

This statement, which is doubtless essentially accurate, shows that *relatively*—so far as the number of its adherents is concerned—the position of Christianity in the middle of the nineteenth century is not quite so bad as some people suppose.

But the view becomes more cheering, by far, when we look at its position in some other respects.

1. The Christian countries—which constitute Europe entire (with the doubtful exception of Turkey, in which there are in fact more Christians* than Mohammedans) and all America (with the exception of the north-western part of North America, and the middle and southern portions of South America)—constitute the superior civilization of the world. Whatever may be the civilization of Mohammedan countries, and of India and China, or any other part of the non-Christian world, no one will undertake to maintain that it is equal, or even comparable, to that of Christian lands. Where are the education, the science, the art, the good government, the wholesome laws, the wealth of the world, but in Christian countries? On this point there can be no comparison instituted between Christendom and the rest of the world.

2. The commerce of the world is in the hands of Christian nations, and consequently they possess all the advantages for propagating the religion of the SAVIOUR throughout the world, which this state of things gives them. The ships of Christian nations traverse every ocean, and their sails whiten every sea, and strait and bay. And soon the steamers of Christian nations will be seen making their foaming way on every river of the habitable globe. This state of things must be duly estimated by all who would form a correct opinion of the position, influence, and prospects of Christianity in the world at the present day.

3. The military power of the world is now in the hands of Christian nations. In this respect there has been a wonderful change within a few centuries. In the year 1415, when the Council of Constance was busy in extirpating Heresy, and about the time that John Huss and Jerome of Prague, were burning at the stake, the victorious Mohammed I., the powerful Padishah of the Turks, marched his troops to Salzburg, in Southern Germany; and for aught we can see, might have marched them to Constance, and sent the holy Fathers about better business. Even in 1683, one of his successors, Mohammed IV., thundered at the gates of Vienna, and caused all Christendom to quake! At that period the Barbary States were formidable enough to enslave the commerce in the Mediterranean Sea, of the most powerful nations of Europe. And the Fagan empires in India and China were quite formidable.

Very different is the present state of things.—As to Turkey, the only Mohammedan Power worthy of mention, the little kingdom of Holland, with only three millions of inhabitants, has, in reality, more inherent strength, and could in six months sweep the Turkish commerce from the ocean. And a few English ships of war, with some fifteen or twenty thousand troops aboard, are now quite sufficient to frighten the Emperor of China into the acceptance of the most unfavourable terms.

What has brought about this state of things? You will agree with me in believing that Christianity has done it. The civilization which Christian nations owe to Christianity has given them that superiority in letters, in arts, in sciences, in commerce, in military affairs, which in these times forms an astonishing contrast between Christendom and the rest of the world. There are men who affect to believe that the influence of Christianity, in this respect, has been

over-estimated. But they have certainly not examined the subject with care, else they would have come to a very different conclusion.

Now, if all the portions of Christendom possessed only as much true religion as some do—for example, Great Britain and these United States—what a mighty influence it soon would exert upon the world! What a host of Christian missionaries would annually go forth to replace those who annually fall on the field of battle, or to make new incursions into the territory of the Enemy! What an influence in behalf of the Truth, Russia would then send down into the very heart of Asia! How salutary would the influence of Italy and Spain be on the Mohammedans of Northern Africa! The work of converting the world would advance with accelerated rapidity, and the time would not be very far off when it would be proclaimed in Heaven, as well as throughout the Earth, that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Is it not worth while, then, to make efforts to bring about the regeneration—the renewed evangelization of all the portions of (nominal) Christendom which need it! And cannot British and American Protestants be made to see and feel the importance of this great work—so indispensable to the speedy and complete subjugation of the world to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Oh, how important is the work of Home Missions! How important is the Home Missionary work of Christendom! Is it not as incumbent on us to pray and labour for the regeneration of Christendom, as to pray and labour for Heathen lands? Most certainly it is.

I am your friend and brother in the faith and service of our Common SAVIOUR.

R. BAIRD.

CHINA.

THE REV. W. C. BURNS TO THE CONVENER.

