

THE MISSION OUTLOOK.—II.

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We proceed to speak of the foreign field. And first we ask what progress has been made in the evangelizing of the nations generally?

We sometimes hear even the friends of missions assert that the progress is deplorably small. We ask—small in comparison with what? If the answer be—small in proportion to the effort made, the answer runs clean counter to our deepest convictions. Considering how little man has done or tried to do, the blessing from on high appears to us most graciously, most marvelously large. The seed we sow never perishes; it brings forth fifty, sixty and a hundred fold. Just compare the progress made in modern times with what was witnessed when the Gospel was preached even by apostolic lips. Some thoughtlessly speak as if the miracle of Pentecost had been frequently repeated through the early centuries. It was not so, even during the first. The highest estimate which we can possibly form of the number of professing Christians in the year 100 is not half a million, including children, and some authorities make it considerably less. But, during the last century, more than 3,000,000 have been rescued from heathenism by Protestant missions alone. The Lord is pleased to bless our poor, initial efforts far beyond what we had reason to expect—for very feeble and faltering have these efforts been; and His marvelous goodness ought to impel us to run henceforth the way of His commandments.

We are fully aware of the retort which is frequently made: "Yes, you have gained perhaps 3,000,000 from heathenism during the last century; but the heathen population of the world has been increased by a vastly greater number; and there are far more heathen now than there were a hundred years ago." True, but the Christian population of the world has been increasing too. *Proportionally* it seems to increase twice as fast as the heathen population; and by the end of the present century—that is, ten years hence—the Christian inhabitants will *actually* increase more rapidly than the heathen inhabitants. Of course, we may be told that merely nominal Christianity is of no value. But that is not true. Just compare the state of Europe with that of the heart of Africa! The last accounts, supplied by Stanley and Mackay, regarding interior Africa, are as horrible as the descriptions which Dante gives of hell. Europe is no paradise; but neither is it a pandemonium.

We are amazed at the erroneous conceptions as to the progress of missions existing in quarters that ought to be well informed. A few years ago a journal of high name asserted that the conversions to Mohammedanism in British India were about a hundred thousand annually. More recently an anonymous writer in one of our most influential magazines maintained that the conversions to Islam were