

personal intercourse with many of the leaders, and witnessed the incipient steps which led up to the change of government. Many other papers of great interest follow, with much useful information. Published by Funk & Wagnalls, 18 and 20 Astor Place, New York. \$2 per year; in clubs of ten, \$1.50. Specimen numbers, 20 cents.

Editorial and Contributed.

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

WITHIN the past decade—to go back no further—there has been a great awakening in the Churches on the subject of missions, especially missions to the heathen. That which at one time was regarded as a side issue is rapidly becoming the main question, and there is a perception, dim as yet, but real, of the fact that the great purpose for which Christ instituted His Church among men was to “preach the Gospel to every creature.” For long years this truth was lost sight of. Of course, it was not openly repudiated; but it was held with a very feeble grasp, and did not influence the thought, much less the practice, of Protestant Christianity. This was largely owing to a perverted theology. The doctrine of the Divine Decrees had been unduly exalted, until it almost entirely hid from view the fact of human responsibility. If the heathen are to be converted, that is God’s work, not ours. So the Church reasoned; and her thought found expression on the memorable occasion when Carey, in an assembly of ministers, asked if it were not the duty of the Church to evangelize the heathen, and was promptly rebuked by a venerable member of the assembly—“Sit down, young man; when God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without you or me.”

“To every creature” is the Church’s marching order; but how feeble have been her attempts on the line of unquestioning obedience. Nearly nineteen centuries gone, and two-thirds of the world’s population yet untouched. Lethargy in the Church, but activity everywhere else. China’s millions poisoned with opium forced upon them by a Christian(?) government, and the healing Balm of Gilead withheld by Christian selfishness. The Dark Continent deluged with rum, and the Water of Life dispensed in dribbles to a great multitude dying of thirst. There is altogether a wrong in this matter which cannot be too quickly corrected. It is time to ask if the Churches have not expended far too much money and effort on their home work, in comparison with what they have expended on missions to the heathen. We do not

mean that they have spent too much on home missions, properly so called, but too much on the home work in its broadest sense. In almost every home church the ministry is overcrowded. In many localities churches and congregations are multiplied beyond all reasonable needs. A village of five or six hundred people will have half a dozen different denominations competing for the people and for what they are able to give. Then follows unwholesome competition in the matter of church buildings. Rivalries are fostered; heavy debts are incurred. The thought of the Church is centered upon local, not to say selfish, projects, and in the clamor of contending interests the Master’s voice is unheard and His command unheeded.

“To every creature” is the measure of the Church’s responsibility. “Go, thou and preach the kingdom of God,” is the command to every saint. There is nothing about waiting for Church Boards, and Committees, and Conferences. The Master did not say, “Go—when you are promised a good salary,” nor “Go—when you are sure of a fair support,” nor “Go—when you have received the sanction of some ecclesiastical assembly.” If you must wait for all these conditions to be fulfilled, the Church will never overtake the world’s needs. If the world’s population would only remain stationary, if the lives of the present generation could only be prolonged for a few centuries, the need for haste might not be so urgent; but time does not wait on human convenience. If the present generation of heathens are to be reached at all, they must be reached by the present generation of Christians. Succeeding generations will have enough to do without undertaking a work we have left undone. And as the whole world is now open, there is need for every Christian to be in the ranks. If there is no other way of meeting the emergency, we must reduce the “Home Guard” to its minimum strength, so that the “army in the field” may be fully recruited and thoroughly equipped. The command to “go” cannot be explained away, and upon every Christian rests the responsibility to *go* or *send*.

To all who have submitted themselves fully to God the Master’s command is imperative, and if to fulfil that command requires the surrender of all we have, the surrender will be cheerfully made. The difficulty with vast numbers is, that their acceptance of Christ has been partial and one-sided. Like Nicodemus, they say, “We know Thou art a *teacher* come from God,” but it does not seem to occur to them that they are under any obligation to *obey* His teaching. They confess Him as their Saviour, so far as the future penalty of sin is concerned, but not as a Saviour from the