

tainly not. This is one step in the course of Divine providence towards bringing to pass that for which we ardently long—the coming of our Lord, and the full establishment of his kingdom. And I think we may correctly view it as preparatory to the display of his wonderful grace. There are here, and I think elsewhere, some signs, which we are disposed to regard as indicative of happier days; and God has already, even though our numbers have been diminishing, shown in several instances of his converting grace, how he smiles upon the labours of his servants. Gideon's army was reduced by his sovereign will to three hundred men, that the power of his interference might be the more conspicuous.—We fondly hope that the reduction among us may be attended with similar spiritual results. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," and it is often upon occasions of the deepest sorrow to his people that light springs out of darkness, and good out of evil.

Perhaps the minds of missionaries are more directed at this time than ever before to the importance of raising up a native ministry, not only from our schools, but from the teachers and others of the people with whom we come in daily contact. This, of course, is always an important object with us, though it is a general opinion very naturally founded, that a long process of education and a long period of years are first requisite before such men can be raised up. This idea is correct to a great extent, and with this end in view, schools are established and carried on, with the hope that many youths among them will become converted, and proved to be thoroughly disciplined preachers. But besides these, there are many of good sense and good education, who, if they are brought to know and love the Saviour, will much earlier be fitted for usefulness as private Christians and as evangelists. We pray for these, and we implore Christians at home to pray, that there may soon be raised up in China as well as in other heathen countries, native Christians in our schools and among our teachers and others, who shall be fearless and wise defenders of the truth and confessors for Christ—who shall be examples of what Christianity is "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."—When Christ directs us to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest, he does not confine our prayers to foreign missionaries, nor should we thus confine them. Native missionaries are especially needed, and should be particularly prayed for.

It would perhaps be profitable, to refer to some other thoughts than those which have been briefly alluded to, but I would simply, in conclusion, beg Christians at home to consider what bearing these facts have upon them. Because this building up of the

kingdom in China is a hard work, and because it requires great sacrifices, is it, therefore, to be neglected? Because it is God's work, are our hands to hang down? Because we pray for a native ministry, and hope that God will hear us, are we therefore to withhold our sons and our brothers from this service—are our educated young men to neglect the broad land of Siam and its hundreds of millions of souls, to the undue guardianship of the few men who are left? Let this ratio proceed, so that in the place of eight experienced men, who are removed in the providence of God every year, only seven as yet inexperienced men are sent out, and what may you expect to hear from China within a few short years? The field is every day widening. Scores of villages surround us, which we have only occasional opportunity to visit; large towns, near to the central five ports, might with all safety be entered, and chapels might then be built; and the inhabitants of the cities where we respectively dwell, might become much more thoroughly acquainted with the way of life, had we labourers to spare for this work. The suspiciousness of the people, in this city at least, is fast wearing away; we have no trouble in building houses and chapels anywhere within the walls. Schools are established readily, both male and female, and generally a goodly number of people are present at our chapel ministrations. The officers do nothing to hinder us, and the people treat us kindly—so that we come in and go out, teaching and preaching, with none to molest or make us afraid. We hope that it will not be long when some way will be opened into the interior of China, for the further promulgating the glad tidings. But who is there to go? Do not the churches at home, do not ministers of the gospel, and those preparing for the ministry, have a responsibility in this matter? Christian love is expansive in its influence—and how can churches at home flourish, who withhold their interest from the wide spread of the gospel? We long to hear of more missionaries coming to China; men who are willing in season and out of season to serve their Master. God grant that this chastening which his servants are experiencing in the removal of their number, may call forth the sympathies of Christians everywhere. H. V. R.

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