

instrumental in causing these people to seek for more instruction ; and may we not be encouraged to hope and pray that they may find the "pearl of great price," for which they will be content to make whatever sacrifices are necessary ; and in such a land as China these are neither few nor small.

#### INDIA.

To secure the instruction of the masses of India, and to make that instruction Christian in its character, are tasks the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. The missionary force is at present sadly inadequate. At the recent Decennial Conference, held in Calcutta, it was stated that "many districts, with more than a million of inhabitants, are left to the care of but one or two ; and other tracts of country, equally populous and yearly becoming more accessible, have not a single Christian missionary resident among them. From all parts of the Indian Empire the cry is heard that there are abundant openings for labour, but no labourers ready to take it up." The appeal sent from this Conference, which was attended by nearly five hundred persons, ought to be heeded.

The Rev. J. A. D. Macdonald, who superintends the Colportage work of the Calcutta Auxiliary, gives an interesting and intelligent view of the situation.

Our colportage work is mainly undertaken to carry the Bible to those whom ordinary Mission agencies fail to reach. Every Christian preacher doubtless does what he can to induce men to read the sacred volume ; but Mission stations are few and scattered in this wide country. In the streets of Calcutta, and in remote towns and villages, there are thousands willing to buy and read the Holy Scriptures. Our problem is to reach these unprejudiced inquirers and to place the Word of God in their hands.

This problem is by no means satisfactorily solved. Colportage is pioneer work, demanding great courage, perseverance, and faith on the part of the agents, and considerable aid and attention from those under whose direction they labour. Colportours of the right stamp are not easily found, and most missionaries are too busy with their own duties to spare time for an effective supervision. So that there are vast stretches of country where the Bible never goes, though, for aught we know, there may be hundreds of inquirers who are wistfully seeking the Word of God.

**A HINDU SCHOOLMASTER.**—A few weeks ago a schoolmaster was baptized in Calcutta, whose religious history shows the necessity of sowing beside all waters. As a boy he was dissatisfied with idolatry, and longed for a purer faith. This dissatisfaction increased as years went on, and became so strong that he put off marriage in order to seek the way of peace. In a distant part of the country he heard Christian preachers, and obtained from them portions of Holy Scripture. These he studied in private until he became convinced of the truth of the Divine message. Under the influence of this conviction he came to Calcutta, sought out Christian teachers, and in spite of the entreaties and opposition of his relatives, joined himself by baptism to the people of God.

Those colporteurs who have made special tours into distant parts of the country have discovered that the Word of God is being studied diligently, although no human teacher is at hand to speak of Christ.

Year by year the influence of the Bible increases among the people. In illustration of this, I may mention, that one day when conversing with a young Hindu, who is a constant reader of the Bible, he said :—"I feel fully convinced that the Christian religion is the true one, although I do not profess it. You should regard me as a Christian at heart." On another occasion, when recommending the Bible to some educated natives as the true veda, they said :—"We are not strangers to its teaching. We frequently read it.