

magnitude and importance of the work are yet made we are far from saying, and we do not forget that the vast majority of the world's inhabitants are still in heathen darkness. The evangelization of the nations is, we may say, only commenced; the first-fruits only of modern missions have been gathered. Nevertheless, results highly encouraging have been realized. The message of peace has been carried to almost every land; converts number millions; and the Bible, in part or in whole, has been translated into most of the languages spoken by man. Into many of the principal languages a considerable Christian literature has been rendered; and, what is of great significance, several of the Churches formed from the heathen world have themselves become missionary centres, and are zealously diffusing the light which has shined upon them from heaven. In comparison with the vast sums which measure the revenue or the commerce or the wealth of Christian nations, the contributions of the Churches for missions—for all their work indeed—seem small; yet we note with thankfulness that the missionary revenue is still increasing, and when placed beside that of the earlier years of missionary effort shows distinctly that the tide is rising.

In our estimate of the condition of the nations called Christian we do not forget that there is another side of the shield, on which the inscription is less hopeful. We might, with too much truth, be reminded of the wide diffusion of unbelief; of estheticism and ritualism simulating religion; of worldliness, war of classes, militarism; of activity in church work, not accompanied with faith and love. But our object here is not to strike the balance between the good and the evil—the hopeful signs and the ominous signs—of the century.

Were this attempted, we should have important deductions to make from the characteristics in which we all rejoice. But no person, we think, can, with unbiased mind, survey the entire trend and results of the century without seeing that the way is being prepared for the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It must not be imagined that we would argue in favour of a fund such as is now proposed exclusively on the ground of the beneficent characteristics of the nineteenth century. Were this century far less remarkable among the centuries, the argument for making, at this juncture, a special effort to secure a great fund for Christian purposes would hardly be weakened. Were the nineteenth century one of the least fruitful centuries in the Christian era, it might, indeed, be not the less the duty of the Church to put forth special efforts to strengthen and extend the work of God in the coming days. The closing of one century and the opening of another so appeals to human sentiment as to suggest and encourage exceptional liberality on behalf of the kingdom of God; and when we survey the century now completing its circle, and mark its great features, the impulse to attempt something large for the cause of the Redeemer is certainly strengthened.

Let us look then a little more closely at the question whether the raising of a fund such as is proposed is a fit and proper way of commemorating the departing century, and preparing for that which is coming to the birth. Unless this question can be answered in the affirmative with some measure of decision—so answered as to carry the convictions of thoughtful and good people—the success of the scheme will be very