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BY \_\_\_\_\_

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# Chairman's Address.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS UNITY.

"That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off Divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves."

—Tennyson.

## MR. CHAIRMAN AND CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,—

It was with a good deal of trepidation that I accepted the position of Chairman, to which you elected me twelve months ago, the apparent unanimity with which your wish was expressed being the only justification for my accepting a position which so many of my brethren were more qualified to fill. The duty which I am expected to discharge this evening is one which might well make any layman pause before accepting office; but in addressing you to-night I feel assured of a brotherly, sympathetic reception for anything of worth that I may speak, and that ample allowance will be made for all failings and shortcomings, on account of the difficulties which a busy man of business must always encounter when he attempts to produce from the office or the shop that which is the natural product of the study. One thing I am thankful for—I speak for myself alone—my utterance has no official signification; I am free to speak as I think, without committing you to anything I may say. My words can only influence you as they appeal to your reason or conscience. I can give you no authoritative interpretation of dogma, and the Laws of the Church will remain unaltered when I finish.

One of the first "cares of office" that falls on the chairman-elect (at least I speak from experience) is the choice of a subject for his address. Church finance occurred to me as a suitable subject for a layman, but that seemed to be worn threadbare, and, fortunately, was rejected. I say fortunately, because we are to have some fresh light thrown upon it by one of our ministerial brethren during the present session. Then the question arose, should I deal with some of the modern developments of Theological Thought, or the Higher Criticism, from the standpoint of the pew? But discretion seemed the better part of valour. Finally the direction in which my remarks should go seemed to indicate itself almost unconsciously, and to-night I shall endeavour to present to your minds something of what appears to me a universal movement towards unity—unity of thought, word, and deed.

If I required a text for my address I would take those beautiful lines by Tennyson, which we use as one of our hymns :

"Our little systems have their day :  
They have their day and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou O Lord art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see,  
And yet we trust it comes from Thee ;  
A beam in darkness, let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and Soul, according well  
May make one music as before.

But vaster."

As most of you are aware, immediately after my election I left the colony and travelled right round the world. Almost everywhere the evidences of growing unity forced themselves upon me so prominently, that nothing short of an amalgamation of all the religious denominations of this colony into one National Church of Christian Believers could have surprised me on my return, while the continued opposition of Captain Russell and Mr. Seddon in politics seemed almost unnatural.

Let me mention a few instances by way of illustration. As a coincidence I commenced my travels in a Union Company's boat, and landed in the United States of America. There, where a few years before I had found the bitterest hostility to England and all her ways, I found on my arrival the flickering flame of friendship and unity, which grew and grew during the two months I was passing through the country, till it fairly blazed by the time I reached New York, where the combination of the "Union Jack" and "The Stars and Stripes" in places of amusement almost drove the people frantic with enthusiasm. One of the most pleasant memories of my trip is derived from the fact that I was there to see, and to participate in, the development of this great transformation, which is fraught with such wonderful possibilities for the future of the Anglo-Celtic race, and, indeed, for the whole world.

While passing through the States I had my attention directed to some marvellous results obtained by scientific research in bridging the gulf between matter and mind, which gives promise of unifying results in the future, and which I hope to refer to later on. There also I came in contact with the Christian Scientists, who claim to have discovered the most complete oneness of matter, mind, and spirit, while in the domain of economics, the growing recognition of the close connection between land tenures and social conditions augurs well for unity of action in the future. In the religious sphere, one of my first duties a day or two after landing in Scotland was to visit, as your representative, the Congregational Union of that country, where, for the first time since the final completion of Union, the Evangelical Unionists and the Congregationalists were sitting together as one body.

I also found that arrangements were practically completed for the amalgamation of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches of my native land, while across the Border "The Free Church Council," with Dr. Clifford at its head, was carrying on a noble work in the way of unifying the Free Churches of England.

In the realm of politics, that wonderful manifesto issued by the Tsar of all the Russias for the disarmament of Europe almost startled the civilised world, and should prove a valuable assurance to those who are looking for a speedy advent of the millennium, and, however much subsequent events may indicate the improbability of an early attainment of this ideal of Unity, the Christian world will not readily permit to fall into oblivion a proposal so far-reaching towards the time when there shall be Peace on Earth amongst men of Goodwill.

