

THE MISSIONARY HERALD.

SEVENTY-SIXTH REPORT.

THE year which has just closed has been, to the Committee, and the friends of the Society, one of unusual anxiety. Beginning it with a debt of more than £5,000, it was clear that all efforts to enlarge its operations must be postponed until the financial position was materially improved. At the outset, therefore, measures were taken to effect this object. Circulars were issued to the pastors and officers of the churches, suggesting a special collection early in October, the date of the Society's formation, and in commemoration of its 75th anniversary. Communications were addressed by the Treasurer and Committee to every subscriber of one guinea and upwards, soliciting an augmentation of the amount; and conferences have been held with pastors and deacons, and members of churches, in Cornwall, Somerset, Wilts, Lancashire, and Huntingdon, with the view of ascertaining what organizations existed, and what could be done to strengthen and improve them; and similar meetings will be held in those districts which have not yet been visited.

Fully aware that a considerable increase in the expenditure—especially in India—was inevitable (the causes of which were stated in the last Report), hearing from many friends the heavy losses they had sustained, and from many more of diminished power to help in this time of need, knowing also how wide-spread was the distress consequent upon diminished foreign commerce and home trade, the Committee looked with considerable apprehension to the close of the year, expecting not only a diminished income but a large augmentation of debt. Happily these fears have passed away, and, though they have still to regret the existence of a debt, yet they have to present a somewhat encouraging report, as the following brief statement of facts will show:—

The debt at the close of the past year was £5,096 13s. 5d. Towards this amount, £4,500 19s. 2d. had been received to the 31st March, made up of contributions from 1s. to £200. These gifts have come from numerous churches,

and many private individuals. But they have been given without reluctance, and in a spirit which greatly enhanced their value—almost invariably accompanied with expressions of the warmest affection to the Society, and most earnest wishes for its prosperity and success.

The contributions for General Purposes—from the churches and auxiliaries, and including legacies, donations, and advances from the Calcutta Mission Press—amount to £23,800 7s. 9d.; and with those for special objects £30,362 15s. 1d. If the donations towards the debt be added, the entire income for the past year will be £34,912 14s. 3d.,—the largest income which the Society has ever had except on the year of its jubilee. The expenditure has been £33,158 16s. 6d., which is in excess of previous years, but chiefly in India; and owing to exceptional and unforeseen causes. In the greater number of stations in other parts of the field, the expenditure has rarely exceeded the estimates laid before the Committee at the beginning of the year. The balance now due to the Treasurer, inclusive of the small balance of last year's debt, and this year's deficit, is £3,342 15s. 8d.

A comparison of the present with the last cash account will show a great falling off in legacies, and if those for the debt be excluded, in donations as well. From a careful examination of the facts, it appears, that the recurrence of a debt is mainly owing to the extremely fluctuating character of the income derived from Legacies, Donations, and Mission-press advances; and the Committee will have to consider whether some method of treating these contingent sources of income may not be devised, so as to render the fluctuation less violent from year to year, and thus avoid the danger of a repeated and considerable deficit.

The Churches continue to manifest their interest in their support of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund; the small diminution seen in this year's receipts being easily accounted for. But the Native Preachers' Fund, wholly contributed by the young through their New-Year's Cards, amounts to £568 10s. 2d.—the largest amount yet received, and which does not include what is collected by Mission-Boxes, Cards, and among the scholars in our Sunday-Schools.

The Committee rejoice to learn that the practice of contributing after the monthly missionary prayer-meetings is on the increase. They would be glad to see it universally adopted; not so much on account of the increase to the funds, which might be expected from it, as for the sake of the recognition of the principle that prayer and effort should be combined. They have incurred a considerable annual expense in supplying by post every pastor of a contributing church with a copy of the *Herald*, to enable them to communicate to those present at these meetings intelligence of the Society's operations. It is hoped, therefore, that the suggestion now made will be generally adopted. They venture to press again on the heads of Christian families to have a

missionary-box placed on the table every Lord's-day morning at worship, that such members of the family as may be so disposed, might give their weekly offerings, however small; wherever the practice has been adopted it has been successful, not more in augmenting the funds, than in sustaining and quickening the interest already felt in the Mission, and kindling into ardour the desire to promote its success. They have also abundant reason to believe that the practice has proved most beneficial in promoting the growth of personal godliness; for whatever augments attachment to the Saviour's cause strengthens and vivifies our love to Him, and intensifies the willingness to make sacrifices to extend His kingdom in the world. The habit of frequent giving to such an object, keeps in exercise the best feelings of which a devout heart is susceptible, and gives a reality to our pity for those who know Him not, and are perishing from lack of that knowledge.

