

us, what shall we conclude? Like the magicians of Egypt, all must admit that "this is the finger of God."

Again, viewing the history of modern missions, we behold the agency of God in giving access to the heathen world. At the inception of modern missions, the lands of darkness were practically closed and opposed to the missionary. Behind walls without and fortresses within, all stood hostile to approach. India, that "Gibraltar of heathenism," in possession of the East India Company—a power opposed to Christianity—and under the influence of two religions, the most subtle and despotic on the pages of history; China, for centuries separated from every other nation, and so impenetrable that the aged Xavier was led to exclaim, "O Rock! when wilt thou open to my Master?"; the islands of the sea, whose inhabitants were more to be feared than the wild beasts of the forest. To-day, the whole aspect is changed. Closed doors are now opened; hostility dying away; India open, and ruled by a Protestant nation; China's walls laid low, and protection afforded the servant of Christ; the ports of Japan free of access, the edict against the missionary removed, and people eager to embrace the spirit of western progress. The islands of the sea ready to receive and welcome the missionary of the cross. Step by step, country after country has been opened, until now there is access to all. These are facts which history presents. How are they to be accounted for?

Various natural elements and agencies have played their part in this work. To accomplish this end, the civilized nations of the world have joined hands—often unwillingly—with the missionary. In many instances their agency has been foremost. Mainly selfish were the motives which led them to knock at the closed doors and demand admission, that their ambition and covetousness might be satisfied.

In other cases the agency of the missionary has been in the van. Single-handed, he has gone forth and gained admission to hostile lands, often at the sacrifice of his life; while in not a few instances no human agency was used, doors, like the iron gate before Peter, opening at the approach of the apostles of the Lord. In every case the result has been the same. Elements and agencies, both diverse and adverse, have worked together in harmony for the accomplishment of one grand purpose. Is it reasonable