Whence cometh then, and whither tendeth, this great movement towards Unity, which promises not only to produce unity of thought in the different branches of human knowledge, but to co-relate them all into one complete and harmonious whole? The Rev. Alfred Rowland, in his address from the chair of the English Union last May, referring to the decay of the denominational sentiment, as we have known it, which he predicted would not long outlive the dying century, gave as one of the reasons for its disappearance the fact "that Christians generally know each other far better than they formerly did," and it is in this growing knowledge of our fellowmen, and of the laws of the universe in which we dwell, that is enabling men everywhere, and on every conceivable subject, to see things "eye to eye" more completely than they have ever done before. Imperfect knowledge invariably begets diversity of opinion, and frequently strife and dissension; fuller knowledge brings greater unanimity of thought, and perfect knowledge, as

far as that is attainable by finite faculties, brings complete unity. "Nothing is ever settled, until it is settled right," is the expression of a great natural, moral, and spiritual truth.

The humanitarian effects of the marvellous discoveries in the domain of physical science, in bringing the whole race into closer touch with one another, by such agencies as steam and electricity, can hardly be overestimated, and the peace proposals of the Tsar may well be considered as only an indication of greater movements in the future, making for the solidarity of the race, as the result of a growing intimacy.

If we could clearly comprehend the stages and agencies by which we have arrived at our present position, it would probably help to indicate the direction in which we may expect to make further progress, and a clear conviction of where and how we ought to go will make our efforts more fruitful in results.

Let me indicate briefly some of the probable stages and methods by which human knowledge has been evolved in times past, with the hope that it may throw some light on the path of future progress. I was a good deal impressed with a book I read recently, entitled, "The Theory of Human Progression," written about fifty years ago by Patrick Edward Dore. This writer while believing that the "Greatest study of mankind is man," maintains that this is true only when man reaches a certain stage of development, that before he can scientifically study himself he must first have made considerable progress with the observation and classification of the phenomena of Nature around him. He claims that there has been a natural and necessary order or sequence governing the progression or development of man's knowledge in times past, and that careful analysis will enable us with accuracy to determine what that order has been, and to predicate with a good deal of assurance the direction and steps it must take in the future.

Beginning with logic as the first of the sciences, the power to think, preceding the act of thinking, he traces man's progress as he emerges from the jungle of physical evolution; his first thoughts would be of numbers, the number of nuts on the tree, the number of beasts of prey, because it is absolutely necessary to know something of the science of numbers before the mind can comprehend the science of quantities. Arithmetic before algebra. In like manner a knowledge of quantities is essential to a proper understanding of dimensions, or geometry. These all in turn being necessary as being involved in the laws of statics, which is necessary to a knowledge of chemistry, and so on, from inorganic to organic. Chemistry being necessary to a proper understanding of botany or plant life, a knowledge of which is necessary to understand biology, or animal life, which latter is essential to the science of physiology, or human life.

It is not contended that it was necessary for man to have reduced each of these branches of knowledge, or the many subdivisions which might be made, to the position of an exact science, before he could begin to think of the next in order, but rather that it was necessary for him to begin thinking in the order named, and impossible for him to systematise with accuracy his knowledge of one succeeding branch until he had done it with the preceding one.

The methods employed by man for the attainment of knowledge have varied in every age, always with an upward tendency, and I think it is an undoubted fact that the marvellous advances of discovery and invention in the past fifty years have been largely due to the superior scientific methods which have been adopted in the investigation of natural phenomena during that period. The first essential to the acquirement of knowledge is the correct observation of facts or phenomena, the next is the proper classification of the facts observed, and the third the deduction of the laws governing the different groups of facts. The application of these methods to the investigation of spiritual phenomena is likely to produce the most beneficial results.

In all ages man has been found theorising on the nature of the universe, and of life, getting his theories tested by all the known facts and by others as they come under observation. History proves that false theories are not usually long lived; a school of sceptics invariably comes along whose destructive criticism compels them to crumble away, and, on the whole, the race has been helped rather than hurt by their promulgation, so that if I refer to some modern theories which appear to you wild and fantastic, you will calmly rest on the assurance that truth alone possesses that mighty power which must finally prevail. The true attitude of the Christian being one of cautious receptivity, "Prove all things, hold that which is good." We must not be afraid of the light, or reject truth simply because it is new to us, but should be willing to receive and welcome it, however unpromising the quarter from which it may come.