The Committee cannot dismiss this topic without once more, and with the strongest emphasis, stating to their constituents, that unless the income of the Society can be sustained to the amount of the *entire* income of the present year, its operations cannot be sustained even on the present scale. Can it be that £35,000 is the utmost which our churches can raise for this object? Is that limit never to be passed? Is there to be for the future no extension of labour, no increase of agency? Or rather, must what we have be diminished? They trust not. They, therefore, turn to the pastors, and beseech them to enforce this great question more frequently from the pulpit. They intreat Christian friends to speak of it oftener in their intercourse with each other. The mind, and heart, and conscience of all must be awakened to a more exalted sense of its grandeur, to a deeper conviction of our responsibilities to Christ and mankind, until a spirit of holy fervour and love be enkindled within us, that shall ascend to God like the flame of sacrifice, and bring down from Him what He is waiting to bestow, a blessing more rich and effectual than we have ever known.

In the hope of rendering the present anniversary more effectual to this end, the Committee arranged for United District Prayer-meetings, and for separate meetings, where the others were found—from distance or any other cause—impracticable, in all the churches of the metropolis, to be held on the evening of the day of the opening service. They were greatly encouraged by the cordial response given to this suggestion, and they rejoice in the growing desire for more frequent association for prayer, and the conviction that if we are to have success we must be more fervent and devout.

With regard to the work abroad, the year past has been in one sense uneventful, whether regard be had to the labourers, or to the fields of their labour. Yet the Committee are permitted to rejoice over manifold tokens

of the divine care and blessing, and over results that may well call forth fervent gratitude to God.

In the Report of last year the Committee had to speak with mournful regret of the death of three of their esteemed fellow-workers abroad. It is with thankfulness that they report, that this year they have not to record a single decease among their brethren. Nor has sickness driven so many from their posts as in years past. Four only have returned home on account of health. One of them, the Rev. R. Smith, after only a few months' absence from his station, has already returned to it. The other three brethren, who have been compelled to seek a change of climate, are the Revs. J. Trafford, Q. W. Thomson, and E. J. Kingdon. In the case of Mr. Kingdon, his constitution seems so ill adapted to the climate of China, that he can scarcely venture to return. On the other hand, two young brethren have entered on missionary life in India,—the Revs. A. O. Gillott and J. Thomas; while the missionaries named in the last report—the Revs. C. B. Lewis, J. Gregson, T. Martin, W. Littlewood, and D. J. East, as likely to return during this year—have all reached their respective spheres of labour, and have resumed their various duties. One, the Rev. W. Littlewood, encountered on his way a frightful storm, and for hours was in danger of shipwreck. For the twelfth time the hand of God, in answer to prayer, was stretched out for his safety and that of those who were with him, and the ship reached her desired haven.

In passing on to the work in which our brethren are engaged, the Committee propose to omit in this portion of their Report the detail of each mission that it has been usual to give. They will rather endeavour to describe the more general aspects of the work, and especially call attention to one or two subjects which have received their anxious consideration during the year.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE MISSIONARIES.

The proclamation of the Gospel to the heathen, by the divinely-appointed ministry of the Word, is the chiefest, and, therefore, the primary duty, both for the Committee to secure, and for your missionaries to accomplish. Generally speaking, your Committee think, that it should not be the aim or the practice of your missionaries to settle down as permanent pastors of the congregations they gather, nor to merge altogether their missionary character in that of teacher to English congregations. For years past it has been the endeavour of your Committee to secure the appointment of native brethren as the pastors of native congregations, to relieve the Society of the burden of their support, and to devote the energies of the missionaries to the wider diffusion of the kingdom of God. There are, however, different departments in this great work; each of which, in a suitable degree, ought to have attention.

