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A

DEFENCE

OF THE

Church Missionary Society

AGAINST

THE OBJECTIONS

OF THE

REV. JOSIAH THOMAS, M. A.

ARCHDEACON OF BATH.

BY DANIEL WILSON, M. A.

MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW.

NINTH EDITION.

LONDON :

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

EIGHTH EDITION.

THE rapid sale of the following small work made it impossible for the Author to revise sooner what he had written. It was indeed originally composed in the midst of numerous engagements, and under the pressure of family affliction; and though he was able to avail himself of the assistance of two or three judicious friends, yet he is well aware that many things were omitted which would have found a place in a more deliberate composition. His absence from London during the greater part of the week which has elapsed since the first appearance of the work, has prevented an earlier attempt to supply in some small measure its defects. He is still sensible how entirely it fails of doing justice to the immense importance of the general cause of Missions, the interest of which he deems to be intimately involved in the local occasion which gave rise to the publication.

It is proper to add, that the whole argument, with all that is material in the detail, remains unchanged in the present edition.

Chapel Street, Bedford Row,
Monday, Jan. 12, 1818.

A

DEFENCE,

&c. &c.

THE Reverend the Archdeacon of Bath having published an Address, which he delivered at a meeting held in that city on Monday, the 1st of December, 1817, it may seem requisite, in order that the statements of that publication may be properly considered, to take a brief view of the general cause of Missions, and of the circumstances which led to the formation of the various Associations in connection with the Church Missionary Society.

It had long been the reproach of the christian church, that so little had been done for propagating the faith among heathen nations. The zeal which animated her members in her earlier days, seemed almost extinguished; and, after the lapse of nearly eighteen centuries, the last command of her Redeemer, *to preach the Gospel to every creature*, was yet unaccomplished.

It might have been expected, indeed, that, with the progress of superstition in the dark ages, the pure flame of christian charity should decline; and that the church, either inculcating a corrupted doctrine, or employing unhallowed means, should fail more and more in her efforts to disseminate the christian faith.

But why have not the reformed churches rekindled the sacred fire? Why have they allowed three centuries to pass away, before they have attempted any thing considerable for the salvation of the world? Why has not the holy zeal of their Missionaries marked the revival of that pure doctrine of Christ, which they received in order that they might disseminate it to the ends of the earth?

The painful truth is, that the Reformation has never transfused into its communities the spirit of Missions. The Roman Catholics, with all the defects which we charge upon them, have outstripped us in this race. At the very time when Protestant Germany and England were utterly indolent, Rome was pushing her Missionaries into the most remote and apparently impenetrable regions of the earth. It is with a sort of triumph that Muratori observes, "That, amongst all the marks that serve to distinguish the Catholic Church from sects delivered over to error, the ardent zeal she has ever shewn for the propagation of the Gospel, is one that strikes us most."¹ Undoubtedly the wealth and power of that church, together with its absolute dominion over its priesthood, facilitated its missionary designs; whilst the uncertain condition of the early protestant communities, and the domestic habits of their clergy, proportionably impeded them in such exertions. It is to be considered also that much is to be deducted from the apparent effects of the Romish Missions, on the score of the superstition, duplicity, and force, which too much disgraced their later measures: but still the humiliating acknowledgment must be made, the reformed churches have been lamentably defective in these high and ennobling duties. Surely, as they acquired stability and influence, they should have laboured to equal the efforts of the catholic missionaries in extent of labour, whilst they surpassed them in purity of doctrine and simplicity of proceeding.

We must not, indeed, undervalue the actual attempts of the different protestant communities in their various missions. The patience and faith of Ziegenbalg, Grundler, Swartz, and Gerické, of Eliot, Brainerd, and others, will never be forgotten. But what proportion do the labours of these, and a few other holy men, bear to the immense extent of the heathen world? The population of the globe is estimated, at the lowest, at 800 millions, of whom not more than 175 millions are professedly christian—that is, in the nineteenth century from the birth of the Saviour of the world, three-fourths of that world never heard, to any effect, of his name; never heard of the God who made nor of the Saviour who redeemed them; were never told of their immortal destiny, of their duty and their danger, of the way of repentance or the foundation of hope. Surely this single fact is sufficient to afflict every considerate, every humane mind. And yet, Time stops not in its course—thousands of our fellow-creatures are hastening into eternity every year, every month, every day, who might have been enlightened and blessed with the truths of revelation, if we had possessed more zeal and charity in consulting their everlasting welfare.

¹ Muratori's Relation of Missions to Paraguay. Lond. 1759.

Indeed, were the temporal well-being of mankind alone in question, they who rightly estimate the astonishing effects of christianity, in mitigating the evils of war and abolishing the cruelties of heathen superstition, as well as in communicating innumerable other benefits, would ardently wish to diffuse it with a view to the present happiness of their fellow-men, as well as to their eternal felicity.

