

capital was taken, ended the flourishing period of Abyssinian missions.

Since then attempts have been made again and again to build up these waste places, but with poor success. The present Emperor, John, is hostile to western ideas, and is seeking a reunion with the Oriental Church, particularly with that of Russia. The golden opportunity for Christianity and for modern civilization in historic Ethiopia would have been in 1868. If England had then, instead of leaving the conquered land upon which she had taken her vengeance to its miserable fate, to anarchy and internecine destruction, assumed so much of a protectorate as to secure freedom and liberty for the gospel messengers, a new and encouraging era for Ethiopia's Christianity would have been inaugurated. The complications with Italy are not promising as far as the cause of the gospel in Abyssinia is concerned.

But whatever the fate of Abyssinia may be, and of Christian work in Abyssinia, certain it is that this work there will always be one of peculiar difficulties. The Abyssinian being a church with a highly developed ecclesiastical organization of bishop, priests, deacons, monks and nuns, with a fixed dogmatic system and settled and stereotyped forms and ideals of worship, it will always be a vexed problem as to the position to be taken over against the native clergy and the native church. Are the Christian missions to co-operate with the native church, to revive the church from within, or to establish new communions of renewed Christians as opposition organizations to the existing church? Heretofore the first has been the only method pursued, not so much from choice as from necessity. The missionaries could labor only as long as the king permitted it, and no greater danger to the king's authority could be imagined than the opposition of the native clergy, who control the minds of the people almost absolutely. For this reason none of the missionaries established new churches or entered into open opposition to priests or monks. In the case of the conversion of the Falashas these were baptized by the native clergy and made members of the national church of the land. The little bands of converted Christians were thus an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, and it was thought that they as a leaven could eventually leaven the whole lump. Whether they would have done so if the missionaries had been able to continue their work, only a prophet or a prophet's son could say. But as long as the new gospel spirit could find its way only into the hearts of the people, and not into the hearts of the spiritual leaders, the success of this method would seem to be doubtful. Sooner or later the conflict would be inevitable; indeed it at some place already had commenced when Theodoros turned against the mission enterprise. Future mission work in Abyssinia must be guided by the light of the experience acquired by gospel workers in the last sixty years. The task is not hopeless, nor have all hopes been given up. On the contrary, soci-