

of the world cannot possibly be effected by preaching the gospel either to tribes, or communities, or nations in the mass. It must be effected by the instruction, illumination and conversion of individuals. The truth has to be brought to bear upon men one by one. Successful evangelization is the product of effort with individuals rather than with masses. No doubt, the lines of family, of kindred, and of nationality are those along which the work must be conducted. But after all men are not evangelized, and they cannot be evangelized as whole families, or tribes, or nations, but as individuals. Availing themselves therefore as far as possible of the advantages of domestic, social and national influence the heralds of salvation must go personally, and preach the gospel personally as well as repeatedly to every creature. How much of toil and effort and self denial are involved in this will become at least dimly apparent when we consider the enormous proportion of the human family which has never yet heard the gospel. If those who have the best right to speak with authority upon this point are correct in their statement that of the 1,500,000,000 of the world's population at the present time, 1,000,000,000, or two thirds of the whole number, are as utterly ignorant of the gospel as if this commission had never been given, what an affecting view this one fact, thoughtfully considered, opens up with respect to the enormous magnitude of the work.

But let us look at the matter in another aspect. Christianity was never so widely prevalent as it is to-day. Missionary effort has seldom or never been put forth with more intelligence, zeal, or devotion than at the present time. Yet notwithstanding the present prevalence and power of christianity in so many parts of the world, in spite of the almost unparalleled missionary activity of the last one hundred years, there is reason to believe that never at any period in the past were there so many people in the world destitute of the knowledge of the gospel as there are to-day. The author of the now celebrated article on "A Century of Foreign Missions" affirms that the heathen and Mohammedan population of the world is more by 200,000,000 than it was one hundred years ago, while the living converts to christianity and their families do not amount to 3,000,000, and he draws this startling and impressive inference, that,

even during the boasted century of Protestant Missions, the increase of the unevangelized population of the world is numerically about seventy times as great as that of the converts to christianity. Now if this view of the matter be correct, if with all the missionary activity of this age the church is overtaking only one in 70, not of the heathen population of the globe, but only of the increase of that population as compared with a century ago; or to put it more broadly if with all the missionary activity of this age the church is reaching only 3,000,000 out of 1,000,000,000; in other words, only one in upwards of 330 of those whom she ought to reach, whom she would reach if she carried out her commission fully, it must be painfully apparent how colossal is the magnitude of the task which has been impressed upon her.

But once more, if we are to be adequately impressed with its enormous magnitude, we need to bear in mind that each one of these unevangelized millions has within him the taint of moral and spiritual depravity; a taint which no human power can remove; a taint which even the truth of the gospel apart from the power of the Almighty arm that wields it is unable to remove; a taint which invariably ensures indifference and very often hostility to the truth. We need to remember further that that taint has been made infinitely harder to remove by the evil habits which have been acquired under its influence. Nor ought we to overlook the fact that the great mass of the heathen, in addition to their native depravity and hostility to the truth, in addition to the evil habits which they have formed and the vile customs which they have practiced, are under the influence of organized systems of superstition and error which exercise an immense influence over them, systems which have been hallowed by antiquity, and rendered sacred in their eyes by their national traditions, and by the veneration of their ancestors, systems some of which are older than christianity itself, and a few of which have sacred books which have been studied by successive generations for ages.

Whether therefore we think of the comprehensive sweep of the great commission; the vast number of persons which it requires those who are charged with its execution to reach or the number and power of the hostile forces with which the attempt to execute it brings them into collision, we cannot fail to be impressed with the