

The Coming Kingdom.

THE Missionary record of the 19th Century is the most eventful since the Christian Era began. Last century witnessed Christianity in all its branches at the lowest ebb. The Protestant Churches were especially *dead*. Religion had fallen into a state of cold formalism. Scepticism and infidelity had obtained a temporary ascendancy. It was the age of Hume, and Gibbon, and Paine, and Voltaire, and others of crowning intellect whose ambition seemed to have been the utter overthrow of Christianity. But, in the darkest days, God has never left the world without some faithful witnesses to its truth and power. At the most unexpected moment, and by means the least likely, He has caused "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." It was at the beginning of this century that a missionary spirit began to breathe upon the churches of the Reformation. Then there were but *ten* missionary societies in the Protestant world, and, if we except the society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Moravian Missionary Society, they existed scarcely more than in name. Foreign Missions had as yet only been propounded as a problem to be discussed in ecclesiastical courts, and from year to year to be consigned to oblivion.

How stands the case now? The Protestant Churches have more than 60 distinct societies for promoting Foreign Missions. With an aggregate annual income of over \$6,000,000, they together have in the field a staff of 2300 European and American ordained missionaries. These are assisted by 19,000 native labourers—catechists and

teachers. Out of heathendom, they have gathered into the Christian fold 502,494 communicants, and half a million of children are under instruction in their schools.

Wanting in many of the advantages enjoyed in the Apostolic age, when missionaries received a higher than Presbyterial ordination, and were divinely endowed for their work, it is not a rash statement to say that there have been more converts from the heathen during the last fifty years than there were in the first fifty years of the Christian age.

It is not a matter of opinion, but of demonstration, that the average increase of communicants (not to speak of nominal adherents)—in congregations reclaimed from heathenism—is relatively greater than in the congregations of the Parent Protestant Churches. Take for example the Presbyterian Church of the United States,—the gains in membership over the whole church in the last three years is found to have been *eight* per cent. The estimate of increase of membership in all the Missions of the Foreign Board of that Church is stated to have been during the same period over *sixty-four* per cent! Looking no further than to the results of our own Missionaries' labours in Formosa, is it a small thing to be able to say that in five years from the commencement of that mission no less than *seventy-five* idolaters have, after the most rigid Presbyterian examination, and the exercise of more than usual caution, been admitted to full membership in the Christian church! How many congregations are there in Canada who can count so many genuine converts in the same length of time?

But to take the commercial and lowest aspect of the case, some one will say, are the results commensurate with the money