It is painful to reflect, that, amongst all the nations professing the protestant faith, our own country has had, till within these very few years, the largest share in the guilt of this inactivity. It is truly alarming to consider the rank and commerce and glory of this great empire, and yet the little that she has done in the noblest cause which can animate man. She stretches her dominion over an immense portion of the world: her ships cover every ocean: her territories border on most of the considerable heathen and Mohammedan states: her fame for wealth, and liberty, and valour, and good faith, has filled the earth: and yet what has she effected for the highest interests of mankind? what, worthy of the blessings bestowed on her? what at all answerable to the facilities which she possesses, and the correspondent obligations under which she lies? Especially, since the vast extent of her possessions in India has added sixty or seventy millions to her population—an event of incalculable moment, and bringing with it a deep responsibility—what has she attempted to meet the great occasion which is presented to her, of extending the christian faith?

If we except the laudable efforts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in the South of India, where a few clergymen, and those of the Lutheran church, have long been supported, nothing, absolutely nothing, has been done, till these late years, by our church, for the instruction of the heathen.

And yet what is there so holy, what so elevated, what so arduous, as the work of disseminating the most stupendous blessings among nations debased by vice and superstition, nations lost to Heaven and to themselves, “without hope and without God in the world?” We boast of our benevolence and humanity; but what exercise of benevolence or humanity can be compared to that of rescuing our fellow-men from ignorance, and cruelty, and lust, and misery; of conveying to them the knowledge of a Crucified Redeemer, and telling them that GOD IS LOVE? We talk of heroism; but what is so heroic as to quit the comforts of our native land, and cheerfully to encounter the dangers of a foreign clime, and all the labors and sufferings incidental to missionary undertakings? Surely there treads not on this earth a man so truly magnanimous as the faithful Missionary! To be engaged in inviting such men into the field of exertion, and of aiding and

animating them in their toils, can only, therefore, be second in importance to the becoming Missionaries ourselves.

And yet England was for a long period, as a nation, utterly unmoved by these considerations. With a cold selfishness she monopolised the gifts of Grace, which were confided to her for the benefit of mankind. She was contented with languid wishes for the good of others; and, by her indifference, seemed to pour contempt on the ardor of those who were willing to enter on the high service of enlightening mankind.

But, blessed be God, these reproaches on the British name, are, in their full force, no longer applicable. Within these few years, a zealous desire to promote these efforts of love has begun to appear; and it will depend very much on the British nation at large, to determine whether this spirit shall or shall not be nourished and augmented. Benevolent individuals, of various religious confessions in this country, began about twenty years back to form several Missionary Societies for propagating the Gospel in different parts of the world. The proposals were received with attention. The blessing of Almighty God appeared to rest upon these undertakings. It then occurred to a few pious and conscientious members of our church, that some success might attend a modest and prudent attempt to form a Missionary Society in our own body. The moment seemed inviting. Our immense Indian empire, our efforts to open Africa to freedom and the blessings of civilization, our increasing commerce, the apparent revival of christian piety in many quarters, the example and success of other religious communities, the warning hand of Divine Providence in the commotions of the European states, the long reproach which had rested on the church for her remissness in this labour, the comparatively small exertions of the only two societies within her pale which had any concern with missions, the circumstance that not one English clergyman was acting as a missionary among heathens, the duty at any rate of making an attempt though it should fail, and the possibility of its being crowned with success—these considerations loudly and irresistibly called on them to propose a new society, exclusively devoted to the object of missions.

The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East was accordingly formed. Its measures were, in the first instance, submitted to the notice of the then Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. For the first few years it was chiefly engaged in making inquiries, circulating information, collecting subscriptions, and instituting preparatory measures. It proceeded with all due caution. It had to contend with various difficulties in its first attempts to send out Missionaries. Its chief impediments, however, arose at home, from that want of a lively interest

in the members of our church for the salvation of the Pagan nations which, we must acknowledge with concern, had too long prevailed amongst us. Still its conductors bore up, though "in weakness, and fear, and much trembling." They fixed on Africa, injured Africa, as the first scene of their labors. The efforts of the friends of humanity for accomplishing the Abolition of the Slave Trade encouraged them to this attempt. In a few years they addressed themselves to the work in various parts of India; and, afterward, as the Providence of God opened their way, to the large and populous Islands of New Zealand, and to the extensive shores of the Mediterranean sea.

After seventeen years of patient labor, they have been blessed with a measure of success which calls for their unfeigned gratitude, and animates them to further exertions. The stations which the society occupies, including the schools of the Tranquebar Mission, now amount to about forty-five. In these stations there are upward of eighty christian teachers, of the various descriptions of missionaries, readers of the scriptures, schoolmasters, and settlers, of the English and Lutheran churches. More than 3000 children are receiving christian education, according to the principles of the church of England; and, of these, at least 400 are wholly supported at the expense of the society. Besides these children, there are many adult scholars. The Gospel is constantly preached to thousands of the heathen, and has been blessed to the conversion of many who are now living; whilst, in all the chief scenes of the society's labours, some have died in the faith and hope of Christ.

