

the field of one of our most important missions, and of the labours of the greater part of our lady missionaries. By a series of providential movements, whose story reads more like a romance than sober history, God had established in the very heart of India the supreme power of Christian, Protestant England. He had done this by means of the East India Company a most selfish, godless corporation—whose directors so hated missions that they said they "would rather see a band of devils than a band of missionaries get a foothold in India," but

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

By the horrors of the Sepoy Mutiny He brought England to her senses, showing what class of her Indian subjects were most loyal, and henceforth mission work was not only tolerated, but encouraged in India.

The door was thus opened by which the men of India could be reached with the Gospel, but alas! for the 100,000,000 of women and girls sunk in utter ignorance and degradation—one-sixth of these widows, of these, 80,000 under ten years of age. Of the world of woful meaning involved in this statement we are beginning now to form some idea. To use the words of Scripture, their dwelling-place was "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." Regarding these, you have heard the testimony of Dr. Duff after many years of toil in India: "I can no more reach the high-caste women of India with the Gospel than I could scale a wall of brass fifty cubits high." Our beloved missionary, Mrs. Murray Mitchell, in the early years of her life in India, could only get permission to speak a few hurried words to these poor prisoners through the half-closed shutters of the zenana, but now, what hath God wrought? "He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," marvellous things which we looked not for! They tell us that our embroidery needle was the weapon which the Lord first used to open the gate of brass, set in the wall of adamant! However that may be, thousands of zenanas are to-day opened to lady missionaries and the deep necessities of these, our sisters, hungry, thirsty, sick and in prison, now for the first time brought within our reach, are God's voice out of the cloud to the Christian women of Gospel lands, saying, My work is to be done here, and done by you; I have prepared the work for you, and laid it ready to your hand. Arise, and what your hands "find to do, do with your might." You will have observed that all the "wonderful works of God" at which we have been looking are only His preparing the way of His messengers.

Even more amazing and more glorious are the wonders He has wrought by means of the Gospel in the midst of heathen people. Such are the transformations of character from the vileness and ferocity of the lowest savage to all that is saintly and Christ-like. On this subject Dr. A. T. Pierson says: "The noblest examples of self-denial—separation unto God—passion for souls, singleness of aim, evangelistic zeal and liberal systematic giving, which have been found during this century, have been the outgrowth of missionary fields. The new converts from the most degraded tribes have often put to shame the ripest fruits of our Christian civilization."

And now, what saith the voice out of the cloud to each one of us this afternoon? "Speak, Lord, for Thy servants hear. Show us Thy way, and we will walk in Thy truth." The message is brief, but comprehensive—in three little words, Go, Give, Pray. 1st. Go, the standing marching orders for all disciples, to the end of the world, for the limit of the promise interprets that of the commission. Let us not conclude too hastily that from this obligation at least, we are exempt—from going to a heathen land to tell of Jesus there, we may be, but the command is "to all the world," and a part of that world lies in the immediate surroundings of each one of us—the members of our own family, our neighbours, our acquaintances, all brought in any way under our influence, Jesus in that command bids us tell of Him earnestly, lovingly to every creature whom we can reach in our own little corner of "all the world." Distinctly, we, as Presbyterian societies, are bound to do our utmost for the diffusion of a missionary spirit, which is simply the loyal, self-denying spirit of Christ within the bounds of our respective Presbyteries.

Further, are there not some among the members of

our auxiliaries—are there not some in this meeting to-day whom we might move to a new sense of the glorious possibilities of a redeemed and consecrated life, whose sacred duty and high privilege it is to go far hence to tell of Christ in a heathen land?

Again, the voice says, Give, give freely, constantly, systematically, cheerfully, give your pound or your mite, and if the Lord shall call your son or your daughter, your pride, the joy and sunshine of the house, to serve Him as a foreign missionary, O give, and be a cheerful giver, for the Lord loveth such.

Yet once more, the voice out of the cloud says Pray, pray without ceasing.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The most persevering and well-directed activities, and the most lavish giving are not accepted if the spirit of prayer be wanting. That Spirit it is alone which practically rebukes the pride of man, and claims for God the glory due unto His name. Have we yet realized the divine intimacy of the power which is made available at the call of the prayer of faith? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is anything then too hard for the prayer of faith which the Lord hath pledged Himself to answer? We hear His voice, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you."

Pray ye then the Lord of the harvest that He would thrust forth labourers into His harvest. "Pray as the Master taught us, first, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Pray as the Master set us the example, "continuing all night in prayer to God." Pray for the Master, that the Father would fulfil to Him the old promise, "Ask and I will give thee the heathen thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth thy possession." In the case of some of us, dear sisters, our going to tell of Christ, and our givings for Christ, may be pent within very narrow limits, but O, in our loving and our praying there need be no limitations of our nature, and only He who made us in His own image knoweth what these are. In our love and our prayers we may embrace the whole round world, with all its sins and sorrows, with all its dark past and all its bright future "when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover it as the waters cover the sea."

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION FOR 1887.

