness of sincerity and truthfulness, is a sword in the hands of God to punish men for remissness in Christian duty. The iniquity by toleration acquires strength, enlists powerful interests in its perpetuation, and renders certain and terrible the convulsion and violence attendant on putting it away.

The charge is often made that the Protestant Reformation carried the revolution in its bosom, and is responsible for the revolutionary and disorganizing tendencies of recent times; while it is claimed that the Romish church is the steadfast conservator of government, order, and tranquillity. It may be admitted that Protestantism, coming necessarily in the form of a protest against error and wrong, assumed an antagonistic attitude, and has been the occasion of revolution and convulsion. Yet the responsibility does not attach to Protestantism, but, according to the principle just now explained, to the Romish church, which allowed error, superstition, and oppression to usurp the place of truth, piety, and justice. "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." The woe is not on the truth, nor on its preachers, but on him who by his alliance with error and wrong makes the preaching of the truth an offence. It is not Elijah, but Ahab, who "troubleth Israel." In fact, since the Protestant Reformation, it is the most distinctively Catholic countries which have been characterized by political discontent, by abortive revolutions, and by the insurrection of socialists and the

enemies of social organization and order, while the people have made little progress toward well-ordered liberty ; and it is the most distinctively Protestant nations which have been characterized by steady progress and comparative freedom from domestic revolution and disturbance.

4. The violence incident to an epoch in the growth of Christ's kingdom is an evil. Because our own government was founded in a revolution, we are in danger of associating a revolution with glory, of thinking that the overturn of what has been established is in itself progress to something better, and so of falling into that insatiableness of reform which, like Saturn, perpetually devours its own children ; or, as Izaak Walton puts it, whets the knife till there is no steel left in it. But the American Revolution scarcely was a revolution in the proper sense of the term. It perpetuated the principles and, with little change, the form of government to which the colonies had been accustomed ; it only separated them from a distant nation ; it only accelerated an epoch which was coming as the inevitable result of growth ; only shaking the tree to hasten the fall of the ripened fruit. The benefits accruing are not the result of the revolution, but come, in spite of the evils of revolutionary violence, because the change effected was the natural result of healthy growth. The immense majority of revolutions attempted by violence have been failures, and have hindered, rather than helped, the progress of society.

5. The epochs in the growth of Christ's kingdom are often not recognized as such at the time of their coming.

They who are not in sympathy with Christ fail to recognize them, because they have not spiritual discernment, and "cannot see the kingdom of God." So the Jews did not know the Messiah for whom they were eagerly looking, and their fathers before them did not know God's prophets. And even good men may fail to recognize such an epoch, because it is attended with confusion, conflict, and distress. Hence, in such an epoch, the noblest sentiments will be ridiculed as fanaticism ; the principles of justice, when pro-

pounded as the principles of constitutional law and social organization and order, will be flouted, and they who are the prophets of righteousness abused as disturbers of the peace and order of society. In every such epoch are persons of the type of those who said of the apostles: "These men are full of new wine."

For the same reason such epochs are attended with discouragement and reaction. The Israelites, amid the hardships of their journey to the promised land, clamored to be led back to Egypt. It is a type of the reaction attending the epochs of human progress. Men see only the difficulties of the crisis, and long for the ease and quiet of the former life. The glory of such a period is fully seen only after it is past. It does not shine till the observer is far enough removed to see it in its wholeness. Then it shines like the moon, full-orbed in silver light, with only the dimmest intimation of its dismal ravines and horrid mountains. We then think all the actors in it to be heroes, and wish we could have shared in a work so great, and witnessed events so glorious.

6. In the epochs of the growth of Christ's kingdom the progress is usually further than the agents in them had originally intended. This is true of epochs in political and social progress. The American Revolution began with no intention of achieving independence; our civil war began with no intention of freeing the slaves; the Italian war began with no intention of giving unity to Italy. The same is true of the progress of Christ's kingdom. The Protestant Reformation began with no intention of separating from Rome; Wesley began with no wish to leave the church of England; American missions began with no expectation of becoming so extensive as they now are; even the apostles began to preach Christ with no very clearly defined purpose of separating from Judaism. God is bolder than man. His grace and providence are at work in human progress. Therefore the people find themselves borne on by a power beyond man's will, a wisdom outreaching man's counsel, a

boldness beyond man's daring. It is wonderful to see how, in such a time, the mere progress of events solves problems which had seemed insoluble, removes difficulties which had seemed insuperable, and makes safe and easy measures which had seemed perilous or impracticable.