Translations of God's Word must be prepared and printed; converts must be trained for the pastorate of the churches, and for evangelistic labours among their countrymen; and the education of youth should not altogether be disregarded, as a most useful and necessary help in the diffusion of that knowledge which both elevates the mind and saves the soul. In one or other of these departments of missionary life the brethren are engaged, and their distribution is as follows:—

The Society's present staff of missionaries and assistant missionaries, in all parts of the world, numbers fifty-eight individuals. Four of these brethren devote nearly the whole of their time to the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the languages of India, Ceylon, and Africa, and to carrying these versions when ready through the press. During the year the New Testament has been completed in Hindi, a new and most convenient edition of the Bengali Bible has been issued, and much progress been made with the Old Testament in Singhalese and in the Dualla languages.

One missionary, the Rev. C. B. Lewis, is wholly occupied with the management of the Mission Press in Calcutta; an institution which has greatly facilitated the printing of God's Word, the production of useful works in every department of knowledge, and by its general business furnishing large contributions to the funds of the Society. During the last ten years, from this source alone, not less than £32,000 have been raised and devoted to the evangelization of India. Two brethren in India and Jamaica have given their time to the training of converts for the preaching of the Word among their countrymen; while four others addict themselves to the work of education among the young, especially in connection with the College at Serampore, and to training masters for the numerous day-schools attached to the congregations in Jamaica. In India and Ceylon there have been gathered not fewer than twelve English congregations. It was not possible that your missionaries should altogether neglect the souls of their countrymen, who, from their number and commanding position, exercise great influence for good or evil, upon the spread of true godliness among the heathen around them. Two brethren only give the whole of their time to the service of these English communities; the other ten combine a large measure of missionary labour with the duties which devolve upon them as pastors. One, the Rev. A. Williams, is entirely supported by his church, that of Circular Road, Calcutta. The church in Lal Bazar, which has just elected the Rev. J. Robinson as its pastor, is also independent of the Society's support. In Allahabad the congregation contributes a specified sum to the funds of the Society; while the rest raise very considerable amounts for direct missionary work by agents of their own selection, and largely aid in various ways the missionary exertions of the brethren whose ministry they enjoy. The church at Monghyr, for in-

stance, provides entirely for all the missionary work at the station, which costs them about £450 a year, and often contributes also to the general funds of the Society. These English congregations, in some cases, are small and fluctuating; being dependent on the soldiery and floating English population, which may happen to be at the station. The congregations in Agra, Benares, and Delhi, are of this kind, and their interference with the direct missionary work of our brethren among the heathen is not great. In all the stations the chapels have been built almost entirely by local contributions. For the most part they are large and handsome structures; honourable to the liberality that has furnished the means for their erection, and most convenient and suitable for the worship of Almighty God. If the apostle Paul found among his Jewish compatriots both converts to Christ and assistance in his ministry, our countrymen in the East, in numerous instances, become not less, illustrations of the power of divine grace and helpers in the faith.

In Africa and the West Indies there are seven brethren who are pastors of the native churches they have gathered; but, at the same time, who make daily visits to the pagan population around them. These communities are for the most part small in numbers, and poor in every worldly sense; but the Committee cherish the hope that, by the blessing of God, they may ere long reach the stage in which their pastoral care may be handed over to native ministers. In the island of Trinidad, and scattered over the rugged surface of the Bahama islands, are numerous churches, thirty-six in number, provided with native pastors. Three brethren exercise a general superintendence over them, and at the same time act, with some native assistance, as pastors of the churches where they happen to reside. By frequent visits among the churches they confirm the faith of the converts, and set in order such matters as may call for their decision and advice. The work in these localities is rather that of consolidation than one of evangelization; the whole population having been brought under Christian instruction, in some form or other, in connection with our own or other Christian denominations. In a few of the islands of the Bahamas, the entire body of the inhabitants is under the care of numerous elders and pastors, chosen by the people for the duties they discharge, and gathered into Church order by the Society's missionaries.

The whole time of the remaining twenty-five missionaries is occupied with the direct preaching of the Word, the evangelization of the people who are lying in darkness and in the shadow of death. Like the brethren in Barrisal, Jessore, and Delhi, they all superintend the native churches of their districts, but at the same time devote themselves to the spread of the glad tidings of salvation among the perishing and the lost.

