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Address by James Bryce, British Ambassador to the United States, delivered at the Rochester Conference, December 30th, 1909.

"It is a pleasure to address an audience of university men. You are, or ought to be, the flower of the youth of this country. Whether it is science or literature or philosophy or history that you pursue, your aim is knowledge, knowledge which doubles a man's power over nature and his fellow men, knowledge which opens the door to the wisdom of the past and makes us the heirs of all the ages, knowledge which enables you to render more efficient service to God and to your fellow-men.

"You, assembled here as delegates, represent the united spirit and impulse of hundreds of universities and colleges, not competing with one another in trials of strength and skill, but banded together for a noble cause. As thoughtful men and earnest men, you have felt the need and heard the call to help in spreading the message of the gospel. You recognize that it is a reproach to the children of those races that received Christianity many centuries ago that nearly two thousand years after our Lord's coming many parts of the earth, many millions of mankind, should still remain in the ancient darkness. So you are engaged in a great effort to secure that within this generation the true light shall be carried forth into all lands.

"The moment is a critical one, and it is also an auspicious one. Since the discovery of the new world more than four centuries ago there has never been a time of such change and advance in the exploration and development of this globe of ours. The process which moved slowly in the sixteenth century has latterly moved so quickly that now nine-tenths of the habitable earth is under the control of so-called Christian powers and though vast multitudes remain non-Christian there is scarcely one spot in which the influence of the white race is not felt and in which the uncivilized or semi-civilized native peoples are not being penetrated by the ideas and habits of those more advanced nations.

"The old religions are shaken: they are crumbling, they are losing their hold on the minds and hearts of the old peoples, and before many years have passed, little may remain of the weaker among them except some superstitious usages of scanty meaning and forgotten origin. Others may be strong