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**The Missionary Problem.**

**C**HRIStIANITY is not an experiment. We look for no other system that is to regenerate the world—for no other Saviour than Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt that the Christian dispensation, be it long or short, will be the last, and just as the world went through a succession of preparatory stages before the advent of the Messiah, so now it is undergoing changes favorable to the spread of the gospel, and by which the command addressed to the early disciples has for us a new emphasis and meaning. The mission fields are not so far away as they once were. The ends of the earth have been brought together; and there has been a remarkable change in the relationship of the great nations of the world to each other, and to Christianity. The Christian religion has now come to be regarded rather as the handmaid of commerce than in any sense detrimental to it. The missionaries have done more for India than the War Department. The difficulties of language have been greatly lessened. The dialects of nearly all peoples have been mastered by the missionaries, and for that matter the English language is everywhere asserting itself as the one which seems destined to displace every other. Knowledge has increased. The amount of Christian literature distributed over the world is beyond conception. The best Book of all has 150,000,000 copies in circulation, against five millions at the beginning of the present century. In almost every land the missionary has liberty to preach the gospel. The number of missionary societies is tenfold what it was at the beginning of the present century, and the number of converts from heathenism nearly fiftyfold. But the great problem is far from having been solved. Two-thirds of the whole human

race are yet in heathen darkness. Add to this, that we have still to deal with by far the most difficult part of the problem. Our successes have hitherto been among decaying races. The work before us is to be done amongst people as intelligent and vigorous as ourselves; in opposition to systems as old as the pyramids, and against traditions, prejudices, and superstitions that are the growth of ages. How the latent power of Christianity is to be developed, and its forces brought to bear most effectively against heathenism is the great question which the churches of Christendom have to consider, and to which some of the ablest minds and most profound thinkers are now turning their attention.

Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, of Detroit, has an admirable paper on this subject in the March number of *The Gospel in All Lands*, from which we make the following extracts:—

“Looking both at the successes of the Gospel in foreign lands and at the transformation of the church at home within these eighty years, I cannot resist the conclusion that the fulfilment of prophecy may be just before us. Two most marked predictions are those that tell us “the isles shall wait for his law,” and that “Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God.” Does it mean nothing that the first grand conquests of modern missions have been in these *very directions*.

Whichever way we turn our eyes, the signs of the times are the sure tokens of a day dawn. We have passed the dull grey that is the first advance herald of the morning—even the purple and crimson tints that tell of the glory, hastening on; the east shows something more than dark clouds edged with gold—the sun of righteousness is rising on the world! Christ-lieb, completing his survey, breaks forth in rapture: “Yes, the present is, thank God, the century of missions, such as has never been.