

Gospel Light, and of the few verdant spots which meet the eye in the midst of that moral wilderness. It is under the impulse of such a feeling that your Committee have this year once more carefully considered the obligations which devolve upon them, with a view of ascertaining whether they cannot develop some more comprehensive scheme of action than has yet been initiated, and whether the ample resources which God has placed at their disposal may not be profitably employed to enlighten the Hindu idolater, and to convey a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to the deluded followers of the false prophet. A strong conviction has prevailed in the minds of many of them, the result of anxious and prayerful deliberation, that India at the present time presents such a promising field of labour to the spiritual husbandman, that a Society whose one object is to provide the only seed that can spring up unto life eternal, ought not to shrink from taking its place in the van of that mighty movement which is shaking old superstitions to their foundation, and making a way for the glorious advent of the Prince of Peace. Never in the history of any previous nation have the material resources of a country been developed with such wondrous rapidity. Never have the devastations of war been so quickly obliterated by the advancing tide of civilization, or deeds of rebellion and massacre so speedily recompensed, not by deadly hatred, but in the generous spirit of forgiveness and love. But what lasting benefit can civilization produce, or to what soul-satisfying knowledge can science lead, apart from that foundation on which all true progress rests, and that highly exalted One in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

The one great want of India, then, is the Word of God, and no Christian duty seems more plain and paramount than to disseminate that Word among its teeming millions, wherever an entrance can be found for it. The success which has hitherto accompanied the appointment to any country of a special Agent whose whole time and energies should be devoted to the one object of circulating the Scriptures, has induced your Committee to determine upon establishing a similar Agency in India. They acknowledge, with deep gratitude, the readiness and zeal with which the Auxiliaries of the various Presidencies have employed all the means at their disposal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. But the affairs of these Auxiliaries are mostly conducted by missionaries—men whose whole time and strength are absorbed in the preaching of the gospel, the education of the young, and the oversight of native churches—and your Committee would neither think it wise nor right still further to exhaust their energies by calling upon them to devise and carry out plans for circulating the Scriptures especially in districts beyond the sphere of their appointed labour. Your Committee, moreover, feel that they need more information than the exhausting climate and the overtaxed powers of their missionary friends enable them to supply.

To take a comprehensive view of such a field as India now presents, requires the rays of vision to radiate from various centres, and an amount of general information to be collected, which can only be obtained by a personal knowledge and inspection of many localities.

The field is large, the work various; there need be no rivalry, and the only emulation should be that of love. The scheme to which your Committee have