

There have been golden periods in the history of nations when political progress was extraordinary, when the people evinced the greatest degree of happiness and contentment; but we cannot study the history of these periods without seeing that the government was in the hands of men whom, we are disposed to think, reared and destined for the particular occasion. In that period of history when Britaania triumphed over all her foes; when she who previously had dwelt within the limit of her little island home spread herself out in her colonies to the remotest parts of the globe; when mighty tyranny bowed its head to mightier right, even until the poorest man in his cage might bid defiance to the force of the crown,—*whose hand was at the helm?* It is about the name of a Bruce, a Cromwell, a Chatham, a Washington, a Lincoln, or a Webster that the memories of the dearest liberties cling—names that have come down to us symbolic of wisdom, patriotism, and justice, which keep the names of their countries respected in every land.

Such are the distinctive marks of a true politician; but how may one possess them? We know of nothing to nourish these traits in a man so surely as the principles of Christianity. Religion teaches him to do justice to his fellow-man, remembering that there is a God who knows and will certainly punish the unjust. It teaches him to love his country; remembering that God created no one to be unhappy, that he designed man for society and is therefore pleased with every one who promotes it. And, above all, it teaches him wisdom and discretion in the management of great affairs. The Great Governor is himself the best instructor in this science; in the rule of the Omniscient there must be the greatest wisdom. Surely, then, those who rule, in whatever sphere, can find no better and no wiser mode of government than one in conformity to His teachings.

We live so closely surrounded by blessings that we are apt to become insensible of their greatness and their source. We boast of our civilization, our political freedom and our laws, while we seem to forget entirely how large a share is due to Christianity. Indeed the politics of our country and the Christianity of its people we put at the widest range as if, like the lion and the lamb, they were of such natures that they cannot exist together. But although there is so lamentable a fact as that politics and Christianity

rarely walk together, still the past reveals that they have often done so and with the best results.

Look over the pages of history and see who they are to whom posterity seems most grateful. Perhaps there is nothing that a free people prizes more than its freedom: than those rights and liberties which have cost the nation an ocean of blood and ages of toil and suffering to procure. Among these, mention may be made of the struggle against royal despotism. It is no longer, as formerly, that the king is the only free man in the state and that the people exist simply for the purpose of being governed by him. Men have learned a true lesson. Christianity, through the agency of a Milton or a Hampden, has taught that humanity has a nobler destiny than to be the footstool to the ambition of a few families.

Although men of the world deride the notion of influencing human affairs by any but selfish motives, still history is lighted up by great names in whom the liveliest religious feeling is joined with the loftiest patriotism, and who have labored long and earnestly for their conscience and their country: Especially has this been so in the work of the emancipation of slaves. Here we have seen nations put forth their power and make great sacrifices for a distant and degraded race who had no claims upon them but those of wronged and suffering humanity. There is nothing in the history of modern civilization more fraught with crime and suffering, than the slavish condition of the negroes; and nothing more laudable than the efforts made to set them free.

If we inquire "what gave the negroes their liberty," history plainly answers "Christianity." That was the principal motive power which originated and sustained every effort in their behalf. In England, perhaps as never before, the people responded to the reasonings of Christian philanthropy as Baxter, Wesley, Whitfield, Robertson, or Paley, from pulpit and platform, lifted up their voices against the injustice. Clarkson and Wilberforce later joined in the denunciation, and lived to see the work so far completed that no more slaves were to be imported. So far as Britain was concerned, the iniquitous trade had come to an end. A quarter of a century later, by the persevering efforts of the same zeal, slavery was completely banished from British dominion.

In America, the same result was attained by similar means. Washington, who, before he died, provided