

## THE GREAT NEED OF THE CHURCH

and of the Church's Head is not so much more gifts for missionary work, though from so many sides come the tidings of work straitened and limited for want of necessary funds; nor even an increased number of labourers, though from all lands the cry is sounding louder and louder, "come over and help us"; as men and women in sympathy with the Lord, who, realizing their calling to be his remembrances, will take it as one great part, if not the chief part, of their life-work, really, constantly, earnestly, to "watch the case on behalf of the Crown," to look on at the great conflict which is being waged day by day with greater concentration and force on both sides, between the powers of Heaven and Hell, between the forces of the Prince of Peace and of the Prince of this World; so watching it that they may be able to pray with the understanding as well as with the spirit; so watching it *on the Lord's behalf*, that they may see all from his point of view, as it affects his interests and his glory, and may be able to offer such prayers as shall be according to his will, and therefore heard.

If, in all the details of ordinary life, we thus watched every case as part of this case, in full sympathy with the King, who can say what a difference it would make to the progress of his kingdom?

For it is as a practical thing that the Lord has been setting this before me, and, in its practical working, as a wonderful means of hourly fellowship with Himself. What a different thing the reading of a newspaper becomes when, instead of merely looking to see what is going on in the world as a matter of personal or general interest, we study it *for God*, to see how his cause is prospering; what *He* is doing among the nations of the earth, and what attitude they are assuming towards Him; recognising his Hand in all the events of the day, and comparing them with what He has said, shall be. Reading it thus, we find in almost every column some new cause of prayer or praise; and the reading, instead of being, as it sometimes has been, a break in the conscious, personal intercourse of our soul with God, becomes a definite means of communion with Him, as we enter into his thoughts and plans for men, and watch the unfolding of his purpose and the fulfilment of his word.

## PRAYERFUL STUDY OF MISSIONARY NEWS.

Or take the case of a missionary magazine. How many of us, even in our missionary reading, have read as those who were "watching the case on behalf of the Crown"? Have we not often taken up such magazines as a kind of spiritual relaxation, especially on Sunday evening, when we have been "too tired for anything deep"? How far have we read them as a matter of business as carefully as a lawyer would read up all the facts of the "case" he had undertaken, in order that he might be able to help to bring it to a successful issue? Is it not true that in every trial the result, if not mainly, at any rate materially, depends upon the persevering, painstaking, diligent study and watching of the advocates on either side? How far are we thus helping on the cause of our Lord?

To go back to the missionary magazines, how often we have been content with just glancing over them. If we have friends in the mission field we read carefully every paper in which they are mentioned, and when we lay down the magazine we perhaps even pray in a general way for "all who are working for Thee among the heathen"; but what do we know of real prayerful

study of missionary news? When the next number of such a paper reaches you, will you take it up as a "watcher on behalf of the Crown"? When you read of some triumph, great or small, of the Lord over the enemy, will you stop right there and praise Him? When you read of work languishing, of a worker being weary and disappointed, of some who "did run well" going back and walking no more with Jesus, will you lift up your heart in prayer to God for that work, for that labourer, for those back-sliders? When you find a story of a recent convert from heathenism or Mohammedanism, will you ask the Lord to make him stand and confess Christ boldly before men?

And then—watch the case. Look out for the next news of those workers and those converts; look out on behalf of the Crown. Even from my small knowledge of missions and missionaries, I am sure the writing of a report would be quite a new thing, if the writer knew that it would be read in such a way as this, and would call forth such a response. Do you think it would give no new impetus to a lonely, discouraged worker to know that his very discouragement, when once it was known, would call forth this kind of prayerful sympathy from a company of Christians at home who were watching what was going on in his distant corner of the harvest-field, and watching on the Lord's behalf?

When once we take our position as those whose business it is to

## WATCH THE PROGRESS OF THE KINGDOM

of God, in individual hearts and lives, and in different communities and nations, we shall find that subjects of prayer will crowd in upon us day by day. Personally, I found this to be so much the case, that before many days it became necessary to keep a list of the "cases" I saw and heard of that needed to be "watched" on God's behalf, and already that "Watchman's Book" has come to be, not only a wonderful interest, including as it does definite subjects of prayer for every quarter of the globe, some *only* the result of personal watching, others again requested in by friends, but also a record of the faithfulness of God, as one after another the answers are received, and the watcher and the King rejoice together.

It is sometimes said that missionaries, and others, too, have a way of writing to ask prayer for certain places and people, and never afterwards mentioning the subjects, nor saying whether the prayer was answered or not. If this should be the experience of any reader of this paper, why not, after waiting in vain for further tidings, write to the missionary and ask for them, saying that you have been praying for the work of the people, and would be glad to know if the answer had come? The very discovery that there was any one at home so watching and praying would surely be an inspiration to greater zeal and new ardour, and kindle fresh hope in one who might perhaps be just then specially needing it.

We hear that the contributions to a Missionary Society in which we are interested have fallen off, and that the funds are low; we are asked to pray that more gifts may come in, and for the moment we respond in some measure to the request. But how many of us take the trouble to "watch the case"? When the next monthly or quarterly statement of accounts appears, are we watching even to such an extent that we turn up the last "statement" and compare it with this one to see whether the prayer has been answered or not? If not,