

SOCIETY FOR IRISH CHURCH MISSIONS TO THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.

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WHILE the great ones of the earth are pondering over the affairs of nations, and mustering their forces for contingent difficulties, Ireland is the theatre of a struggle of a very secondary nature in their estimation. Yet in the sight of Him who ruleth all, it is, in fact, one of the most important points of present contest in the great struggle, to which all worldly warfare is but tributary in a degree scarcely worth calculating in relation to the final result of the whole. Earthly kings combat for temporary dominion over the bodies and properties of men; the present struggle in Ireland is for that, of which the bodies and the properties of men are but instruments,—even for the mastery over the souls and spirits of men, which the Eternal One, the true Christ, claims for his own; and which the great deceiver “which deceiveth the whole world,” is striving to retain from the dominion of that true Christ, by the assumption of His name in the service of falsehood. To the spiritual perception of the true people of God, the struggle in Ireland between Protestant truth and Romish falsehood, is the point of the great battle, the interest of which leaves all others far behind.

The interest of this great struggle has risen rapidly, and its present importance has so ripened in the estimation of the people of God, that it has ceased to be a secondary matter in the Church's general prospect. The power of the success which God has been pleased to bestow upon the Missionary efforts of the last three years, has roused the alarm of the enemy of souls, and called forth an array of his forces, which gives a juster view of the value of the success already attained, than the feeble faith of the few who have been honoured as the instruments would have ventured to take. The kingdom of Romish darkness in Ireland is felt by its rulers to be in great danger; this is manifest from their acknowledgments and their preparations, in spite of the inconsistent contempt with

which they speak of the agents, whose instrumentality has stirred them to such an attitude of defence.

It is of extreme importance that the christians of England should clearly see the precise position, to which the success of the Missions in Ireland has brought the contest. It has now become very plain that the Romish authorities are not only aware of the danger that impends over Romanism by the faithful pressing of the Word of God upon Romanists, but that they are preparing as powerful a machinery, as the wisdom of the world and the resources of its wealth can produce, in order to crush what they now see to be, that which involves the extinction of the Romish church in Ireland. It is no longer concealed that the main purport of the organization which is called "the Catholic Defence Association," is to counteract the progress of "proselytism," the extent of which they do not consider it necessary to understate. The political and the spiritual elements were so combined in the original plan for arranging that Association, that the political partizans joined it with the notion that politics was the primary object. The untoward selection of an unhappy apostate from England divided the parties, and drew forth a plainer statement from those who pull the wires of the puppets, that the spiritual interests of Romanism are in danger, and politics must be merged in the battle against "proselytism." The Pope's legate in Ireland has written a somewhat incautious letter to the editor of a newspaper, of Ultra-papal views, in France. What may seem incautious has probably a far-seen object in view. This letter of the legate is in acknowledgment, as he says, "for the generous contribution you have sent us to aid us to resist the Anglican proselytism in Ireland." In this letter he plainly manifests both the alarm, and the preparations making for this resistance. He says—

"The evils which threaten us are of a more afflicting nature. Our faith is assailed in every possible manner. Perverse or misguided men, filled by the bitterest spirit of hostility to truth, are endeavouring to eradicate the Catholic Faith of our forefathers from the soil, and to substitute in its place the unhappy weeds of hypocrisy and infidelity."
 * * * It would be impossible to describe all the means those teachers of error have recourse to, in order to carry out their wicked designs; or to calculate the vast amount of money which they expend in their endeavours to pervert the souls that were redeemed by the Precious Blood of our Divine Saviour. Their principal effort is to spread schools over the land, in which the tender minds of youth are poisoned with anti-Catholic doctrines; and continual attempts are made to inspire them with bitter hatred against Catholicity, the Clergy, and the respect due to the Blessed Mother of God.
 * * * * *

"Latterly a new class of auxiliaries to the Established Church has been introduced under the name of Bible-readers and street-preachers. These are, in general, low ignorant men, without education, and without any knowledge of the truth. * * * These extraordinary teachers are paid at the rate of two or three pounds a-month."

These extracts are given in evidence of the statement made above, and in order to raise in the minds of English christians a lively sense of the present position of the Missions, engaged in planting the standard of the true Christ in the strong holds of Romanism in Ireland.

Some of the statutes of the Synod of Thurles have found their way

out of the darkness in which it is endeavoured to shroud them, into the light of publicity. It now appears plainly, that however large a portion of attention was given at that meeting to the prominent object of the colleges, the great motive which led to the gathering, was the evidence that Romanism had been left open to the approaches of truth by the utter neglect of the priests; and that to prevent "Proselytism," every energy must be put forth, in every way.