A new theory frequently stimulates thought and investigation along fresh lines, which results either in demonstrating it to be sound, and establishing it as a law of Nature, or disproving and demolishing it. The danger lies in the temptation to make facts fit in with the theory, instead of getting a theory which will include and explain all the facts.

I want now to draw your attention very shortly to some of the evidences of progress being made towards unity of thought by the increase of knowledge, and refer to some of the modern theories which may possibly lead men to still greater unification of thought hereafter. Look, then, at the domain of physical science. Ever since Galileo got into trouble with the authorities of his time for propounding a new theory of the motions of the heavenly bodies, men have been gaining knowledge of the laws controlling our solar system, till to-day even the Pope of Rome would confess to a belief that the earth revolves on its axis, causing the phenomenon of night and day. The same process of gradual acceptance took place with reference to Newton's theory of gravitation, while, coming to our own time, many here are old enough to remember the storm of denunciation and abuse which raged round the head of poor old Darwin when he launched his then heretical notions of evolution, scientists vying with religionists in the venom and bitterness of their condemnation. Further investigation has compelled an almost universal acceptance by scientific men of his doctrines, and the application of them to a much wider range of phenomena than was originally contemplated by him, while a leader of religious thought like Professor Drummond, convinced of the operation of evolutionary law in the natural world, boldly set forth the grounds of his belief that it operated also in the spiritual world. The later discovery of a co-ordinate law of self-sacrifice only explains and removes some of the difficulties in the way of accepting the law of the survival of the fittest, by showing that altruism is a condition of fitness.

A survey of the past fifty years reveals the most marvellous strides made in the development of the physical sciences, and the consequent progress towards unity of opinion amongst scientific investigators, but no one would claim that the same fundamental advance had been made in the social sciences, or in the development of spiritual knowledge, and the explanation will probably be found in Dove's proposition regarding the necessary order or sequence in the progression of human knowledge. It seems to have been necessary that the knowledge of physical science should be well developed and systematised before it was possible to make much progress with economic science, the development and application of which I conceive to be the special work of this generation.

Following Dove's theory of progression, when we leave the purely material plane, and come to deal with man as a social being, we find him planning and scheming, producing and disposing, jostling with his fellows, filled with great aspirations, not only for this world, but for that which is to come, and so we have to find laws for his guidance, not only

as an individual, but as a member of a greater organic whole which we term society; but the same law of necessity holds good, and must guide man in the acquisition of knowledge here as in the preceding steps he has taken.

Man's relations to his mother earth must be determined on a scientific basis, before he can get accurate knowledge of the laws which shall determine the extent and limitations of his relations with his fellows. In other words, economic knowledge must precede political knowledge, and the latter in its turn must undergo further development before he can get the fullest possible light on the relationship between himself and God, or spiritual knowledge.

I have already stated that I believe the development and application of economic knowledge to be the special work of this generation, and here let me say that I fully believe the law has been observed and formulated which will give unity of thought in this direction, and only awaits the development of men's minds for its general acceptance. It is a law analogous to the law of gravitation, ruling in the economic world with the same invariability and universality as that law rules in the physical world, performing similar functions.

This law might be expressed in these words: *That the growth of mankind in numbers and capacity exhibits itself in increased land values.* This will hold good whether the growth in capacity be of a physical, mental, moral, or spiritual kind, and every child of God has a right to an equal opportunity of participating in that growth and the value which it creates. To me the facts which demonstrate this law are as clear and complete as those which support the law of gravitation, and with this as a basis, believing in the Fatherhood of God, to whom each one of His children is equally dear, I cannot believe that He approves of a system which enables a very few of His children to monopolise all the advantages that come from an increase of their number, and from a growing knowledge and power over the productive forces of Nature, and to use that advancement as a whip to the backs of the rest of their fellows. Of course, the question whether the present system produces this result, and whether any proposed change would bring improvement, is one on which many of you would disagree with me, but, being profoundly impressed with the belief that all involuntary poverty, with all the sin and suffering attached to it, is the direct result of the violation by society of God's benevolent and eternal law in this connection; and, further, that the method of complying with the law and escaping those evils has been demonstrated; believing this, I say to refrain from speaking of it would be moral cowardice in me, the betrayal of a sacred trust, and in the Master's name I now demand of you to at least examine the evidence available regarding the possibility of securing for every child of God a reasonable human existence in this beautiful world of His, which He has furnished so abundantly with all things necessary to man's comfort and happiness.

