

class—nay, the mass of humanity. Hitherto the curse of the race has been *caste*, with its concomitants, such as invidious distinctions, the servility of woman, the slavery of man. Not one of these salient features of the new economy could have been left out without essential incompleteness and radical deficiency.

Of all civilization previous to the advent of our Lord, it may be briefly said that it was a large lump leavened with malice and wickedness ; of all civilization since Christ's advent, that it was a mass of humanity savored and saved by the salt of a divine principle. These are only general statements, but they hint opposite tendencies.

Another peculiarity should be carefully noticed. Before Christ, the tendency of political development was toward a forced and mechanical unity at the expense of individual development and personal liberty ; since Christ, the tendency has been to individual development and personal freedom, and consequently to division rather than union under one sceptre, relying only on the unity which comes of fusion, sympathy, assimilation. Here, then, we find a key to all history. Until Christ came, men had been testing what could be done to make one compact state out of human materials ; and the result was that, in the last and greatest of the world kingdoms, there was outward unity with moral corruption, social caste, and individual repression. In this fitness and fullness of times He came to teach men the only possible secret of true unity—a kingdom not of this world, with a true brotherhood, a pure morality, and individual liberty. He who sees no God in history will have hard work to account for this mysterious philosophy of history !

It is a curious fact that those four letters A, B, C, D, which stand at the beginning of the Roman alphabet, are the four letters that are inseparably connected with the two great historic divisions of the entire world-age. And it is also a curious fact that, suggesting as they do the alphabet of history, they hint also its inversions. All history previous to the Lord's advent we call the ages B. C. ; but notice that the first and the last of the four letters are wanting ; and so history before Christ lacked both the starting-point and the goal of all true historic development. There was a bond of unity and a civilization, but the bond was not brotherhood, and the civilization was leavened with corruption. But when Christ came a new civilization began ; it had the right starting-point ; it began at the beginning, introducing into human society a new element—allegiance to God—and presenting a new goal—a divine life in the soul and a development of the individual. When you have this " A. D. " you have the " B. C. " of brotherhood and civilization. Give us the Advent of Christ as our point of departure, and we have the basis of a new Bond between man and man, a new Cultus and a new Destiny.

What now concerns us is the double relation of this development of history to the plan of the kingdom of God ; *preparation* first, and *propagation* after.