

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

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The indications are very numerous and decisive, that the present confusion of languages with which the earth is filled will soon disappear. A few leading nations are diffusing their influence over the globe, and the petty tribes which have dwelt in the forests or wandered over the plains have vanished; and with their disappearance have been silenced a thousand discordant tongues. Russia is moving onward in the career of conquest with most gigantic strides; and where her ambition is to meet with a check no one can tell. That vast empire already includes the whole of Northern Europe and the whole of Northern Asia. And in the inevitable progress of civilization, her language must soon absorb the unformed speech of the wandering tribes over whom she has stretched her sceptre. One-seventh part of the habitable globe Russia now occupies. And all the nameless influences of progressive civilization, tend to spread over all these heterogeneous tribes the one language of the camp, the schools and the court.

The number of known languages now spoken in the world has been estimated at 3664. The developments of Providence are very decisive, that this Babal confusion will soon yield to a few leading languages, prevailing over vast communities. And thus while the steamboat and the rail-car are bringing the ends of the earth into juxtaposition, a well educated man may soon be able with ease to traverse the world, and to converse with all the inhabitants.

The *Christian religion*, it is also very manifest, must soon be the religion of the human family.—Waiving the consideration of that vital piety, that spiritual renovation which Christianity is destined to secure, let us first, as philosophical observers, contemplate nominal Christianity, without reference to sects, either Protestant or Catholic. It is susceptible of demonstration, that the Christian religion will soon supplant all forms of idolatry, and reign undisputed.

Contemplate the past achievements of this wonderful moral power. Imperial Rome, earth's master and tyrant, with all her boasted legions, and after exhausting all her energies in the conflict, fell prostrate before Christianity. From the palace of the vanquished Cæsars the cross was unfurled. Even Nero could not build fires hot enough to burn up the energies of the Christian church. Even the wild beasts of the Coliseum, as they tore limb from limb, could not intimidate the followers of Jesus, or expel the Christian faith from the world. The philosopher has toiled, with unremitting energy, to undermine the deep foundations of Christianity; and the shafts of the satirist have fallen harmless from her triple shield. The hostility of earth has marshalled every possible power in every possible combination against Christianity, and all in vain. When the gorgeous idols of Ephesus, when the immortal statuary of Athens and of the Pantheon crumble from their pedestals, at the approach of Christ, can the miserable feather gods of the Pacific and the mud idols of India resist his approach? When the Roman empire, in the plenitude of its power, exhausted its energies in bloody persecution in vain, is it to be feared that earth can furnish other powers of persecution yet more terrible?

When we have seen philosophers and poets and dramatists and princes combine, with the highest resources of learning and wit and wealth, and Christianity steadily advancing notwithstanding all their endeavors, is it to be anticipated that other literary opponents will be able to accomplish that which Hume and Gibbon and Voltaire and Frederic—the conspiring encyclopedists of Europe, in vain essayed?

Were I an unbeliever in the divine authority of revealed religion, still, as a philosophical observer of cause and effect, I am compelled to believe that Christianity possesses an inherent energy which will make it triumphant over the world. All Europe with the exception of Turkey, has become nominally Christian. Every Island upon her southern and western coast has become Christianized. The energies of the Gospel have extended over the wide waves of the Atlantic, and nearly the whole of this new world, from the few feeble savages wandering over the cliffs of Patagonia, to the shivering inmates of the snow-huts of Greenland, has become nominally Christian. Probably, fifty years from this time, not a vestige of living heathenism will be found on the American continent. All of the

West India islands are Christianized. And with what miraculous rapidity is Christianity pervading the islands of the Pacific. Where are the idols of Tahiti, Hawaii, Raratonga? They are in the cabinets of the Missionary Rooms of England and America—the trophies of the peaceful conquests of Christianity. During the last twenty-five years, the groups of the Society and Sandwich Islands, the Austral, He-vey, Vavau and Hapai groups, have all thrown away their idols and become Christianized, and multitudes of other groups are now in rapid progress of change. And it is now not probable that an idolater will be found upon one of the islands of Polynesia, in half a century from the present time. And as England sends her influence up the rivers of Africa, paganism inevitably disappears, and Christianity takes her place. And in southern Asia, every intelligent native admits that Brahma and Booh are fast falling into dishonor. Even Juggernaut himself is disgraced, and at recent festivals he could with difficulty rally enough of votaries to drag his decaying car.

Christians from England and America are gathering the children of both sexes, by tens of thousands, into schools—the youth into colleges; they are establishing churches and the preached gospel, and the result is not problematical. These same causes, with vastly magnified power, must soon be operative in every section of the East. The doom of paganism is sealed.

And look at the Mohammedan power, once the terror of all the world. Its right arm is withered. France, with cathedrals is supplanting the mosques of Northern Africa. England and France and Russia are unfurling the cross above the crescent on a thousand minarets of the Moslem empire. The bell of every steamer which ploughs the Bosphorus, tolls the knell of Mohammed's power. Every European army, which encamps on the banks of the Indus or the shores of the Caspian, hastens the decay of that fearful delusion which was established by arms and by blood. Every ship from Europe or America, which drops her anchor in the Golden Horn, proclaims to the disheartened followers of the false prophet, the intellectual energy which Christianity inspires. Every ambassador from Europe, and every travelling scholar who enters the gates of Constantinople, Shiraz or Teheran, even be he an infidel, is influential, in the overruling providence of God, in undermining the foundations of Mohammed's reign.

And when we add to all this the persevering and sleepless zeal of Christian Missionaries, kindling, with the accompanying aids of the Holy Spirit, the fires of devotion—of spiritual renovation, in ten thousand hearts, we cannot doubt that the delusions of Mohammed will soon follow the idolatries of Greece and Rome to utter oblivion, and the Christian religion will extend without a rival over the habitable globe.

And when all hearts shall be brought under the spiritual influence of the religion of Christ; when all men shall be truly born again of the Holy Spirit; when all wrong shall cease, and the ties of brotherhood shall be universally recognized, then will this world again appear as it did on that bright morning when, at its birth, all the sons of God shouted together for joy.

This general outline may lead to investigation and thought to fill up its details; it may deepen the reader's interest in observing the signs of the times—those wonderful developments which are ever opening around us in the nineteenth century. And his heart must be indeed cold, and his faith must be indeed weak, who is not animated by these views to redoubled exertions in diffusing a spiritual Christianity through this agitated world. And now, when God is overruling the speculations of the closet, the experiments of the laboratory, the skill of the artisan, the policy of the cabinets, the tramp of armies, to usher in the glories of the Millennial day, let not the sacramental host of God's elect sleep. When God is compelling the toil even of the atheist and the infidel to be subjected to Christ, elevating the valley and depressing the mountain for Messiah to ride triumphant in the chariot of paternal deity, Oh! may the Christian be awake to the *signs of the times*, and be true to his privileges and his responsibilities.—*New York Ecangelist*.

There are three sorts of men-slayers; they which kill; they which hate; and they which detract.