Perhaps some of you may object that this is not a subject for a religious gathering like this, but I know of nothing marking out one sphere of man's interest or knowledge as sacred and another as secular, and I am thankful, as an evidence of progress towards unity, for the rapid disappearance of the striking contrast that used to be drawn between material, as secular knowledge on the one hand, and spiritual, as sacred knowledge on the other, and believe it must ultimately pass away entirely.

The laws which govern in the physical world and in the economic world are no less Divine, and, therefore, sacred, than those which prevail in the spiritual world, and a knowledge of them is equally necessary to man's highest development, so that no justification is required for asking you to enquire with diligence how far present day social conditions are in conformity with the Divine Will as expressed in the laws of the universe, and, having arrived at a conviction that

certain changes are necessary to secure that conformity, that you will fearlessly advocate those changes, regardless of the abuse and charges of fanaticism which will be hurled at your heads as they have been at the heads of all reformers since the world began, including Christ himself. How long is it since those fanatical people who would persist in bringing forward temperance motions at Church Councils were denounced for introducing political questions at religious gatherings? but most religious bodies have since discovered that the temperance question is a moral question, and so is every political and economic question a moral question, and the most pressing moral question that awaits discussion and settlement to-day is the question of the relationship that shall exist between man and the land on which he must live, and move, and have his earthly being, and when the churches come to realise, what I believe to be a fact, that the highest development of spiritual knowledge and spiritual life is being, and must be, retarded, until our economic conditions are brought more into harmony with the Divine Will, then they will bend their energies more effectively to the solution and settlement of the problem.

Further confirmation of this theory of progression will be found if we look at the chaos in which political questions are involved to-day, and when I use the word "political" in this connection, I refer to the relationship existing between man and man, the extent and limitations of the control which society or the State has a right to impose on the individuals of which it is composed. On these questions you can hardly find two people who will be agreed as to where the functions of the individual should become merged into those of the State. On the one hand, we have those who claim that not only should men have equal access to all the opportunities of Nature, but that all the implements of production and exchange should be owned and controlled by the State—in fact, that every interest and activity of the individual, from the cradle to the grave, should be controlled by society in its collective capacity in the interests of all, apportioning to each the nature and extent of the daily task. On the other hand, we have those who believe that the State has no functions to perform, except preventing any one individual from interfering with the liberty of his fellows, and an endless variety of opinion between these two extremes. That a law will be discovered which will bring unity out of this chaos I verily believe, but I also think that further progress must be made in the adjustment of economic relationships before anything like agreement can be attained in the settlement of political relationships.

Coming now to the domain of spiritual knowledge—although we see evidences on every hand of movement towards unity coming with the fuller light which accompanies increase of knowledge, still it seems to me progress made in this direction has been slow and halting, and largely of a negative character. Still, our losses often prove our greatest gains, and the loss of the old conflict between religion and science has been a great gain to both. The season of severely destructive criticism through which theological thought has been passing for a good number of years seems to be closing for the present, and an era of reconstruction taking its place, and in that reconstruction the results of physical scientific research will play an important part.

The striking tendency of the present time towards unity of material and spiritual knowledge has come about by the extension of scientific research into the realms of the occult, and the broadening of man's conceptions of the spiritual, till they almost seem on the verge of meeting.

Not so long ago physical scientists were pretty generally condemned by religionists, and with fairness, as being pure materialists, confining their attention to the three conditions of solids, liquids, and gases, and prepared to deny the existence of a fourth condition. The observation of certain phenomena not controlled or accounted for by the laws of the first three conditions necessitated the admission—nay, compelled the



acknowledgement—of a fourth condition, and it is along the line of this etheric, or fourth condition, that some startling modern theories promise developments in the direction of unifying human knowledge by providing a meeting place for material and spiritual science, the seen with the unseen.