7. Epochs necessitate new ideas and a new policy. The gospel is always the same; but what is wise in policy and practicable in statesmanship changes with the changing time. "The wisdom of winter is the folly of spring." It is not strange that in great epochs the old lingers after the new has come, like blocks of ice lingering on the river's bank after it has been broken up in the spring, and melting but slowly into the running stream. Sympathy with Christ and his kingdom is necessary in order to understand an epoch, to know the ideas, and wisely to determine the policy fitted to the changed conditions.

Here is the difference between the preacher of righteousness, the reformer or prophet, and the statesman. The former is a prophet rebuking sin, holding up the ideal of moral perfection, and warning against the displeasure of God. He preaches Christ's kingdom and righteousness to elevate the people and to prepare them for institutions embodying the highest moral purity. But the maxim of the statesman is always the words of Hesiod, with a new application: "Fools, who do not know how much better half is than the whole."¹ The statesman does not attempt to carry through measures and laws, and to create institutions realizing an ideal perfection. He seeks the practicable, rather than the ideal, approximating to the ideal as rapidly as the actual advancement of society admits. He knows that the attempt to embody in institutions an ideal of perfection far in advance of the actual character of the people would probably result in a reaction, undoing much of the progress already attained. The half is better than the whole. God himself has

¹ Νήπιοι· οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἤμισυ πάντός,
 'Οὐδ' ὅσον ἐν μάλαχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλῳ μεγ' ὄνειρα.
 Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, 40, 41.

sanctioned the principle that political institutions and laws are to be modified on account of the hardness of men's hearts.

Hence it is the Christian, in sympathy with God's truth, who sees the kingdom of God, and understands the epochs of its growth when they come. In the quiet times before the epoch comes, the Christian may be at fault. Intent on his moral ideals, and impatient of the seeming slowness of God's movements, he may unwisely insist on the immediate expression of all truth in institutions and laws, putting new wine into old bottles, and sewing a new patch on an old garment. But when the epoch has come, possessing the hearts of men with its new ideas, and demanding a new policy, then it is the Christian who sees clearly; while the man accustomed to the statesman's habit of thought is confounded, and, unable to see the significance of the new as it penetrates the old, babbles.

VII. The Progress of the Kingdom is Cumulative.

So our Saviour predicted: "He will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." Christianity has always undeveloped resources; its progress is a perpetual surprisal. Examples in our own day are the inception and growth of foreign missions, the results of home missionary work at the West, the termination of American slavery, and of the temporal power of the Pope. Every great advance of Christian truth is a surprisal even to those who had labored for it. It reveals undeveloped resources. Men marvel at the presence and energy of a power whose existence had been unknown or forgotten. The same is true of local revivals. Men acknowledge the presence and work of God; they marvel at the divine power in the Christian life.

The divine grace which advances Christ's kingdom is an inexhaustible fulness of power, which while old is always new, and every manifestation appears in the freshness of its divine nature. And the energy of faith and love which it calls forth in men is an energy which has never been put

fully to the test, and continually surprises by its character and results. Thus Christianity never grows old. It is like fire, always the same, if it exists at all. It comes to every generation as fresh and young as at the beginning, as the sun and the stars go up the sky as bright and glorious as in the day of their creation. It is this undecaying freshness of divine grace and human faith and love which gives to Christianity in every generation the power of astonishing the world by its new developments. And there is to-day a power in faith and love which Christians as yet imperfectly appreciate, which, if fully exercised, would do greater things in advancing Christ's kingdom than the world has ever witnessed. The greatest earthly power is the power of a human being thoroughly in earnest. And when that earnestness is sustained by faith and love, its power is immeasurable. The work accomplished by every Christian thoroughly in earnest, from Paul's day until now, has been a perpetual surprisal; before him and his achievements all men marvel.