Many duties fall upon the missionaries in addition to those which are their

special care. Native preachers have to be assisted and their work prescribed; native pastors often require advice and instruction; schools for heathen and Christian children must be visited, and the schoolmasters superintended; colporteurs must be set about their task, and their routes arranged; inquirers must be entertained, and their inquiries carefully met; and then the "care of all the churches," which by God's grace have been gathered, falls to the missionary's lot, that the converts may be kept free from error, and stimulated to earnestness and devotedness in the work of the Lord. In some stations orphans have to be fed and educated; women's classes to be taught; and the sick, both heathen and Christian, attended to. In short, your missionaries must be ready for every good word and work, and your Committee are happy in the belief, that very few fail to do their utmost to promote the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of the people they seek to benefit, and to advance among them the kingdom of God.

NATIVE CHURCHES.

Passing on from the work in which your missionaries are engaged, the Committee next call attention to the character and position of the numerous churches they have been permitted, through the divine blessing on their labours, to gather. Omitting the congregations in Jamaica from consideration, the number of native churches that are at present in connection with the Society is about 105. They contain somewhat more than 6,200 members, in the following proportions:—in India, about 2,080; in Ceylon, China, and Europe, 730; and in Africa and the West Indies, 3,420. It is gratifying to the Committee that they are able to state that the baptisms during last year, over 600 in number, have been unusually large, and that every portion of the field has enjoyed in this respect some tokens of the Divine favour on the labours of His servants. Of these churches there are 86 which enjoy the services of native pastors. The remainder are either, as above mentioned, under the direct care of a missionary; or, from local circumstances, although native brethren preach to them, have not as yet chosen any one as pastor; or are so small in numbers as to render, in the judgment of the missionary, such an arrangement premature.

INDEPENDENCE OF NATIVE CHURCHES.

It has, however, long been the anxious desire of the Committee to see all these native communities in every respect self-sustaining and independent of the revenues of the Society. The deputations that have visited the missions from time to time have, at the request of the Committee, brought this question very distinctly before the missionaries and the churches. It has been the

subject of frequent and prolonged correspondence. Four years ago the Committee addressed a circular to the missionaries, urgently pressing upon their attention the importance and necessity of this measure. At the same time an address was prepared, and translated for circulation among the members of the churches in the various languages spoken by them. Early in the present year, as it was found little progress had been made in India, the topic was again resumed by the Committee in a circular especially addressed to the Indian missionaries, dated July 10th, 1867. It will be interesting to the constituents of the Society if the general results of these communications are briefly given.

In the West Indies, the native ministry of the numerous churches in the Bahamas, of five churches in Trinidad, of two churches in Hayti, is entirely sustained by the contributions of the people. A few of these devoted men labour for their own support, and in only one instance does the Society now contribute to the maintenance of a native pastor. These churches are fully organized, conduct their own affairs with occasional advice from the missionary, and administer the ordinances of the Gospel. They have erected their own sanctuaries, with but small help from extraneous sources; they also carry on a considerable amount of local evangelization. In Africa, the churches are either too small, or the people have too recently emerged from barbarism, to render a native ministry possible. In Brittany, the church at Morlaix continues under the charge of the missionary; but a step forward has been taken of a very interesting kind. Three of the members have been chosen by the church to go forth as evangelists: their special duty is to hold meetings on the sabbath day, to explain the Word of God, and to announce the Gospel to their countrymen. The cost is defrayed by a weekly penny subscription of the members of the congregation. "It promises," says Mr. Jenkins, "to answer fully our expectations." In Norway, the six churches among which our devoted brother Huber travels, receive no further aid from the Society than the small sum by which this simple-hearted evangelist is sustained.

NATIVE CHURCHES IN INDIA.

