

change in his neighbor, nor unaffected by it when known. Thus through the force of conscience a self-propagating power is imparted to religious reformations. Once start the process in a particular spot, and conscience will become the catalytic agency to transmit it from individual to individual, we cannot tell how widely.

*In the third place, the history of Christianity shows it to be possessed of an extraordinary catalytic power.*

Recall to mind the circumstances under which the gospel was first introduced. Its Author, a poor, persecuted wanderer, chose twelve illiterate fishermen for his council, his heralds, his body guard, and his successors in propagating his system of truth among men. The whole world, too, stood armed to the teeth to resist its introduction. All its prejudices, its social, political, religious, and even its military power, was ready to be arrayed against the gospel; and, in fact, all these forces were employed to arrest its progress, and to root it out of the world. Ten times within three hundred years did the mighty Emperors of Rome assail Christianity with fire and sword. And they felt sure of a triumph; for how could a few feeble, contemptible fanatics, without wealth, power, or influence, resist an array that had conquered the world? But how little did these worldly-wise rulers know of the inherent vitality, the self-sustaining and self-propagating power of the gospel! So that, in fact, while they supposed they were giving the finishing blow to the system, it was silently and irresistibly working its way into the hearts and affections of all classes of the community, till at length, in the beginning of the fourth century, it became the established religion of the empire.

Perhaps you will say this was the effect of the miraculous agency that was manifested in the church in apostolic times.