

The Great Conquest.

OTHER MISSIONS have their appointed bounds. The field of FOREIGN MISSIONS is the World! The marching orders of the Christian army as it advances to the Great Conquest are the last words of its Great Commander,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

The population of the world is computed to be about 1,374 millions, divided somewhat as follows.—HEATHEN, 900,000,000. CHRISTIAN, 347,000,000: MUHAMMEDAN, 120,000,000: JEWS, 7,000,000. Four-fifths of the human race are either entirely ignorant of Jesus Christ, or refuse to accept as their Saviour Him concerning whom we believe that “THERE IS NO OTHER NAME GIVEN UNDER HEAVEN AMONG MEN WHEREBY WE MUST BE SAVED.”

It is not necessary to enter into a discussion as to the salvability of the heathen. David Livingstone's remarks about Sebituane, the noble Bechuana chief, whom he encountered in the heart of Africa, and who died suddenly before he was made to understand the Christian system, is perhaps all that can be said on the subject;—“He was the best specimen of a native chief I ever met, and it was impossible not to follow him in thought into the world of which he had just heard when he was called away, and not to realize somewhat of the feelings of those who pray for the dead. The deep, dark question, of what is to become of such as he, must be left where we find it, believing assuredly that the Judge of all the earth will do right.” We recognize it to be our duty and our privilege to instruct the heathen in the Christian religion, and this work, whether regarded simply as respects its magnitude, or the results expected to follow, is certainly the grandest ever presented to the mind of man.

Is the conversion of this appalling mass of

heathenism at all possible? or, does past experience indicate that the advocates of Foreign missions are engaged in a fruitless and hopeless warfare? There is nothing so conducive to success as success. People, as a rule, like to be on the winning side. Can we shew any appreciable results as the outcome of missionary effort in the nineteenth century? The fact of the matter is, we are living in the best time Christianity has ever seen; only some of us don't know it. It is now with us the Third great Reformation—the era, pre-eminently, of missionary enterprise. In the beginning of this century you could count the missionary societies of all the Protestant churches on your ten fingers. Now we have more than seventy large, well organized, efficient societies, under whose direction there are twenty-three hundred European and American ordained missionaries, with a staff of trained native assistants numbering over twenty thousand. The Bible has been printed in nearly three hundred different dialects, and thus the way has been prepared for all nations and tribes to hear and read the Gospel in their own language. Countries hitherto hermetically sealed, have in a remarkable manner opened their doors to commerce and Christianity. Notably has this been the case in China and Japan, seats of the densest masses of heathenism. In “The Celestial Empire,” where until quite recently the herald of the cross dared not open his mouth, there are already two hundred and fifty missionaries, and fifty thousand Christians. The inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands † are as much a Christian community as the people of the United States who began their conversion in 1820. Fifty years ago, there was not a single Christian in the group of the Friendly Islands. Now, thirty thousand natives, clothed and in their right mind, meet regularly for worship on the Lord's day. The

† See Record for May, 1879.