

MISSION FIELD.

THE VARIETY, THE PROMISE,
THE GLORY OF MISSION
WORK—Continued.

By the Rev. Canon Westcott, D.D.

The dangers with which we are familiar at home manifest themselves, and more than this, greater question, as the Report says, arise—questions of the independence of native Churches, and questions of organisation; and nothing in the Report struck me with greater joy than the wise and careful reference made to those great subjects. We rejoice to think of that temporary mission which is to visit India, to quicken as we trust the life there, and to bring home to England an access of life from India. The great and weighty sentences which speak of the problem of Church organisation ought to sink deeply into the hearts of all. There is—I speak deliberately—no question of greater importance, greater anxiety, and I will venture to say greater hope, than this question of the organisation of native Churches.

Such is the variety of the work. Do you not feel that by its variety it calls for the offering of every human power? Is there not escape for every gift of God, body and soul and spirit, for widest use and completest consecration? Let us rejoice to remember that the promise of God, the promise which He is pleased openly to show to us, is commensurate with this variety.

II. THE PROMISE.—There is promise, as you have heard, in new openings, promise in those vast openings for education in India and Japan. For the first time, as it seems to me, the whole of India is open to us. Hitherto we have had no approach to the women in India. Now at last by the new changes in education, by the new desire for learning, Christian women have almost unlimited access to the families of India. For the first time then, I say, the whole of India, with its power of sympathy and power of influence, is accessible to the influence of Christianity. And in Japan, as you know, the education of women has been distinctly offered to Christian teachers, and we trust this offer will be accepted and blessed. And then, again, think of the opportunity which we have in India of dealing with Mahomedanism. A great Indian writer has told us that there first Christians and Mahomedans come face to face with the power of understanding one another; and if it has been said truly that the way to China lies through Calcutta, I should venture to say that the way to Mecca lies through Delhi and Peshawur, and there is another new sign of promise, I venture to say, in the stir of those old religions, there is a sign that men are beginning to think of those problems of humanity to which Christianity alone can offer an answer. These are promises through new openings. And think of the promises which come to us from the growth of native Churches. Think of what you have heard in the Re-

port of the growth of the native ministry and of the extent of the native cause. Think that your earliest mission to Sierra Leone has become not only self-supporting, but already self-extending, having missions of its own. And I rejoice to hear that even in China the Chinese converts have organized a mission of their own to Corea. And can there be anything more touching in its exquisite simplicity than that letter, which must, I think, have brought tears to many eyes, from the Native Church in Tinnevely to their suffering fellow Christians in Uganda, fragrant, in its own touching words, with prayers and infinite love. And other opportunities which unfold a work of singular difficulty. Your missionaries in many places must come into contact with ancient communions, which, through the pressure of grievous calamities, have lost much of the purity and power of their first faith. They will strive to quicken and to purify—they will strive, not to disintegrate them, but to bring them into vital contact with the fulness of the Holy Scriptures, and the transforming energies of the living Spirit. This has been, as you remember, the clear, wise, catholic policy of your Society from the first. This I believe, is the peculiar mission of our National Church—a Church which alone of reformed Churches has never broken with the past; a Church which alone of the great historical Churches enjoins upon every one of her ministers the life-long devoted study of the Holy Scriptures, and requires nothing of her children but that which is contained therein. So it is that her faithful representatives can offer in the words, the memorable words, of one of your former Secretaries, "to the sight of all, the pattern of a Church essentially scriptural in doctrine and apostolic in discipline."

(To be Continued.)

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