As an illustration of scientific progress along this line, I might mention the phenomenon of induction in our telegraph and telephone wires. In certain atmospheric conditions it has been observed that, without contact at any point, a message passing along one wire gets inducted into other parallel wires, and can be taken off them by the instruments at the end. This has been discovered to be a mode of motion in the ether, which, in passing through the atoms of the wire, on which the message is travelling, takes up the vibrations occurring there, carries them through the intervening atmosphere, and reproduces them in the other parallel wires.

Further, we are told that many of the phenomena which we see around us are similarly caused by vibrations, some of them in the air, others probably in the ether, or it may be even in some yet unsuspected condition or form of substance. For example, take sound. A certain number of vibrations in the atmosphere to the second will produce a sound audible to the human ear; increase the rate of those vibrations, and you get higher notes or sounds, until at a given point they become inaudible to the human receiver, that point not being fixed exactly alike in every individual, some people hearing lower sounds and others higher than the average limit. Increasing largely the rate of vibrations, under certain conditions, heat is developed, further increase producing light, as in the ordinary electric light. This marks the limit of our power to agitate the air, and we then come to deal with this subtler form of substance called ether. A high rate of vibration in this interstitial element gives us the wonders of the Rontgen rays, by whose aid we can literally look through our own bodies, and perform many feats that would have secured martyrdom for witchcraft not so long ago. In this same region we can perform the marvels of wireless telegraphy; set up disturbances in the ether with one machine, which another machine, properly adjusted or attuned, will take up and repeat, though situated miles apart, and using no medium but the ether. Now, some of you must be thinking that this is highly extraneous matter. What I have been trying to lead up to is this, that with these wonderful examples of man's knowledge of this invisible substance, and his success in utilising its power, it does not take such a great stretch of the imagination to seriously consider a theory like this: *That the human mind in the operation of thinking sets up a similar, or still higher, range of vibrations in the ether, which, passing through the intervening atmosphere, similarly agitates other minds, causing them to think similar thoughts*, and if this were so, how many of the strange phenomena of life around us would be explained? Thought transference, the occurrence of which requires some other explanation than mere coincidence, would appear in the natural order of things, and the awful potency of even unspoken thoughts would compel a deepened sense of responsibility.

This brings me to speak of the Christian Scientists, who are very numerous in America, and have adherents now in every part of the world. You will have observed that some of their number have been receiving unenviable notoriety in the London cables of late, in connection with the death of Harold Frederic. Of course, it is not necessary to accept every doctrine of any school of thought, neither would it be wise to reject every precept of any school because of the vagaries of some of its followers. Judged by this method most sections of Christianity would have been out of court long ago. Personally, I am a good deal repelled by the idea of selling a Christian scientific cure for headache for 50 cents or upwards, according to the nature of the case or the depth of a patient's pocket.

But, fortunately, there is another phase of this new school which demands a more respectful consideration. Henry Wood, of Boston, whose books, such as "God's Image in Man," some of you know to be full of beautiful and elevating thoughts, might be taken as the philosophic exponent of Christian Science. They take as the basis of their belief this hypotnesis: *That every thought takes on a physical form, or is expressed in a physical condition, with the natural corollary, that every physical form or condition is the direct result or product of thought, and is necessarily capable of being controlled or modified by thought.*

This appears at first sight a very startling theory, as all new and fundamental theories invariably do, but, after all, is it not only a generalisation in accordance with phenomena of everyday observation? Almost everybody would admit that mind sometimes affects or modifies matter. What mother that has had the rearing of children but knows how strong mental emotions have so affected matter as to seriously interfere with the digestive organs of her child? This idea that mind transforms matter is not by any means a new one; how often have we heard people remarking about the tender, loving spirit being reflected in the saintly face of their friend.

If, then, in certain cases it can be shown that mental thought produces a definite physical result, may we not suppose that its occurrence is not in any sense a departure from the laws of nature, but rather is part of a universal law not understood by us, but quite in accord with the extensive hypothesis of the Christian Scientists?

