

OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES OF MISSIONS.

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At a crisis in His ministry Jesus said to His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are already white unto harvest."

Standing at the threshold of the first century the view of the apostles was limited to the land of Palestine and to the people of Israel. As we face the opening of the twentieth century our outlook is worldwide. In whatever part of the globe we may look we can see the white fields ready for harvest. Never before were there such opportunities and possibilities for missionary work. As we take a careful survey of the different fields the conviction must be forced upon us that the opportunities are as great as the world, and the possibilities as great as God.

Let us glance rapidly at the different mission fields and see what the present opportunities are.

SOUTH AMERICA.

Look at South America, our sister continent, with about 37,000,000 people, and only three hundred missionaries, or 123,000 souls to each missionary. There the most degraded form of Romanism exists. Many European and American Roman Catholics will not recognize it as their religion, but prefer to attend the Protestant churches. In all these papal lands there is to-day, among the intelligent thinking population, a virtual falling away from Romanism. A proof of this is the small attendance of men to be seen at Roman Catholic churches during service hours. At present there are still over 7,000,000 people in South America who cling more or less openly, to the superstition of their ancestors.

A missionary relates the following incident of the readiness of the people to accept the Gospel: "A little over two years ago, we rented in the city of Buenos Ayres, the largest hall we could get at the time, and in a few weeks the hall was crowded with men and women who knew absolutely nothing of Jesus, or of the love of God, and thought the news too good to be true. We took a larger hall and they crowded it; and at last we were driven to build a larger place, and it is now crowded." Truly, this continent is open to the Gospel.

CENTRAL AMERICA.

Three days' sail from New Orleans is Central America with its 5,500,000 population, and with its doors wide open for missionary work. There are many large cities, and a great number of small towns, where the Gospel has never been proclaimed. Last year the president of Honduras invited missionaries into the interior, while other presidents have given similar invitations in behalf of their states. Shall

these people ask in vain for missionaries? Then there are the islands, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, with their 10,000,000 of immortal souls. These islands from the beginning of their history have been shut out from the Gospel of Christ, but are now open and accessible. Many of the people are disgusted with the abuses of Romanism, and are waiting to accept the simple story of the cross. Already a few missionaries have gone forth, but their letters tell us repeatedly that they are, by far, too few to meet the need; and they are making strong appeals for more laborers.

The field is ready. Where are the workers?

AFRICA.

Fifty years ago the interior of Africa was entirely unexplored, while the worst forms of heathenism and superstition existed everywhere. Livingstone and Stanley in the regions of the Congo, and the British in the Soudan, have done much to open the heart of Africa to commerce and the Gospel. The same distance that took Stanley weeks and months to travel on foot and in boats, can now be covered in a short time over the Congo Railroad.

When the missionaries went out there was no written language of any kind; to-day the Bible, in whole or in part, is translated into a number of different dialects. Scattered throughout the continent are thousands of native Christians. Of a truth Ethiopia's millions are "stretching out their hands unto God."

Shall they be left to perish in their sins?

INDIA.

Suffering India, too, stands wide open to the ambassador of the cross of Christ. The philanthropy of Christian nations, during these years of judgment, has created a deep desire in many hearts to know the God of the missionaries. The faith of all India in its ancient religious system is shaken. The several hundred missionaries laboring there are far too few to meet the great need. Shall India be won for Christ? If so, the Church must at once send large reinforcements.

ARABIA.

Arabia with 6,000,000 souls for whom Christ died, and who are his cousins in the flesh, presents opportunities as never in the past. Until six years ago, suspicion, hatred, and distrust were real obstacles to the Gospel. Schools and preaching were forbidden; only the privilege of distributing the Word of God was given. To-day the glad tidings can be preached in many places, and there are always a few hearts glad to receive it.

KOREA

Within the last quarter century Korea has been opened to the proclamation of the story of Jesus as