This power is therefore cumulative; it is always able to produce greater and better effects.

The progress of the kingdom is cumulative, also, from the increase of numbers. Every convert becomes a new spiritual power for the world's conversion.

It is cumulative, also, from the Christian growth of individuals. The power of each one grows in intensity, is freed from conflicting elements, and reaches out in new directions, and finds wider scope for itself in resisting evil and bringing men to Christ.

Christian ideas, also, become incorporated into society, form public sentiment, determine customs, laws, and institutions, and thus create for themselves an organic force. Then the customary ongoings of life and civilization help the progress of Christ's kingdom. The currents of popular thought, political agitations, inventions, manufactures, commerce, contribute to its advance. Influences are incorporated into society which work with the Christian while he works, and work for him while he sleeps.

By this cumulative progress Christianity is working out in human history a demonstration of its divine origin and power. And when it shall have prevailed through the world, the demonstration will be complete. Humanity itself will have become a living epistle, known and read of all men — a word of God, declaring Christ the living Word — a second incarnation of the divine in humanity, demonstrating the reality of the incarnation in Jesus Christ.

Precisely here is the great want of this age — a demonstration of Christianity by its life-giving power. The Tartars worshipped their own scimitars — the mightiest and best helpers they knew. Civilized men will worship the steam-engine, if it prove itself mightiest and best. They must see a power, proving itself divine by its superior beneficence, using the steam-engine itself for high and beneficent ends.

Infidelity itself now unwittingly testifies to the power and truth of Christianity. It has become pious and philanthropic, and claims acceptance on the ground that it does more Christian work than Christianity itself. "The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments." When the apostles cast out devils, Simon Magus insists on doing the same. The gospel must silence modern infidelity, not merely by proving that the philanthropy which characterizes modern civilization is the gift of Christianity, but also by showing a benevolence purer, more self-sacrificing, and universal; motives to beneficence more energizing and persistent; philanthropy more wise, comprehensive, and efficient; a character more complete, and a power more divine in the renovation of men. It stands before modern infidelity, as Paul did before the seven sons of Sceva, and must prove its power to cast out devils by doing it, leaving to the pretenders the shame of hearing the devils answer: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Its challenge must always be, like that of Jesus himself: "The works that I do bear witness of me; though ye believe not me, believe the works." The world accepts the challenge: "What dost thou work? Show us the desert blooming beneath thy tread, the dead in

sin living at thy touch, the powers of hell fleeing before thy voice." Faithful Christian workers, mighty in faith and love, are the best evidences of Christianity. We are not to prove that it is from God merely by its great works in the past. We are not to be obliged to point to the primitive church as the most beautiful exhibition and the sufficient proof of the power of the gospel, but to create now an age of Christian purity and power. "The fathers did eat manna in the wilderness"; we thank God for that. "But they are dead"; God now is giving us the living bread, that we may eat thereof, and not die.

ARTICLE V.

LYELL'S STUDENT'S ELEMENTS OF GEOLOGY.

BY JOHN B. FERRY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ANOTHER volume by Sir Charles Lyell¹ appeared a few months ago in England, and is now republished in this country. It is partly a new book, in part a recast and revision of the last edition of the "Elements."² As its title indicates, it is designed for students. It has been the aim of the author to present the matter in such a light as, without sacrificing substance, to adapt the publication to beginners. By the omission of portions of the earlier work, room has been secured for large additions; while effort has been made to exhibit the subject in fullest consonance with the existing state of knowledge.

Of course, on the appearance of any such work, it is all-

¹ The Student's Elements of Geology, by Sir Charles Lyell, Bart. F.R.S. London. 1871. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1871.

² The latter work which was originally prepared as a "Supplement" to the Principles of Geology, was published as a separate duodecimo volume in 1836, and passing through successive forms reached the sixth and last edition in 1857. There was thus abundant occasion for a recension, and an ample opportunity for improvement, so great has been the progress made in geology during the last decennium.