But while so much has been accomplished in the West, the Committee are not able to report such gratifying results in the East. No doubt the totally different state of society in the field of Eastern missions, may largely account for this. In India particularly, the system of caste has thrown the converts, especially in the early years of the work, on the missionary for the necessaries of life, and for protection against social persecution. Not ten years have elapsed since complete liberty of conscience was secured,

and the prejudice of the Government of India against the employment of christian natives in its service overcome. It is only of late years that converts in any numbers, in a given locality, have been gathered together. For the most part they have been gathered out of the heathen masses one by one; picked up as stray sheep, in remote places. In very few instances, and only recently, has there been any movement of the people in bodies, or families, towards Christianity. On every side the convert had to meet the bitterest opposition; he was deprived of his share of the paternal inheritance, and excluded from the common privileges of the village in which he might happen to dwell. No one would hold intercourse with him, or employ him, or purchase the produce of his toil. The convert was thus, too often, brought into a relation of complete dependence on the missionary. His helplessness appealed to the christian feelings of those by whose instrumentality he had been enlightened. Many an enquirer had to go away, sad at heart, because a profession of Christianity would deprive him of every resource, and he would become literally an out-cast from his people and his home.

Among the inhabitants of Ceylon, the singular apathy which characterises the race, partly the effect of their religion, and partly the national habit, has had to be overcome. Kept for ages in a state of extreme depression by successive conquerors, the minds of the people seem to have lost their natural energy, while poverty, which the vast extension of coffee cultivation has now largely removed, appeared to create an insuperable barrier to independence in church affairs. In China, it is only within the last ten years that missionary operations have been directly brought to bear on the vast population of that Empire. The number of converts were formerly exceedingly few; they were in many instances exiles from their native country, while the missionaries could get no further than the outskirts of the great regions they desired to penetrate. Taking these considerations together, it should create no surprise that so little progress has been made in establishing an indigenous and independent native church in these great countries; but they do not, any the less, render it the duty of the missionary to press onward in that direction. It may be difficult to emerge from a state of things which circumstances have forced upon them; but the Committee are convinced that the Gospel will not make that rapid progress they desire to see, until their native brethren, emancipated from all bonds but those which the Lord himself has imposed, shall feel themselves free, but, under divine obligation, to be the messengers of Christ's mercy to their own countrymen.

INDEPENDENCE OF NATIVE CHURCHES.

To the last appeal of the Committee, numerous answers have been received,

and it is due to their brethren and to the friends of the Society, to record the extent to which their efforts in this direction have gone, and the difficulties which have to be met. Of the thirteen native churches in Ceylon, three only have attempted to establish themselves as independent churches. Of the two in the Kandy district, no distinct report has come to hand; but of the third, the church in Grand Pass, Colombo, the most gratifying accounts have been received. It is the fourth year of its independence of the Society's funds. At the commencement of its separate life it numbered 51 members. They elected Mr. James Silva as their pastor. The church now numbers 100 members. It exhibits a most gratifying spirit of active christian exertion before almost unknown in the Singhalese churches. The number of baptisms has increased from year to year, in a manner almost unprecedented in the history of the Ceylon mission. Twenty-five persons were received by baptism during the past year, and the ministry of the Word has been most liberally sustained. About £120 were contributed by the church and congregation in 1867, and spent for the support of the pastor, lighting of the chapel, and various other purposes. Grand Pass is the oldest Baptist church in the island; it was planted during the ministry of the Society's first missionary, the Rev. J. Chater. Four other churches have in fellowship as many members as that of Grand Pass when it resolved to undertake the responsibility of its ministers' support; these the Committee hope will soon follow its example. There are indications of a growing liberality in all the Singhalese churches, their contributions each year gradually increasing in amount.

The little church in China, now numbering twenty-eight persons, of whom nine have been baptized during the year, is scattered over three villages. At the last station formed, in the village of Hankhiau, Mr. Laughton informs the Committee that he has not placed there any paid agent. He told the converts at its commencement, that now the Gospel was introduced, they must feel themselves responsible for its maintenance and propagation. "I am glad to say," he adds, "that it has succeeded beyond my expectation." The principle on which this station has been begun, Mr. Laughton hopes to carry through in another station he expects shortly to establish.

