

The Missionary World.

IN India there are spots bright with the sunshine of material prosperity, but there are extensive regions wrapt in the deepest gloom and distress,—regions where famine and disease are literally decimating the people. The great Presidency of Madras, all Southern India, and the Island of Ceylon may be looked upon as clad in mourning and woe. A very wide door is opened for missionary enterprise. The gigantic efforts of the Government to feed the starving myriads, the bounty of the missionaries and the benevolence of Christians in general, make a favourable impression on the native mind, and thus the way is paved for preaching the Gospel and for its kindly reception. We read of continued progress in Japan. The whole nation appears to be rapidly rising to the dignity of a Christian community. One of the latest items of news received by us is that all Presbyterian Missionaries in Japan were about to unite in one organization. China is so great an Empire that the impression made by our missionaries, thus far, appears slight indeed in comparison with the enormous totality of stolid heathenism remaining to be reached. Still, we rejoice to hear tidings of increasing success, new stations opened, new provinces explored, new churches organized. Our own Chinese Mission is one of the most successful of which we read. The Missionaries in Turkey—many of them Presbyterians—live in the midst of racking anxiety, peril and sad distress. Thus far they have been on the whole very kindly treated under the conviction that they are English, and that the English Government is the steadfast friend of Turkey. We read of progress in various districts of Turkey in Asia, but the agitation connected with the impending war has been a most serious obstruction. The fanaticism of Islam shows a most ominous and alarming spirit of revival.

In Africa the old and well established Missions on the West Coast are steadily increasing in power and in numbers. A few months ago, all the Protestant Missionaries

belonging to this region met in Conference in order to strengthen the hands and cheer the hearts of one another. It is hard to elevate the Negro to the standard of ordinary Christian morality, yet the improvement made within the past quarter of a century is not more gratifying in itself than encouraging as a pledge of future growth. The Central African Missions planted by our parent churches are just getting into working order; but they have already exercised a most salutary influence in checking the accursed and cruel trade in slaves which has so long desolated the fairest portions of the ill-fated African continent. In Madagascar there is no falling back, though, unfortunately, corrupt forms of Christianity are being introduced in sections of that noble Island. Nothing remarkable has of late been reported from the sunny isles of the Pacific. New Guinea, one of the largest islands on our globe, has been partially explored by agents of the London Missionary Society, and it is proved that there too a field exists ready for harvest,—a field with attractions all its own.

From all parts of the wide world-field comes the cry of “more Missionaries.” Alas that the response is so inadequate! Many Missionary Societies and Boards, we regret to say, are deeply in debt for last year’s operations. This should not be so; and surely it will not continue. Wherever retrenchment may be talked about, it is impossible in relation to Foreign Missions. We cannot, we dare not, sound a retreat from any section of the field wherein Christ has given us a banner to display for Himself: nor dare we allow our missionaries feel the pinch of hunger or groan under the cruel burden of debt.

The battle is the Lord’s. He has granted and is still granting success, all along the far-extending line. The call for reinforcements reaches us, loud and clear: and none whom it reaches can treat it with indifference. Whoever studies most closely the tidings with which our periodicals are freighted, will feel most strongly the conviction that the Lord is doing a work in our generation such as was never before witnessed on this earth. Well may we be ambitious of being fellow-workers with the Lord in this great work!