The position of affairs at this moment then, is this. It has pleased God to call into action a missionary spirit amongst his people, who have gone to the Romanists in Ireland, and called them to come out from Babylon. He has given the hearing ear to multitudes who have obeyed this call. The success with which He has blessed the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics has drawn forth the utmost energies of the Romish Church to resist the aggression. By the rapid progress of the movement under this blessing, the Irish Church Missions find all the powers of the enemy in battle array against them. This is a glorious spectacle for men and for angels, who are watching with outstretched necks the issue of the contest. With such a formidable host in front, plumed with the circumstance of haughty boast in human power,—calling upon one who is out of the hearing of their cries, and outraging the humble piety of the blessed virgin, if she could hear,—what shall be the course of the despised Missions? What was the course of the lappers of Gideon? He encircled the Midianitish host with his three hundred. Trusting in the arm of the Lord alone, he felt no fear, and he discomfited those who were the enemies of the people of God.

Upon the opening of the new year, the Committee of the Irish Church Missions have received tokens, that the Lord is moving the hearts of his people to give them the necessary means; and therefore, in full view of all the powers of falsehood marshalled against them, they have given directions to extend their lines. "It is nothing with the Lord to help, whether with many or with them that have no power;" and in this confidence they have stretched forth with their powerless few into the length and breadth of the land. Five new Missions are to be organized without delay. The following extract from the Minutes of the Committee will shew their feeling and their faith.

"If these direct Missions be undertaken, the Roman Catholics inhabiting a great breadth of country along a line running south-east and north-west all across Ireland, from West Galway on the Atlantic, to Wexford on St. George's Channel, would be under the Missionary operations of the Society; and as between the Roscommon Mission and the Drogheda Mission, Local Committees for Missions are actively at work in Longford, West Meath, and Meath, it might be said that the Society's Missions would extend over the whole central breadth of Ireland."

To accomplish this object, which has been adopted by the Committee, there are three great wants.

They want the pecuniary means.

They want the suitable agents.

They want the fervent prayers of the Lord's people.

The Committee subjoin the statement of their agency at the beginning of the year 1857. This amount of agency would need to be doubled, in order to carry out with effect the five new Missions they have determined to undertake.

They make an earnest appeal for enlarged assistance, to carry on this great work, which it has pleased God to bless their endeavours, by giving them so strong a vantage ground of success.

STATEMENT OF AGENCY.

No.	MISSIONS.	STATIONS.	Ordained Missionaries.	Lay Agents.	Readers.	Schoolmasters.	Schoolmistresses.	Total.	Schools.
1	Castelkerke	1 Castelkerke ....	..	..	3	..	..	3	1
		2 Kilmilkin .....	..	..	2	1	..	3	1
		3 Curnamona .....	..	..	1	..	1	2	1
		4 Lyons .....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
2	Lough Mask	5 Tourmakeady ..	..	..	3	1	1	5	2
		6 Partree .....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
3	Oughterard	7 Oughterard	1	..	3	1	1	6	1
		8 Glan	1	..	3	1	1	6	1
4	Galway	9 Galway	1	..	5	1	..	7	1
		10 Ross .....	..	..	..	..	1	1	1
		11 Headford .....	..	..	1	1	..	2	1
		12 Rooveagh .....	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
		13 Tuam .....	..	..	2	1	..	3	1
5	Connemara	14 Clifden	1	2	5	1	3	12	3
		15 Fokeragh .....	..	..	..	..	1	1	1
		16 Salruck	1	..	2	1	..	4	1
		17 Ballynakill	1	..	2	..	..	3	..
		18 Sellerna	1	..	7	1	..	9	1
		19 Cleggan .....	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		20 Claddaghduff ..	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		21 Omey .....	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		22 Ballyconree	1	..	4	1	1	7	2
		23 Barratrough ..	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		24 Turbot Island ..	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		25 Errislanon ....	..	..	2	1	1	4	1
		26 Ballinaboy ....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
		27 Derrygimla	1	..	3	1	1	6	2
		28 Aillebracke ....	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		29 Duholla .....	..	..	..	1	1	2	1
		30 Roundstone ....	..	..	3	1	1	5	1
		31 Moyrus	1	..	2	1	..	4	1
6	Iar Connaught	32 Inverin	1	..	5	2	..	8	1
		33 Spiddall .....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
		34 Casla .....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
		35 Lettermore .....	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
7	South Eastern	36 Enniscorthy	1	..	2	1	1	5	1
		37 Mulrankin .....	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
8	Kilkenny	38 Kilkenny	1	1	2	..	..	4	..
		39 Carlow .....	..	..	2	..	..	2	..
		40 Portarlinton ..	..	..	2	..	..	2	..
9	Dublin	41 Dublin	2	3	27	3	..	35	..
10	Drogheda	42 Drogheda .....	..	1	1	..	..	2	..
10	Missions.	42 Stations.	15	7	96	34	21	173	39

Annual subscriptions and donations to the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics will be received by the Treasurer, John Dean Paul, Esq., at Messrs. Strahan, Paul, and Co.'s, Strand; at Messrs. Williams, Deacon, and Co.'s, Birchin-lane; at Messrs. Herries, Farquhar, and Co.'s, St. James's-street; and by Messrs. Hatch and Son, Piccadilly; Messrs. Seeley, Fleet-street and Hanover-street; and Messrs. Nisbet and Co., Berners-street. Communications are requested to be addressed to the Secretary, No. 14, Exeter Hall, London.

