

agencies are appearing on the stage.— Can any man fail to see why their advent has been so long delayed, or what their mission is now that they are come? If as we attempted to shew in our former number, Christianity be the system which is destined to rule the world, how manifest is it that the period of its universal diffusion is at hand! Here are its pioneers, heaven-sent, busied in preparing its path: throwing down the barriers which have so long kept mankind apart; convening the world in one great assembly; and proclaiming in the tongue of every nation and tribe under heaven the “wonderful works of God.”

This reconciles us to what we are apt to regard as the slow progress of Christianity. Not only had truth to be developed as regards its subjective revelation—and its development is slow compared with error, which being short-lived, soon comes to its maturity—but a vast array of subsidiary helps had to be got ready. The means of easy and rapid communication with the most distant regions of the globe had to be provided; and an instrumentality discovered for unfolding the Divine record to every eye. I was not till our own times that this apparatus was perfected. At the first promulgation of Christianity, the printing-press—at this hour the mightiest human agency in the world—had not come into being. A few might have access to books, but the greater part were dependent on oral instruction; and the consequence was that, after the age of the apostles, the gospel became corrupted, and began to decline. At the Reformation the printing-press existed, and proved itself one of the most powerful subordinate agencies by which that great movement was helped onward. It gave a mighty impulse to the human mind, and furnished richly the materials of thought by unlocking the stores of ancient learning. It rendered a yet higher service to the Reformation when it scattered over England and Germany copies of the Word of God. But there the services of the printing press ended; not because its powers were exhausted, but because our ability of making these powers applicable had reached its limit. We had not then mastered the tongues and dialects of India, and the hundred other diversities of human speech which prevail on the globe. But this has been done now. The Bible has been translated into almost all the languages of the human family;

and were the door to be opened, we could scatter the Word of Life over the globe in even greater abundance than on a former occasion it was scattered over England and Germany. This is the great work which our missionaries have done—a work of little show but great utility—and the importance of which will be better understood a century hence, than it is even now. If need were, we could, in the course of a few months, put a copy of the Bible into the hands of every man who can read in India and China.— Have we not then ground to infer that the third outburst of Christianity will be on a far larger scale than either of its two former awakenings; that it will be an awakening extending not only over a few countries, and lasting for a century or two, but an awakening which will cover with light the whole earth, and last till the end of time? Never till now were the means prepared for a universal revival of this sort. But they are ready now. Here is the steam-ship ready to carry the missionary to the end of the earth; here is the Bible translated into all the tongues of the globe; and here is the printing-press ready to scatter its millions of copies over every land; and with this state of renewed zeal on the part of the Church, and of forwardness as regards subsidiary means, the providence of God is evidently conspiring. Unlooked-for doors are suddenly opening, and new and vast fields are presenting themselves to Christianity, reinforced by these new and marvellous agencies, to enter and cultivate. If Popery has destroyed the world at its centre, if Continental Europe has become water-logged (to recur to our former figure), the other compartments may yet be preserved. New and powerful states are starting up outside the pale of the Papal countries. America, but recently overshadowed by forests, and trodden only by the foot of the Red Indian, is now the seat of a powerful and Christian nation. Australia is rushing up, as if by enchantment, to become, we trust, a mighty centre of moral and religious influences in the southern hemisphere.— China is taking her place, at a single bound, among free nations, and we trust also among Christian nations. That idolatrous and persecuting empire, which has so long covered with darkness those countries which were the birth-place of revelation, is dissolving, and, in all probability, will very soon pass away. On the right hand