

Wherever pious men attempted the conversion of Pagan nations and tribes, preaching to them, even in a very imperfect way, the gospel of Christ, they obtained success. But when Princes, more zealous than wise, endeavored to compel the reception of Christianity and submission to the Baptismal rite, at the point of the sword, they met a stubborn resistance. Charlemagne attempted this course with the Saxons, and failed. The Hungarians indeed were nominally converted in this military manner; but the consequence was, that they retained for more than a hundred years a partiality for their old Pagan worship.

The Missionaries of the middle ages we hold in honorable remembrance for their courage, patience and zeal. But the Christianity propagated by them was laden with superstitious observances, and became subservient to the dictates of the See of Rome. Darkness that might be felt brooded over Christendom. At last light broke. The 16th century is rendered illustrious by the Reformation.

"The web, that for a thousand years had grown  
O'er prostrate Europe, in that day of dread  
Crumbled and fell, as fire dissolves the flaxen thread."

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Reformed Churches were engaged in organising and defending themselves. It must be confessed that they were excelled in missionary enterprise by the Church of Rome, which by means of the early Jesuit missions recovered some of its lost ground, and won new territory and new influence in Asia and America. The eighteenth century was for the most part a period of reaction, coldness, and declension.

III. *The missions of the nineteenth century* form a new and interesting epoch. Denmark, Germany and Switzerland have sent forth many excellent Missionaries; but the main support of modern missions has been found, as every one knows, in the British and American Churches. Such of those Churches as follow the Presbyterian polity have conducted their missions in their ecclesiastical capacity. Other Churches have been obliged to remedy their defective constitutions by the expedient of forming Missionary Societies, to which members are admitted on a pecuniary qualification. Such are the Baptist, Methodist, London, and Church Missionary Societies, all of which are nearly contemporaneous in origin, having been formed within the closing ten years of the eighteenth century.

The chief labors and successes of modern Evangelical missions have been in Polynesia, New Zealand, Western and Southern Africa, India, Burmah, and, to a smaller extent, in China. They are scattered more widely than the missions of former epochs, and are at least making an attempt to establish Christianity, as no longer *one* religion among many, but the *sole* true religion for the whole world.

A comparison of the present missionary epoch with the two former suggests certain important grounds of encouragement.

1. Compare them in respect to *length of time*. The first and second missionary movements continued for hundreds of years. The third has not much exceeded half a century. If so much has been effected in so short a time, in the