

Mission Field.

THE "QUARTERLY REVIEW" ON CHURCH OF ENGLAND MISSIONS.

[From the *S.P.G. Mission Field* for
April.]

[CONTINUED.]

"The pressing necessity for additional support to Foreign Missions is emphasised by the extraordinary openings presented during the last generation. The Church of England in this nineteenth century needs, above all things, the faith and self-denial to rise to the crisis of the greatest opportunities she has ever known. A shrinking back now may mean final exclusion from most promising fields. From every quarter invitations are pressed upon us."

That phrase "those who now speak scornfully of Missions are simply men behind their age" is literally accurate. It were amusing, but for the real sadness of it, to hear men speak slightly of the work of the Church abroad, in a superior tone, as if they were enlightened by the most recent human wisdom. They are really adopting the dull fallacies of generations that have passed.

And for action the time is emphatically now. Again and again we must say it. As the Reviewer writes:

"India is reproducing with startling identity the phases of the fall of Roman heathenism in the first three centuries. The weakening of traditional faiths, the cry that the Ganges has lost its power to cleanse from sin, the pathetic wail over the growing influence of Christianity, the attempts at compromise such as that of the Brahmo Samaj, the repeated defection of Brahman and Mahomedan leaders, the universal demand for education—these are some of the elements in the bewildering and intricate problem of India's future destiny. Every quarter of Africa, from its coast-line to its central regions, opened up and parcelled out with confusing rapidity, presents fresh fields for missionary effort which call for immediate occupation. Old prejudices are melting away before the gradual diffusion of fuller light."

Turning to his inquiry into the way in which the Church is bearing her part, he writes:

"The conversion to Christ of the Roman Empire occupied three centuries, and it is only a century since our missionary work in India was begun; and the relative condition of this and the other fields of missionary work, with all their diversities of language, civilisation and hereditary environment, must be taken into account before we can form a just estimate of the comparative advance of modern Missions, or can draw a reasonable forecast of their ultimate result."

The Reviewer then proceeds to describe the organisations by which the Church of England is working, and describes the S.P.G. as the older with "its careful ecclesiastical order, its special aim at permanent and concentrated work, its splendid ro-

production of the Church in all its breadth of spiritual type."

He makes several quotations from the "Classified Digest of the Records of the S.P.G." and from various books and pamphlets to show what progress has been made in all parts of the world, and concludes thus:

"Never in all its history has the Church had such facilities. Never has success been so largely obtained. At the present rate of progress in India it is calculated that the Protestant faith will absorb the entire population by the middle of the 21st century. Such a thought suggests deep searchings of heart about the form of Church order which is to prevail there and in the other lands which our divided, and sometimes competing, Missions are conquering."

We are persuaded that the same Divine power which worked mightily in the early days of Christianity is working in the Church still; and that if the most sanguine hopes inspired by Mission history are not fulfilled, it will be not because the fortress assailed, whether Hindu or Mahomedan, was impregnable, but because the attack was deficient in earnestness, in perseverance, or in faith."

Altogether the *Quarterly Review* article is most thankworthy, and we trust it will bear good fruit.—S. P. *(Mission Field)*.

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