MR. EDITOR,—In his report for 1887, dealing with the subject of Religious Instruction, the Minister of Education says, "There is a distinct declaration on the part of the Department, that Religious Instruction is an essential factor of our system of education, and both pupils and teachers have daily presented to them, as a standard by which their conduct is to be regulated, the sublime ethics of the Bible." That is good doctrine, and there is nothing in the report of 1887 to indicate that the Department have ceased to hold the general principle. It may be safely assumed, besides, that the statement re-echoes the sentiment of the nation as a whole. There has been no outcry against it so far as I am aware, except, perhaps, from an infidel. Now what I complain of, as I think justly, is that this principle is not acted upon by the Department. It does not provide for the giving of this instruction to the extent it might and ought. Nay more, it, inconsistently with its own declaration, steps in and forbids the giving of religious instruction from the Bible. In saying this, I do not forget that the reading of the Scriptures by the teachers at opening and closing of the school in connection with the prayers is no longer optional, and that the pupils may join in the reading from their Bibles. But this is not to be regarded as religious instruction worth the name, without permission and encouragement, to say the least, to give such explanation as is necessary for the pupil to understand what is read. The burden of the report is to show that the Minister is utterly opposed to any such thing. I believe his reasons are most unsatisfactory in themselves, and his attitude entirely at variance with the spirit of the mass of the people.

The Minister asks (p. li.) "Are the Public Schools Protestant schools in any sense of the term, or do they stand upon even a broader basis?" I do not care how broad it is, so long as it is Christian. My own opinion is that as soon as religious instruction comes to be recognized as "an essential factor of our

system of education," in anything more than name, it will be difficult to do so on other than a Protestant basis. In a public speech on one occasion the Minister is reported to have said, referring to a political opponent, "The great mistake he made was in assuming that the Public Schools were Protestant schools. They were for Jew and Gentile, Christian and Agnostic." True. So is our land. But is it possible to carry on Government on lines in all respects Jewish, Gentile, Christian and Agnostic? The Jew is welcome to our shores, and on the seventh day of the week he may observe what religious rites he pleases, but there are certain respects in which he must not violate the law of the Christian Sabbath. The fact that we accommodate a Chinese witness with a saucer does not in the least contradict the fact that the normal oath of the Province is as to form and matter, Christian. So we admit all classes to our Public Schools, but we must conduct them on certain definite lines. They cannot be conducted on principles that Christian and Agnostic will both approve. What fellowship hath he that believeth with an infidel? There is no room for controversy here. The schools are Christian. Are they Protestant? The Department recognizes that the standard of moral conduct, and the basis of religious instruction is the Bible. Now, which?—the Douay or the King James version for instance? Is it immaterial to the Government whether the Scripture selection to be read in opening or closing school be taken from the books of the Maccabees, or only from the books recognized by Protestants as canonical? I can conceive of no answer but one to this. The only thing I care to contend for here is that, while the Public School is open to the Roman Catholic as freely as to the Protestant or Jew, whenever the Government comes to a point where these elements diverge, and a choice of one course out of two or three must be made, that choice must lie, and does already lie presumably, in the Protestant Christian line, due provision being made to protect the consciences of those who cannot agree. As therefore it would be monstrous to exclude the Bible and all recognition of Christianity in a Christian state, because a few infidels may disapprove thereof, it is hardly less so to forbid religious instruction because Roman Catholics may object, so long as they are not required to receive it.

Further, is it not fair to ask the Minister, when in any district, the Roman Catholic element has been provided with Separate Schools, what element, in the estimation of the Government, is supposed to remain in the Public Schools if not Protestant, it being granted that the schools are Christian?

Again, even where there are no Separate Schools, the Government, which is not supposed to know any religious denomination as such, does with strange inconsistency recognize that there is a Roman Catholic element in the school, and provides for its withdrawal during the religious exercises, without the usual conditions binding upon other children. Now when the law has thus provided for the elimination of the Roman Catholic element, is it not fair to ask what the law recognizes as left? Most people would say that what remained in a Christian school was Protestant. At all events, it seems clear to me that the demand for religious instruction in our schools is not met by denying that the schools are Protestant. They are sufficiently Protestant to admit religious instruction.

A. HENDERSON.

THE second annual report of the Temperance and General Life Assurance Company, published elsewhere in this issue, proves conclusively that Canadians are beginning to understand and appreciate Home Institutions, and that Total Abstinents are waking up to the fact that they have a much better record for longevity than moderate drinkers, hence the patronage accorded to the Temperance and General. This Company keeps a separate class for Total Abstinents, who thus get the benefit of their better lives and profit accordingly; the actual experience of the oldest companies established on these principles in Great Britain and Australia proves that from twenty-six to thirty per cent. of the mortality element is in favour of the Total Abstinence, and we trust that our Canadian Temperance men will not be slow to take advantage of this fact, and that they will continue to largely patronize the Temperance and General, which is the only Canadian Life Assurance Company offering the advantages above mentioned. Read the report in another column.