

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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In the year 1000 the number of nominal Christians in the world was computed at about only 50,000,000; in 1500, 100,000,000; in 1700, 155,000,000; in 1800, 250,000,000; and now, in a world population of about 1,130,000,000, 177,000,000.

As to the different governments of the world and the people whom they rule, nearly 800,000,000 of the 1,130,000,000 inhabitants of the world are under Christian governments. The progress, at first slow, has been with an ever-increasing ratio.

As to the different forms of Christianity. In the year 1700 there were 90,000,000 of the inhabitants of the world under Roman Catholic governments; 33,000,000 under Greek; and 32,000,000 under Protestant; and now the number under Protestant is about 450,000,000 of the 800,000,000 who are under Christian governments.

As to the United States, the latest reports (of 1896) give 25,424,133 as the number of communicant members in all the churches of all kinds, and about 10,000,000 children in all the Sunday-schools, which figures seem to leave a large proportion of the population beyond all direct ecclesiastical connection, not connected in any way with any of the churches or schools, though, of course, many of those who are not members of any church may be in families some of whose members are in the churches and schools and attendants upon the services, and, in some measure, under their influence.

The contrast between the little Ante-Pentecostal Church in Jerusalem of 120 members and the millions upon millions among almost all nations now is great in the arithmetical figures, but the Omniscient One alone knows the number of the saved for eternity—the multitude of true and obedient believers in the crucified Jesus, and the incomparably greater multitude still of all the infant dead, who have been taken to the glory of heaven during the terrestrial strife and progress. And as to the intellectual, moral, social, restraining, elevating influence which Christianity has had upon society at large in the nations it has reached, and not merely upon those who have been eternally saved through it, what human pen can describe it all?—*Missionary Review of the World*.

THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

The following address was delivered by Rev. James Crookston at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Newcastle, N.S.W.

A striking and beautiful legend prevailed among the Germans. When the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden occurred, two angels, pitying them, asked to come and abide with the smitten ones on this earth. One was named Hope, and the other Music. Hope was always dwelling in their hearts, comforting them and teaching them ever to look forward and upward; while Music spoke to them through nature around them. The babbling brook, as it rippled o'er the pebbly bed, uttered a silvery song, and the breezes among the trees, even in their sighing, seemed music to them, inspiring their thoughts and aspirations with ideas of a better life. The birds, too, singing out of their embowered wood, led them to think that there was still something sweet left in the world. But a higher mission still of the angel was to insinuate itself into the innermost recesses of the soul of man, and help to bring back every discordant string into sympathy with truth and beauty; give him aid in interpreting not only the songful lessons of nature aright, but in giving voice to the deepest utterances of the heart, teaching brain and tongue to frame tones of song that should float down the ages, through all lands and climes, and so influence human character and lighten many a human burden. Poetry is the sister of music—its methods of vocalisation in all time. How large a portion of the Bible is thrown into poetry? God thus puts His estimate on its value and influence in the moulding of human character. We know how grandly influential was the flow of classic song away back in the ages of Homer and Virgil, and how during the Middle Ages, when reading and books were almost unknown or forgotten, the hard and minstrel, wandering from land to land, kept alive the flame of true chivalry. No one needs to be told how potent a factor music has been in human weal or woe. In critical times it has often cast the die. At a critical moment during the battle of Waterloo, Wellington discovered that the 42nd

Highlanders began to waver. He asked the cause of so unusual an occurrence, and was informed that the pipes had ceased to play. Instantly he commanded that the pipers should play in full force. The effect was magical. The wavering Highlanders rallied, and solid and impregnable as Gibraltar Rock they pushed forward to win the hardly-contested field. But nowhere has the power of music been felt as in the Church of Christ. In all ages and in all lands the voice of praise has been the voice of song. The intimate connection between music and religion is one of the most interesting facts of sacred history. It is not a mere accident. It has the warrant of inspiration and angelic usage. Music and religion have not only, hand-in-hand, come down the pathway of human history, bringing joy to the world, and giving that joy a suitable expression, but beyond this earth the voice of music is still the voice of praise. In the laying of earth's corner stones "the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy." Far away on the other side of earthly history we hear again the voice of song in praise singing "the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb." From everlasting to everlasting is the epoch of sacred song, and its range is from the mouths of babes and sucklings to the blood-washed saints and seraphim of heaven. You are not surprised, therefore, that the Christian Church has used poetry and music as the golden chalice in which to preserve all that is most precious in her history. All her great deliverances, all her bitterest trials, are held for ever safe in her music. From the song of Miriam, the Cantate Domino, to the Nunc Dimittis is a sacred and grand march of song in which are volumes of sacred history. And in her hymns are histories like the stars of heaven for multitude, rich beyond expression in every phase of Christian doctrine and experience. This is the Church's possession. We are the heirs of the ages in many things, but among the most precious of our birthrights is this one of music and song. We eat the fruit of the trees our fathers planted; we dwell in houses which they built; we sing the songs which they composed and hallowed by their best affections. But, like many who fall heir to great possessions, the Church of to-day does not know how to value her wealth, nor how to turn it to account. Rich beyond measure is the Christian Church in music and song, but slothful beyond excuse in her employment of it. God has put songs both new and old into our mouth, yet how slow are we to use them as we ought! If God has given us song, we ought to learn how to sing the songs. The songs of the Zion of olden days were known by not only the choir, but by the people. You expect your ministers to make good and careful preparations for preaching, but if ministers preached as badly as congregations sing, not one church out of fifty would decently support a minister. My idea of the place of music in public worship is just this: It should be much more a thing of the congregation than it is; in fact, there is very largely an utter neglect of congregational singing. Congregations do not realise what they miss by this lack of familiarity with the hymns of the Church. In them you have the gems of literature. The standard hymns of the Church are good and beautiful. No other collection of lyric poetry can compare with the best hymnals of the Church to-day. A good hymn-book is a whole library of poetry. A volume which for purity and depth of thought and feeling, dignity and sweetness and beauty of expression, is far superior to any of the lyric poetry that could be procured at any cost in the best days of Greek or Latin literature. There is nothing in ancient literature equal to the Hebrew psalm:—

"All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice!
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice."

Nor is there anything finer in modern poetry than

"Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

The man who knows his hymn-book thoroughly is better read in poetry than the man who knows Shakespeare, Milton and Browning, and is ignorant of the hymns. As a means of instruction the hymns of the Church can hardly be over-estimated. We use these first; the mother usually and naturally begins with sweet psalms and hymns. Many a man's whole stock of theology consists in the bits of hymns he learned from his mother, or at Sunday-school. And in the Church it has a more powerful place than people think. A man may resist the logic of a sermon, he stands on the