

val of any obstacles to missionary labour that may still remain, and the prevalence more widely of a conviction that the best interests of India, as of every other region on the earth, cannot be successfully promoted apart from the universal extension of Christianity. Waving at present all discussion of questions as to the duties of the Government in connexion with this great and paramount object, and the measures which those in authority ought to sanction and prosecute for the highest good of India, it is obvious that, as facilities for missionary operations are increased, there is laid on the Church a corresponding obligation to make more strenuous exertions. The pathways laid open ought to be entered with alacrity; and, although the unsettled condition of India, and the perils by which many are surrounded, must awaken anxious fears—while the shock recently given to commercial confidence cannot have wholly expended its force in the year just ended but must still continue to be felt—such considerations can form no argument against persevering and augmented zeal in the prosecution of the work, and the gift of liberal contributions to this object by all whom God has blessed with the means of experiencing the delightful gratification which the exercise of such munificence invariably secures. The missionary efforts of the Church of Scotland have indeed been very limited, and complaints consequently are sometimes uttered in tones less fitted to stimulate than to discourage. It is unquestionably to be much regretted that more has not been done; but combined exertion, mutual confidence, fervent prayer, would contribute most effectually to remove this reproach. Were opportunities of commending this mission eagerly sought, and explanations of its nature given to those whose attention has not been specially directed to its importance, much good might be anticipated. Able, intelligent, well-educated, pious young men, giving indication of a missionary spirit, and of a self-sacrificing, high-principled, earnest disposition, ought not to be overlooked, by any one having at heart the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Their attention might be directed to this field. The hope of finding many such missionaries may be faint; but let it not be forgotten that He for whose service they are required is able and willing to provide labourers for His harvest. Let this year on which we have entered be distinguished by cordial union and fervent zeal; and, while we pray that God may overrule all events in such a manner as to benefit the natives of India, let us also ask that devoted missionaries may be found in larger number, and that ample means may be provided for their support. The Committee ere long may come to the resolution of making a di-

rect appeal for increased contributions—urged by the impressive considerations that an intense interest in all that pertains to India is now nearly universal; that the evils of heathenism have been fearfully displayed; that a loud call is addressed to us, not only to supply that place in the Punjab left vacant by the cruel murder of our late lamented missionary there, but also to increase the number of our missionaries in other stations. Whatever the Government may be induced to do, our duty clearly is to endeavor, by every means in our power, to be instrumental in the great work of breaking up that inveterate and ruinous system of error, superstition, and idolatry, by which India is now enslaved—so fruitful in falsehood and revolting crime, and in raising barriers between the natives and all that is truly good and valuable in connexion alike with time and with eternity.

Protestant Central Society of France.

THE following statement has just been received from the Committee of the Central Society, on behalf of which, as well as of the Waldensian Church, we propose to appeal to the Church on Sabbath the 17th inst. :—

The Protestant Central Evangelizing Society continues, under the blessing of God, to prosecute its labours for the advancement of the kingdom of God in France. Their labours have a two-fold object. *First*, To awaken Protestants, who, being thinly scattered, and deprived of the means of grace, are in danger of letting slip their faith, but who, being awakened, may become, in the midst of a Romish population, the leaven which shall leaven the whole lump. *Secondly*, To enlighten Roman Catholics, who, finding nothing in their own religion to meet the wants of their souls, turn to the Gospel, and desire to hear it preached.

The Society has extended its labours over 36 of the 86 departments of France, and occupies from 70 to 80 stations. It employs 16 agents, of whom 20 are ordained ministers. Its lately established Theological School in Paris has already sent out 15 pastors, and is at this moment, either in Paris or elsewhere, training 40 young students for the work of the ministry. This is of incalculable importance, for the want of evangelical ministers is one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of the Gospel in France, and many of our stations and even churches, are sometimes on this account deprived of the means of grace. One half of our stations have been established in the midst of a population who, a few years ago, were almost unconscious that there were Protestants in the world, or who, at any rate, were utterly ignorant of what Protestantism means. And now we are under the mark when we estimate at 3000, those who, by the instrumentality of the Society, have been brought under the power of the Gospel, and have broken their connexion with Rome, among whom many have truly joined themselves to the Lord in spirit and in truth. Around these centres of Gospel light, religious movements have taken place, which prove that a wide door is now open to the Gospel in France. Often whole *communes*, or the greater proportion of their inhabitants, have made application for preachers, and had the Society the means, they could greatly multiply their stations and churches.

Lately a whole village, named Xambes, near Mangles, with the mayor at its head, petitioned for the establishment of a Gospel minister among them; and no sooner was Protestant worship legally authorised, than the pastor who preached the first sermon had hundreds of hearers, while the Popish priest, who had been hastily despatched thither by the bishop, had only six. Many such cases might be cited. Thus, at Moulins, scarcely was the station established, when many entire families publicly embraced Protestantism. At Mone, also a new station, the influx of hearers has been so great, that three times it was found necessary to enlarge the place of worship, and since last Easter, 21 persons have been publicly added to the Church, and we hope to the Lord. Again, at Crevecoeur, 17 proselytes were last year (1856) admitted to the Lord's Supper, 9 more in the month of January last, and many more are in course of preparation. And what is still more cheering, in these, as well as in our other stations, our new brethren in the faith are doing honour to their profession, by their Christian conduct, purity of manners, and active charity. In this all-important respect, there is a marked and sensible progress where our agents are labouring. The reports of these agents abound in most edifying particulars. Here, a poor labouring man, burdened with a large family, declares that since he became a Protestant, and was made acquainted with the Bible, he is the happiest man in the world. There, an old man called at the eleventh hour, devotes his closing years entirely to the service of his heavenly Master, conducts his whole family to Christ, and dies in perfect peace. There, again, a young man brought up by a priest has his eyes opened to the Gospel, embraces it with fervent love, resists every persuasion to retrace his steps, and exhibits the utmost zeal to propagate the truth which he has himself received.

We regret that we cannot lay before you all the encouraging facts with which the correspondence of our agents supplies us, in order to confirm your estimation of their success.

During the last year, the Central Society has expended in the work of the Lord about £1120. This year its expenditure will be, at least, as great; but had we double the amount at our disposal, it would scarcely be sufficient to meet the demand; for rarely does the Committee meet without being compelled to refuse some new applications. The current expenses at this moment have laid us under a debt of £800.

Meanwhile, the time has come to work—to work much, to work more than ever—for the Gospel in France. There is a decided movement in the minds of men towards religious ideas. The Gospel alone can meet these wants, which are becoming every day more apparent, and which may be traced even in the pages of the public journals. On the other hand, the Romish Church feels that everywhere the people are escaping from her dominion, and that Protestant views are continually gaining ground. She has, consequently, redoubled her efforts, and is opposing Protestantism with all her might. The truth will triumph; but for this end many a hard battle must yet be fought under the eye of the Lord. The Central Society is one of the most important and numerous divisions of the Lord's army engaged in France in this holy war. Let all those who love Christ come to our aid by their Christian prayers and Christian liberality.

Jewish Mission.

ANNUAL GENERAL COLLECTION

In making the announcement of the annual collection the Committee would most earnestly appeal to all who seek the good of Israel, and take an interest in the spiritual rege-