

contrary, it anticipated the West in the use of gun-powder, the printing press and the magnetic compass, wonderful inventions in themselves, but which the genius of European civilization found means to improve. From these devices and inventions our civilization received a quickening impulse, while their first inventors lagged behind in the shadow of their decrepit institutions, or plodded on slowly in the hereditary routine of centuries.

Europe, after having for so long received, in part at least, the germs of material progress from the East, is now destined by Providence to regenerate the effete nations of Asia, whose growth, intellectually and morally, has long since come to a standstill. Every sentiment of religion and sound polity is weakening from day to day in the midst of those dense populations; and we are perhaps destined to witness in our time the falling into utter decay, if not the dismemberment of Asia.

The Church in the past was ever alive to the necessity of winning over the countries of the Far East to the Gospel. At every age since the birth of Christianity she has continued to send to those far off shores numberless missionaries of the Faith.

In the Middle Ages, heedless of the never-ending struggle between the spiritual ascendancy of the See of Peter and the temporal power of the Western Empire, the Holy See never lost sight, in its paternal anxiety, of these regions shut out from the light of faith. Gregory IX., Innocent IV., Clement IV., Nicholas III., Nicholas IV., Clement V., John XXI., John XII. and Benedict XII., alternately roused the European nations to exert a warlike pressure or a peaceful influence on the East.

It is certain that, from the time of the preaching of the Apostles, the Gospel was made known by St. Thomas to