In Northern India, fifty-six native Churches have been formed; in all of which native brethren fulfil many of the duties of pastors. But completely organized churches, with pastors and deacons in full exercise of the duties of those offices, are very few. Two churches only can be considered as independent; one in Calcutta, and one in Jessore. The Calcutta church meets in South Colingah, in a chapel built many years ago by the missionaries. For some time past it has enjoyed the gratuitous services of its excellent pastor, Goolzar Shah, who holds a lucrative post in a government office. Last year, his frequent absence on the duties of his department at Simlah, led the church

at his request, to elect a co-pastor; to him the church has given a salary of £48 per annum. The church numbers about 50 members, and has actively exerted itself for the spread of the Gospel in Calcutta. The second independent church is at Kudumdi, in the district of Jessore; the number of members is small, but the pastor has been able to support himself from his own resources. An effort was begun two or three years ago among the nine churches of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, to the south of Calcutta, to raise funds for the maintenance of divine worship and for other purposes; but the devastation of the district by the cyclone of 1864, and again in 1867, destroyed all their resources. Their dwellings and chapels were levelled with the ground; their fields swept bare of crops; their granaries and the contents were carried away by the tempest, and many lost their lives in the fury of the storm. Some years must elapse before prosperity can be restored, or they can be expected to renew their efforts for self-support.

The largest number of converts and churches is found in the districts of Jessore, Backergunge, and Delhi. In these localities the missionaries have endeavoured to organize the churches on the Scriptural model, and to induce the members to assume the responsibility of the support of their pastors, and the maintenance of the means of grace. At Magoorah, in Jessore, Mr. Hobbs reports, that the church has been induced to elect a pastor and two deacons, and that they have undertaken to raise five rupees monthly towards their pastor's support. Three other churches have agreed to contribute a small sum towards their pastors' salaries, and also at their own cost to erect the chapels destroyed by the recent cyclone.

The largest and most important of the Bengal missions is that carried on in the district of Backergunge, and lately in the charge of the Rev. John Page. Since his removal from the district, through illness, the churches have come under the care of the Rev. R. J. Ellis, who has earnestly attempted to carry out the plan of a native independent pastorate among them. The churches are 24 in number, and contain about 800 members in fellowship. Mr. Ellis reports that, with all due regard to the danger of rapid changes, he has endeavoured to inaugurate the new arrangements. Deacons have been elected in all the larger churches, and the burden of keeping the chapels in repair has been thrown upon them, and, in some cases at least, cheerfully accepted. He learns that some of the churches have begun to act nobly in the matter. To bring the question fully before the people, he addressed the pastors, deacons, and members, not only by personal intercourse in church meetings, but by a circular in Bengali, and sought to impress upon them the necessity and propriety of becoming independent as to pecuniary aid of the Society. He expects the process will be a difficult and a gradual one; but he deems it to be practicable. It may lead to the sifting of the wheat from the chaff, and,

for a time to a cessation of additions to the number of the converts; but he looks for a favourable result, since it is as much an ordinance of God that the churches should be self-sustaining, as it is that the Gospel should be preached. It is satisfactory to the Committee to learn that, so far, the prospect of success is encouraging.

The Delhi mission is the next most important of our stations for the number of converts, and the success with which it has pleased God to enrich the toil of his servants. In this important city of Northern India, once the seat of empire, the converts are divided into four churches—one within the walls of the city, containing 99 members, and the three others, with 80 members, in the suburbs. The members of these four churches form only a small proportion of the large body which, since the mutiny, has openly renounced idolatry. But, though the church members have shown satisfactory evidence of conversion to God, they manifest the feebleness of the child rather than the strength of the man, and independence, in the judgment of the missionary, may yet be far distant. Hence he is more anxious to enlighten and instruct than to add to their numbers. Progress, however, is being made towards the end in view. The people are not gathered into Christian villages; they dwell among their own countrymen, supporting themselves on the fruits of their own industry. They learn to face whatever opposition the confession of Christ may involve. They largely manage their own church affairs. "The Church meetings," says the Rev. James Smith, "are becoming a reality, and are attended as they never were before. A regular system of collection is carried on, not only every Sabbath after Divine worship, but also privately among the members. All matters are freely discussed, and I take care to interfere as little as possible with their action. We are moving on in the right way, and never losing sight of the end so much desired, viz., independent native churches and action." The greatest want of the missionary is educated native brethren, capable of being leaders among their Christian countrymen. The missionary is not without hope that such men may be found by the grace of God among the increasing number of trained and instructed youth who are being educated in the Government colleges. He is persuaded that the way is being prepared for a movement so much to be desired, and that it will not be long delayed.

