

the Japanese Church. He says that the best commentary on the Pauline Epistles will be found in the growth of an infant Church in a heathen land. He is about to publish a pamphlet on "Higher Buddhism in the light of the Nicene Creed," which will be placed soon within the reach of Canadian readers. A conflict with Buddhism is clearly drawing on in Japan. We hope to speak of Mr. Robinson's letter in some future number.

#### EPIPHANY APPEAL, 1894.

*To the Reverend the Clergy, and the Laity, of the Church of England in Canada :*

DEAR BRETHREN,—Once more, with the return of the Epiphany season, we summon you to a solemn review of your duty and privilege in connection with the foreign missionary work now being prosecuted by the Church of which you are members.

With no other season of our sacred ecclesiastical year could this duty be more appropriately associated ; for here, on the very threshold of the human life of our Incarnate Lord, we see the representatives of the far east seeking out Him of whom it was prophesied that He should be "the Desire of all nations," kneeling reverently at the feet of the holy infant, and humbly presenting their threefold offering, as a token of their yearning for a better knowledge of Him who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of his people Israel." Thus on the very first page of the Gospel story we find clear intimation of the fact that the Incarnation was designed, not for any favored race or people, but for the whole human family. More than thirty years after "certain Greeks," we are told, came desiring "to see Jesus." Their coming was not accidental, or for merely personal ends. Rather were they the unconscious spokesmen of that vast outlying ancient paganism which, while it believed in gods many and lords many, yet, dissatisfied with this belief, longed for a clearer revelation of the one true and living God, and unwittingly, it may be, sought it at the lips of Him who was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

Later still, when the earthly ministry was closed, and the Incarnate Christ, looking out into the distant vista of the coming ages, was about to return to the right hand of His Father, He gave the chosen twelve this solemn parting injunction : "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." These are the Church's marching orders, and prompt obedience to them is her bounden duty. She cannot expect the benediction of her ascended Head if she shows herself slack and indifferent in carrying out His last instructions. Just here,

brethren, we fear that we discover the secret root of much of her present weakness. Her growth has been slow because she has not been loyal to the trust imposed on her. Instead of kindling into an ever-brightening flame, her spiritual life has been as the smouldering flax, because her faith has been weak, and her love cold, and her offerings for Christ's honor small and scanty.

Dismiss from your minds, we beseech you, brethren, the apologies frequently pleaded in palliation of this prevalent neglect of foreign missionary work. Is it urged, for example, that the heathen are far away, and that it is impossible to take interest in an object so distant? But surely obedience to Christ's commands can never be reduced to a question of latitude and longitude! Besides, distant though they be, they are not so "far off" as we ourselves were when He came to redeem us of whom it is written "that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Is it said that multitudes of the heathen will reject the Gospel if sent to them, and thus will fall under the deeper condemnation? But this objection, if pushed to its ultimate conclusion, would silence the preacher's voice in our own churches! Moreover, our concern is with plainly revealed duties, not possible consequences. For these we are not responsible. Is it asked, further, wherein lies our obligation to the heathen? We answer, in that of gratitude for our own spiritual blessings. But for foreign missions Christ had never been heard of beyond the bounds of Palestine, and your own early progenitors in ancient Britain had been left to perish in their native ignorance and barbarism. Finally, is it alleged that foreign missions are a failure? In reply, we can point to the testimony of witnesses the most impartial and unimpeachable, to the effect that wherever Christianity has erected her standard the vilest abominations of heathenism have gradually disappeared, as snow melts away before the summer sun. In Madagascar, New Zealand, the Fiji Islands, the New Hebrides, Melanesia, and elsewhere, the transformations wrought by missions have seemed as if wrought "by the magic of the enchanter's wand." Slavery, polygamy, infanticide, the torture and strangulation of prisoners taken in war, have become things of the past, while the idols men worshipped are being cast to the moles and the bats. In India the car of Juggernaut no longer crushes its victims beneath its wheels, while the power of caste is being broken as a barrier to the advance of Christianity. In a word, it may be affirmed, in reply to the flippant objection as to the failure of missions, that the tide of Christian truth and knowledge is steadily advancing all along the line of foreign missionary enterprise.