On the authority of Mr. Henry Wood, whom I met in Boston, I understand that at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, a large number of experiments have been made which give support to this theory. For example, samples of perspiration have been taken from a great many persons, whose mental condition at the time was known, and these submitted to chemical analysis, resulting in the working out of a formula which enables them now to take similar samples without knowing the mental condition of the subject, and give from analysis a pretty accurate description of their mental condition. The Christian Scientists, believing mind to be the predominant partner in man, capable of controlling and modifying the material part of his organism, look upon health and disease as the result of mental rather than material conditions, and by means of right thinking believe they can eradicate and avoid disease, and claim to have performed some remarkable cures upon themselves and others. They quote the words of Christ, when referring to His own wonderful works of healing. He told His disciples, "That greater things than He did would they do," and believe He spoke in a literal sense. And when we come to think of it, have not some sections of the Christian Church been claiming all through the ages to have worked miraculous bodily cures, and is it not just possible that they may have been operating unconsciously a great natural law? I was impressed with this fact, that amongst the rank and file of the Mormon people, whom I met and conversed with, their faith in the Divine character of their religion was based more on the miraculous works of their present leaders than on the supernatural revelation accorded to the founders of their faith.

If further investigation should confirm and establish their hypothesis, think what an immense field it will open up, and what a vast range of mysterious phenomena it will tend to explain.

Many of the difficult mysteries of spiritualism will disappear, the Omnipresence of God will then be understood in a very real sense, if we look on ourselves and all the visible world around us as the condensation of His great thought of love, while the means of communication between His Spirit and our spirits will come within the range of our comprehension, and surely constrain us to a more complete and conscious surrender of ourselves to Him.

As an evidence that these ideas are not merely the empirical imaginings of a set of ignorant people, but have some basis of scientific truth,

I might refer you to that wonderful utterance of Sir William Crooke's, at Bristol, a few months ago, where, as President of the British Association, after discussing some of the conditions of telepathy and Spiritualism, and remarking that he thought he saw something of order evolving from the chaos in which the mass of strange phenomena connected with these subjects had been involved, he concluded as follows :—

"Science has trained and fashioned the average mind into habits of exactitude and disciplined perception, and in so doing has fortified itself for tasks higher, wider, and incomparably more wonderful than even the wisest of our ancestors imagined. Like the souls in Plato's myth, that followed the chariot of Zeus, it has ascended to a point of vision far above the earth. It is henceforth open to science to transcend all we now think we know of matter, and to gain new glimpses of a profounder scheme of Cosmic law. An eminent predecessor in this chair declared that 'by an intellectual necessity he crossed the boundary of experimental science, and discerned in that *matter* which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the potency and promise of all terrestrial life. I should prefer to reverse the apophthegm, and to say that in *life* I see the promise and potency of all forms of matter. In old Egyptian days a well-known inscription was carved over the portal of the temple of Isis : 'I am whatever hath been, is, or ever will be; and my veil no man hath yet lifted.' Not thus do modern seekers after truth confront Nature—the word that stands for the baffling mysteries of the universe. Steadily, unflinchingly, we strive to pierce the inmost heart of Nature, from which she is to reconstruct what she has been and to prophesy what yet she shall be. Veil after veil we have lifted, and her face grows more beautiful, august, and wonderful with every barrier that is withdrawn."

And this may fairly be taken as illustrating the changing attitude of scientific men generally to spiritual phenomena; leaving the materialism of the past, they are coming so closely into touch with the unseen world, that the future promises to find in them the highest witnesses and contributors to religious truth, and finally bring us to a clearer conception of the essential unity of all created things.

Now, what lessons can we learn from all this, which will help us more effectively and intelligently to discharge the duty that lies to our hand to-day, and work out in the future life of our Congregational Churches the very highest kind of service for our common Lord and Master? I think it ought to guard us against arrogance of thought and speech, keep us from thinking that we have captured the only beautiful bird of truth and enclosed it in our tiny cage. That while we undoubtedly have become possessed of a small piece of that priceless gem of Divine knowledge, and should valiantly hold it on high, so that it may reflect the rays of Divine love on all around us, we should remember that, after all, it is only a broken fragment, which will shine all the more resplendently when united with the other fragments lying around us.

