

THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.

VOL. XVI. No. 8.—*Old Series.*—AUGUST.—VOL. VI. No. 8.—*New Series.*

GOD'S SEASON—MAN'S OPPORTUNE HOUR.*

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

Three watchwords in the thirteenth chapter mark the progress of the thought. The first is *obedience*—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher authority," and above all unto God. The second is *obligation*—"Render, therefore, to all their dues." And the third is *opportunity*—"Knowing the season, that now it is the hour to awake out of sleep." Obedience to authority, obligation to humanity, opportunity for fidelity, these are the connected thoughts that constitute the logical chain of Paul's argument. There are also three words in the text which are of vast importance, and they are all time-words, or words that have to do with the conception of *time*—the season, the hour, the day. The first word translated "time" was the word "season;" the second word translated "time" was "hour"—"That it is now the high hour to awake out of sleep, for now is [the *day* of] our salvation nearer than when we believed." That is surely just the text for the London Missionary Society at its great anniversary, God-given for such an occasion.

There are three great thoughts: First of all love has a debt to pay; secondly, there is a seasonable time in God's plan for that debt to be paid; and thirdly, there is an opportune hour in man's history for that debt to be paid.

That is a fine conception which is found in the Holy Scriptures, in the New Testament, that as God made the world, so He made the ages. As He framed the ages, He constructed them cosmically, just as He constructed the universe. That conception runs through the entire New Testament. Just as we lay a corner-stone for a structure, and carry up pillar, and capitol, and arch, and capstone, completing the architectural plan, so God constructed the ages. He laid their corner-stone. He reared

* This is a brief report of the Annual Sermon preached before the London Missionary Society at the City Temple, London, on May 10th. The text was the well-known passage from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, xiii. 11—"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."