The church at Dinagepore was reorganized on Christmas Day by the Rev. Isaac Allen with 19 members. Two were chosen as elders or co-pastors, and another as deacon. But they requested three months' trial before they took upon themselves the whole of the responsibilities of a Christian church. Their fidelity to Christ and the laws of His church being thus tested, the elders then propose to undertake the administration of all the ordinances of the Gospel. Five of the members have received a good education at Serampore

and elsewhere, one was trained by Mr. Pearce, and as they are in prosperous circumstances, they may be regarded as well able to raise and sustain an independent native church. There is every probability that this small community will become entirely free of the Society's funds.

With regard to the rest of the Indian churches, the difficulties in the way of church organization and of independent action appear to the Missionaries, for the present, insuperable. Some of the difficulties arise from prejudice; in one or two instances the converts thinking that their own brethren are not able to administer the ordinances of Christ in a valid manner. Some of the churches consist of extremely poor people, few in numbers, and dependent on the generous aid of others. In some cases, the native preachers exhibit a painful degree of reluctance to become dependent on the gifts of their own countrymen, while the converts betray an equal unwillingness to assume the responsibilities which a native independent pastorate would involve. The Committee, are, however, persuaded that judicious and kind treatment and instruction will remove these difficulties; the progress of events will help the missionary, and examples of successful effort will strengthen their hands and aid in the removing of all obstacles from their path.

STATE OF INDIA.

Apart from every other motive for a speedy accomplishment of this important object, the quickened action of the native mind, the growth of a sense of coming changes, the decay of idolatrous usages in many places, the relaxation that has taken place in the bonds of caste, indicate that a period is approaching when the native church will be called upon in the Providence of God to put forth all its energies, to gather into the garner of the Lord the great harvest He is preparing. "I think," says the Rev. James Smith, "we are on the eve of great changes. The loosening of Hindu social and religious bonds is very manifest. Instead of everything being, as heretofore, stereotyped, it is all change, and perpetual change; change in agriculture, in arts and sciences, in travelling, in social habits, in modes of thought, in manufactures. And all these changes have for their foundation changes that are quietly taking place in their religious opinions. The heaven is visibly at work, and the whole nation is certainly rising out of its miserable depths of darkness into Divine light. A few converts here and there are nothing to the operation of truth on the masses."

These views of our observant and esteemed brother are fully borne out by the valuable evidence of Sir Richard Temple, which is recorded in a remarkable state paper recently presented to Parliament. This paper contains a correspondence respecting the comparative advantages of the British and

native systems of Government in India. Among the classes most inimical to British rule in India, Sir Richard Temple places first the priestly class, whether Hindu or Mahommedan. "They must feel," he says, "that the ultimate downfall of their power is only a question of time. They cannot but mark the change in the religious opinion of their countrymen caused by the national education introduced by the British."—"They do, indeed, recognize the ultimate and inevitable tendency of our moral influence, and of the example afforded by our presence." "This class," he states, "strongly objects to the missionaries preaching in public, and charge the Government with affording them encouragement, by allowing it. They cannot but see that wherever a missionary does preach there is sure to be a multitude thronging round to listen, which shows that whatever some natives may think, there are many others of them who wish to hear the tidings of the Gospel." His testimony as to the value and influence of Mission Schools is very important. They are, he says, specially popular among the people, because of "the kindness the courtesy, the patience, and the aptitude of the missionaries for the instruction of youth." Nor less striking is Sir Richard Temple's testimony in reference to the character of the missionaries themselves. "The self-denying, irreproachable demeanour of the missionaries of all denominations, the spirit of catholic charity evinced by them, produce," he says, "a deep impression on the minds of Orientals, and raise our national character in the estimation of the natives." If there be added to these powerful influences the direct operations of the British Government in abolishing barbarous customs, in ruling by just laws, in fostering beneficial changes in the social habits of the people, in promoting education, with the rapid revival of a native literature saturated with the religious and scientific knowledge of their rulers and instructors, Sir Richard Temple may well characterize these movements as "really vast," as amounting to a "mighty agency," leading to great changes in the religious and political condition of the myriad populations over whom Divine Providence has called the British nation to rule. In view of these facts, the words of Lord Cranbourne, when referring in the House of Commons to his tenure of office as Secretary of State for India, are no less impressive. It often appeared to him, he said, that he was "watching the birth of nations, when watching the state of affairs in India." If then, at present, the immediate fruits of our labours in direct conversions seem to some meagre and unsatisfactory, yet is it certain that the vast changes ripening before our eyes tends to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in the land. The Gospel alone finds acceptance among the people, in the midst of the wreck and decay of their ancestral beliefs.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Perhaps there is no evidence of the changes going on in Hindu habits and

