

lised were again over-run with barbarians, and what we gained in one part of the world was lost in another; and what was the use of laboring for nought? Do we not almost seem to be working against the will of God in such a case? May we not have in our failure an intimation that Providence is against us? He did not go so far in words, perhaps, but that was the impression left.

Now is it any wonder that, with such influences around them, and such difficulties and discouragements ahead of them, young men should shrink from going into the missionary field? The wonder is that so many offer themselves as do for service, few as they are. But there is still a further and more unavoidable difficulty, perhaps, which I may be allowed to suggest without offence. There is something in the very idea of being under the inspection and jurisdiction of a special committee, which is contrary to our natural desire of liberty of judgment and of action. The India Committee may be composed of noble-hearted men, and largely of those who have been in India themselves, and who are likely to know something of the feelings and wants of others; it may be said that they allow all the liberty of judgment and of action to their missionaries which any one can reasonably demand; but still it is a fact which ought not to be overlooked, that the thought of being under a committee has an unpleasant, restraining effect upon some, and that most likely in proportion to their force of character and ability for the work. 'The desire of men for *a kirk o' their ain* is as natural as it is real; and were there kirks in India as there are here, or were the missionaries on the same footing socially and ecclesiastically as their brother ministers at home, the salaries might be no larger than they are now, but the men would certainly be more numerous. You may say, of course, that the committee is necessary to the very existence of the mission; but though the evil should be found to be inherent in your system of government, it is nevertheless there as I have tried to state it, and there is no use in trying to speak it away.

If we wished to enquire more deeply into the causes of the general indifference in the Church of Scotland towards

foreign missionary effort, we might find them perhaps in their system of endowment, in a more or less conscious sympathy with the principles of the modern schools of Culture and Evolution, in a kind of worldliness of spirit and love of externals which is rampant everywhere, and so forth, or, in general, in unbelief or want of faith. But having stated what we consider to be the more influential proximate causes of the scarcity of missionaries, we might now enquire, how is the difficulty to be got over? The obstacles in the way of its being done seem to be deep-rooted in our nature and spread throughout the body of the Church. Is there any hope, apart from an act of the absolute power of God and an illapse of the Spirit, of seeing the foreign missionary work of the Church prosecuted with greater vigor and success? With regard to that work, the Church of Scotland as a whole seems at present to be well-nigh dead or sleeping. Can the men and women who compose it arise as in the strength of God and shake from them their lethargy, or must they wait as expectants of a grace and power from on high which may, or may never, be received in their day and generation? Surely, unless we are to hold by the withering creed of fatalism, we may say that something can be done. Will any one make any suggestion on the way in which it may best be done? Meanwhile we close, expressing the hope that something may come from the revival of which we have heard so much in the way of increased missionary life and zeal.

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### Synod's Home Mission Fund.

The annual collection in our Churches for this fund was appointed by Synod to be made in January, or as soon after as would be convenient. It was the practice of the Clerk to issue a Circular on the eve of the collections appointed to be made by Synod, reminding ministers of them, but, though this has not been done in the present instance, it is hoped that no minister of our Synod will fail to give his congregation an opportunity of contributing to this important fund. Indeed there is no fund of our Church to which the people should be urged more earnestly to give. It is true that the