To this end we ought to signalise the birth of the coming century by some move towards closer Christian unity in this colony. What should stand in the way of a closer union with our Baptist friends? We could each bring to such a union elements of strength, and our united forces could make a more gallant and successful fight for some of those cherished principles we both hold dear. And is it not possible for something to be done in the way of uniting for aggressive work all those sections of the Christian Church which, in England, are known as the Free Churches—like what has been done by the Free Church Council at Home? Surely our conditions in these new lands are such that we might lead the van in this unifying movement. We have no State Church hanging round our necks like a millstone, our children mingle in the public schools, forming friendships unfettered by the

narrowing influence of sects or creeds, while our nearer approach to equality of social conditions should help us in a more united worship of the one God.

In my travels round the world I came into brotherly relations with men of all shades of religious belief, fraternising with ministers of the Free Churches, and ministers of the Anglican Church, with Roman Catholic priest, and Jewish rabbi, and everywhere found we could meet on common ground around the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, so that forms and organisations, systems of church government, and even speculative beliefs, seemed to take a very secondary place, and character seemed all in all. Character which has power to transform the world, to bind man more closely to his brother man, and establish the most filial relations with his God. Character which is essential in the lonely student prying into Nature's deepest secrets, as well as in the man of public life, buffeted about in the turmoil of contending factions, and the product of this character is the great work of the Church universal.

The formation and development of character is like the attunement of the soul of man to the great soul of the universe, forming the link which unites man's life to the Life of God, and just as the receiving instrument of the Marconi ray must be adjusted or attuned to the generator before it can receive and repeat the message, so must our heart and life be in attunement with God before we can receive and repeat the message of His eternal, all-embracing love to man.

In thus advocating unity, do not think I am desirous of seeing our individuality lost, through absorption into some of the larger bodies, and our distinctive principles cast aside. No, we must not throw away the fragment of the jewel we possess, because the whole would be incomplete without its part. Even amidst the evidences of unity of which I have spoken, there are instances of retrograde movements—cases of reversal to type, as it were—which demand our most diligent attention. You know it is frequently necessary to take a step or two backward to gain momentum for overcoming some physical obstacle that lies between us and our goal; and so it is in moral movements. We have had several backward movements of this kind in England during the past few years.

First, we had the Education Act, where a great political party sacrificed the national welfare to the bigotry of a sect, handing over large monetary grants to schools admittedly inferior, over which the ratepayers had no control, and where doctrines were taught in which many of them did not believe. This ruthless destruction of the compromise of 1870 has reopened the whole question of education, which will not be closed again until an advance far ahead of all previous arrangements has been made.

Next, we had the Landlords Relief Bill, where a Parliament of landlords, in emulation of the brigandage of their fathers, who robbed the people of England of their patrimony by the Enclosure Acts, passed a Bill to further enslave the people by repudiating the obligations which formed part of the conditions under which they held their vast possessions of land. This has re-opened the whole question of landlordism, and the recent census taken by the *Daily Mail* in London, as to what should constitute the programme of the Liberal party, when the taxation of land values came out second on the list, shows pretty clearly how the final settlement of this question must go.

Then we have the great Ritualistic and Sacerdotal movements, which have been eating like a canker worm at the heart of the Established Church in England for a good many years: they seem to have come to a head, and, by drawing public attention to the anomalies and flagrant breaches of the law within the Establishment, are raising in an acute form the whole question of the relationship of Church and State, and the final settlement of that question can only mean emancipation.

With these instances of retrogression before our eyes, it would never do for us to think of relinquishing the fight for freedom; we are the inheritors of a noble record, and we are called to deeds of valour which shall prove a rich inheritance to our children. Our past work in this colony has contributed a good deal to robustness of life and character; its influence is reflected in our magnificent system of free, secular, and compulsory education, and the democratic character of our institutions generally. The grand heroic struggle of our forefathers in the cause of freedom, for liberty of conscience, must inspire us to add fresh laurels to our name, by taking a wise but valiant part in the greater struggle yet to come, for the larger freedom, for industrial liberty, and so hasten on the time when the whole world shall be joined together in the unity of the spirit and the bonds of peace, when "man to man, the world o'er, shall Brithers be and a' that."