ideas so striking, as the remarkable movement in favour of Female Education, which has received within the last year or two an extraordinary impetus. A fact mentioned by Mrs. Lewis is a notable illustration. It was scarcely possible a short time ago, to gain access to the female inmates of a Hindu gentleman's house, for the purposes of instruction. At first one or two, here and there, would brave the national prejudice, and admit a teacher; but now, in Calcutta alone, about 300 houses, containing some 1,200 females, are open to Christian teachers and instructors. In other parts of Bengal, as in Dacca and in the North-west Provinces, a similar movement is begun, giving hope that this portion of our race, so long secluded from the knowledge of the Gospel, is at length about to see that great light. The Committee rejoice at the formation in this country, in connection with the Society, of a Ladies' Association, having specially for its object the welfare of the women of India. They wish the Association the most hearty success, and commend it to the warm sympathy and support of the members of the Society.

THE FUTURE AND ITS NEED.

The prospects before the Christian Church both in India and China are full of hope. But your Committee is straitened. Neither an adequate number of men, nor the means of their support, is forthcoming. Every year seems to add to the difficulty of meeting current expenditure, and this difficulty is increased by the largely growing cost of sustaining brethren in the field, with the manifold agencies their work requires. Offers of service have, of necessity, during the past year, been declined, and it appears that the financial condition of the Society will compel the Committee to a similar course during the present. It is necessary that the Society's income should be made to cover its expenditure. Delhi, Jessore, Barrisal, the inviting field of Eastern Bengal cry out for help. Africa calls aloud for more labourers, and Mr. Allen's place in Ceylon has not yet been filled. The low condition to which the mission in China is reduced requires an immediate remedy. Mr. Laughton is left alone: the Committee have been deterred from all efforts to give him even a single colleague by the state of the funds. Under these circumstances it has seemed to the Committee probable that brethren might be found who, like the first missionaries of the Society, would go out with the hope of obtaining in the mission field itself the resources denied them here. Such a course would, indeed, demand strong faith in God. It would require a purpose which no trial could shake, a heroism that would not be moved by hunger or thirst, nor by the manifold perils which, under similar circumstances, were the lot of the first missionaries of the Cross. It might demand self-denial of the severest sort; the forsaking of father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and houses and lands, and all earthly prospects. The Committee would fain

hope that this spirit has not departed from the churches. They would cordially welcome brethren animated by this spirit, and as far as the means at their disposal permit, would help them on their way. After long and prayerful deliberation, the Committee have recorded their views in the following resolutions. In form they specially relate to China, but they are equally applicable to every part of the heathen world :—

“Resolved,—“That the Committee will be happy to receive proposals to labour in China, under the auspices of the Society (as has been done with respect to other parts of the Mission field), from brethren who are disposed to enter on the service of Christ, to find, mainly or altogether, their support in the resources which the country they seek to evangelize may furnish, the Committee rendering only such aid, from time to time, as it may be in their power to afford.

Resolved,—“That the Committee are prepared to receive any contributions specially given for the use of such brethren, by Churches or private Christians, and to forward such funds to the brethren for whose aid they are designed.”

It is the fervent prayer and hope of the Committee that many such men may be raised up by the Head of the Church, and sent forth into His vineyard. In no other way is it conceivable that the great countries of the East, with their vast populations, can be reached by the churches of this country with the message of peace.

In conclusion, the Committee desire to remind themselves and the members of the Society that the subjection of the world to Christ cannot be effected by power, nor by might, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. That Divine power is at once our strength and the assurance of final success. It is Christ who worketh in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Let us, then, in all humility, but strong in faith, give ourselves to the Lord's work, and at the same time lean as helpless on the arm of Him whose is the might to fulfil the merciful purposes of His grace. The promise is ours, as it was of old theirs, who sought to fulfil the Lord's command to evangelize all nations, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”