

that country, official census returns and other well-authenticated data show that, notwithstanding all the irreligion which prevails there as it does elsewhere, Christianity is more full of life in the United States now than it ever was before ; that its vitality has increased in every decade of the century ; and has so increased not only absolutely, but also relatively to the population. This appears from, for example, what has been ascertained of the comparative number of churches at different periods, the comparative accommodation afforded, the comparative number of church members, evangelical ministers, Sunday-school teachers and Sunday-school pupils, the comparative value of church property, and the comparative amounts contributed annually for missions and other religious objects.

Thus, so far from there having been a dying out of Christianity in the United States or elsewhere, ascertained facts show greatly increased life and vigor there and throughout the world, and make plain that, rampant as agnosticism or unbelief may seem in some respects to be, if any of you have been inclined on that account, or any other, to regard Christianity as a dying belief or a dying institution, you are deceiving yourselves. The truth is the very reverse.

Undoubtedly, though Christianity has been steadily advancing, yet there is at the same