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THE COMING AGE OF MISSIONS.

[EDITORIAL, A. T. P.]

We stand on the threshold of a new century of missionary enterprise. The time is coming when the Church of God will look back to the present age of missions as we now look back to the feeble beginnings of a century ago, with astonishment and shame that believers in Christ could ever have stood on so low a plane in respect to their debt and duty to the lost.

We now marvel that William Carey should have met persistent and even malignant opposition from professed ministers of Christ, and even from brethren of his own denomination, in his scheme for a world's evangelization; and that for ten years his own enthusiasm and consecration should have been so nearly stifled by the atmosphere of indifference and resistance which he was compelled to breathe. We read with surprise the assaults of the *Reverend* Sydney Smith; we see him sharpening most keenly the arrows in the quiver of his wit, to shoot into that "nest of consecrated cobblers" whom he meant to "rout out" by the sting and smart of his unsanctified ridicule; we hear him, with a sarcasm and irony that verge on profanity and blasphemy, mockingly portraying the heroism that led holy men and women, of whom the world was not worthy, to seek a home amid cannibal savages; hinting that they might, at least, furnish for travellers, stopping at those "hospitable shores," a "slice of cold missionary." We read with amazement the speech of Charles Marsh in the House of Commons, remonstrating against the sending of missionaries to India, lest they should disturb those beneficent systems of religion and morals descended by Providence for the welfare of the people of Hindustan; and we recall with even greater surprise the arguments of an orthodox ecclesiastic in the House of Lords, who undertook to demonstrate that the command of Christ did not apply to the evangelization of India! We cannot understand now a condition of things a hundred years ago, when there was scarce a missionary society in Protestant Christendom, and when the Church of God doubted if it did not deny the obligation to go into all the world with the Gospel witness to all nations; when scarce a thousand pounds a year were spent upon all the missions of the Reformed churches, and a mere pioneer band of workers, mostly Moravians, made up the entire mission force; when there