Amoy, August 5th, 1851.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The post left Amoy so suddenly last month, that I had no time to write, but you would learn from Dr. Young's letter to Mr. Matheson that I had come here. I was very unwilling to leave Canton, but my efforts to get a suitable place for going on in the work in the way that I had been doing, altogether failed; and being refused a place which I had hoped to get two or three days after I wrote you, I made up my mind to come to Amoy, and accordingly embarked on the 26th of June, in the barque *Herald*, from Whampoa to this place. We had a very favorable passage, and on the way I had, in the kind arrangement of Divine Providence, the privilege of spending two days (Sabbath and Monday) at Hong-Kong among former friends. I reached Amoy on the 5th of July, so that I have been already a month here. I stayed, on my arrival, with Mr. Strenach, of the London Society, who, with all the other brethren, gave me a very kind welcome, and then took up my abode, at least for the present, in a small but well aired upper room attached to the school, which was made over to Dr. Young by another missionary; on his arrival here last year. I am thus at but a short distance from my brethren, set down much to my mind, in the very midst of the people; and with so many Chinese voices around me, and the privilege of joining daily in worship conducted in this dialect, I am gradually acquiring the language which I must now speak. This is very different from the language spoken at Canton, not only from the sounds given to the same characters being almost entirely different, but also from the fact, that of the language commonly spoken here, there is a very considerable proportion which has no proper representative in the written language, and is in other provinces of China wholly unknown. However, availing myself of the aids which are furnished by the la-

bors of the missionaries in dictionaries, &c., I am already able to understand a great part of what I hear in preaching, and can also generally make myself understood by those about me, although, of course, I am not yet thinking of speaking publicly, and may not be able to do this suitably for some time. Dr. Young has just got settled in the house, which he rents for two years from a missionary who has gone home, and is going on with the schools, &c., as before. The people here present a great contrast to the Canton population in their kind and respectful treatment of foreigners. In this respect, it seems to me as if I were now in a different country. My dwelling among them, where I at present am situated, seems to be no more noticed than if I were one of themselves. They seem also favorably disposed to the hearing of the Gospel, although it is true, on the other hand, that I have not seen, as yet, so large numbers at public meetings, as I have often seen in Canton. I shall not add more at present, but desiring to be ever remembered at the throne of grace,

I am ever, dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

Wm. C. Burns.

MICRONESIA.

Under its proper head will be found the embarkation of several missionaries, who are expected to commence a new mission among those groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean, which are comprised under the general name of Micronesia, a term which signifies "the region of small islands." The substance of what is known of them and of their inhabitants, is contained in the charge, given to Dr. Gulek at his ordination, by Dr. Pomroy; from which the account that follows is drawn:—

Micronesia comprises several groups of islands, lying north of New Guinea and the Feejee Islands, east of Celebes and the Philippines, and south-west of the Sandwich Islands, extending through about forty degrees of longitude and twenty of latitude, almost the whole of it being north of the equator. The principal groups in this division, are the Pelew, Ladrone, Caroline, Ralick and Radick Islands, Mulsgraves and Kingmill. The islands are very numerous, but not large.

The Micronesians are of the same race with their neighbors, the Polynesians, to whom the Sandwich Islanders belong, and are like them in complexion, features, physical structure, language, customs, and general characteristics. There are, however, some diversities in the different groups of the region. The more southern islands have evidently received some accessions, and some modifications of complexion and character, from the Melanesians on their southern border, while the western section has clearly been reached by influence from the Asiatic continent.

They are social and enterprising. A constant intercommunication is kept up by the inhabitants of the different groups and islands, a circumstance highly favorable to the spread of the gospel among them. In their voyages, it is said, they govern their courses by the stars with great accuracy. They divide the horizon into twenty-eight points, giving to each a name.

Their skill in some of the arts is considerable. Their canoes, which sail either way with equal facility, are covered with a varnish of native manufacture, which renders them water-tight. The girdles or sashes which they wear, are made of the filaments of the banana plant, not braided as in other parts of the Pacific, but woven in a simple loom, the shuttle being much like that in use among us.

In regard to general character, all navigators who have visited them, are strikingly agreed, and testify that their most striking trait is a certain native kindness of heart, sweetness of natural temper, and an absence of harsh and violent feelings, very rarely to be found among men in the savage state. They are distinguished also from

* I speak of nominal Christians, of course; and it is in this sense that I use the word throughout this letter, unless when qualified by some other word.