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I.—LITERATURE OF MISSIONS.

IS THERE TO BE A NEW DEPARTURE IN MISSIONS?

[EDITORIAL.—A. T. P.]

Our Lord rebuked those in his day who were more observing and discerning as to the face of the sky and the forecast of the weather than as to the signs of the times and the signals of coming trials and triumphs.

The question is not what would we like to have as signs of the near to-morrow, but what are the actual indications of the approaching future. What we may not be able to shape according to our mind or will, we may be able to accommodate ourselves to and prepare ourselves for. Possibly what we cannot prevent we may direct and control, as sagacious farmers in the valleys of the Vaudois sometimes guide and bank in the current of a mountain stream swollen by heavy rains.

There are some startling—to some, alarming—signs in the horizon which betoken some new movement in the direction of missions. Ultra-conservatism may complain and criticise, and even seek to arrest these developments, but this may be found to be only a new attempt to sweep back ocean tides. Why not calmly survey the situation and prepare to take our part in giving a wise and winning guidance even to an excessive and inconsiderate impulse of enthusiasm? Some movements that seem purely human have God back of them; and in seeking to “overthrow” them we may “haply be found to fight even against God.”

I. The first sign on the horizon to which we call attention is the *infusion of a new spirit of enterprise into missionary work*.

Enterprise is the characteristic feature of our modern civilization. The world in this nineteenth century no longer moves on its axis, or through its orbit, at its former rate and pace. Travel and transportation, postal and telegraphic communication, the rapid rate of living—yes, and of dying, too; the speed of making and marrying great fortunes; the sweep of thought to the bounds of the earth and the bounds of the visible universe; the quickened pulse of physical, intellectual and social life; the intensity and extensity of scholarly research and