Such is the present state of this infant institution—the only one in the church of England, which has for its exclusive object the conversion of the heathen world.

It is impossible, one would think, for any christian to read this statement, without being filled with gratitude to God for being permitted to assist in such a holy and heavenly undertaking. It is impossible not to look with affection on these extensive blessings diffused by members of our church. Every considerate, every humane person, would surely treat with forbearance any marks of human infirmity which he might imagine that he saw; and more especially as to those great efforts which must have been required to excite and preserve that spirit of zeal and love in the breasts of christians, from which the whole, under the blessing of God, has proceeded.

Among their first and most necessary measures would be that of endeavouring to engage the members of the church of England, in different parts of the kingdom, to aid them with their subscriptions. This plan was accordingly adopted, in proportion as the sphere of the society's operations enlarged, and the demand for

increasing funds became more importunate. In the course, therefore, of the last few years, upward of 200 different associations have been formed; the simple design of all which has been, to offer to such persons, in each neighbourhood, as might feel inclined to subscribe, the opportunity of doing so with the least inconvenience. The exciting also of a spirit of prayer for the blessing of God on the Society, and the stimulating of proper persons to offer themselves as Missionaries, were among the objects in view. The result of these efforts has been, that thirteen clergymen ordained in our Episcopal Church, together with eighteen Lutheran clergymen, have been sent out by the Society; and that, last year, about 20,000*l.*¹ was raised in aid of its designs.

In forming these various associations, the most simple and inoffensive method has been adopted. When the friends of the Society in any considerable neighbourhood, and especially the clergy and more respectable inhabitants, have conceived that there was any fair opening for proposing the Society to the pious and benevolent around them, application has been respectfully made to persons of weight and consideration residing in or near the place; and if the measure has been received with favor, a meeting has been called, some nobleman or gentleman in the vicinity being requested to act as chairman, as is customary on similar public occasions. The plan of the Society has then been explained, an association formed in its support, officers to conduct it chosen, and subscriptions raised.

In this manner the Society has been advancing with increasing rapidity, maintaining always a charitable and prudent line of conduct, interfering with no other Societies, violating no usages of ecclesiastical discipline, making no reflections on those who might decline to support it,² but relying on the purity of its intentions and the blessing of God for that degree of patronage among distinguished persons in church and state, which it might please Divine Providence to grant. Already had the Society obtained the favour of two venerable prelates and other dignitaries of our Church, of many eminent noblemen, and of a great body of the clergy; and the time seemed approaching, when the attention of our fellow-countrymen would be more generally directed to our great cause, when the extraordinary event occurred which has made the present defence of the Society necessary; but which, we cannot doubt, will, in its consequences, serve only to bring the great question of Missions still more fully before the British nation.

¹ The income of the first year was about 900*l.*

² The reader is referred to the official documents of the Society, contained in seventeen reports, which, with the seventeen annual sermons, now form five volumes 8vo.

At a Meeting, called by advertisement, of the friends to a proposed Bath Association, the Rev. Josiah Thomas, the Archdeacon of Bath, appeared; and before the secretary of the Society could explain the nature of the projected undertaking, delivered an Address and Protest, which he has since published, and which has appeared in most of the London and many of the country newspapers. This proceeding has, of course, attracted much public attention; but the reasons by which it is supported, are, as I trust will appear, utterly insufficient to justify so unprecedented a measure.

The objections urged by the Archdeacon are of two sorts: the first regards the AUTHORITY BY WHICH THE PROPOSED ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED; the second, the NATURE AND DESIGNS OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY, with which it was to be united.

On the subject of Authority, the reverend speaker states, that he came to the meeting *officially*; that, in delivering the Address which he has now published, under the name of a Protest, he was executing his office; that the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of the diocese, and the vast majority of the clergy in his jurisdiction, disclaimed the Society; and that the institution was an irregular association, tending to the subversion of ecclesiastical order. He charges the Right Reverend Prelate, who took the chair at the Meeting, with invading the province of his venerable brother, and thrusting his sickle into another man's harvest. He pointedly intimates, that the Society assumed a title to which it had no right. He expresses his conviction, that the formation of the proposed association at Bath would be pernicious, and would render that city a hot-bed of heresy and schism. As Archdeacon, therefore, of Bath, in the name of his Diocesan, in his own name, in the name of the rectors of Bath, and in the name of nineteen-twentieths of the clergy of his jurisdiction, the Reverend speaker protested against the formation of the proposed Society.

The tendency of this language, as well as of the whole Address delivered by the Archdeacon, was to represent the formation of the Bath Missionary association as an irregular, unauthorised, and uncanonical act—as an act so irregular, that it became at once his right and duty to interpose; and, by a personal and solemn protest, to effect either the suppression of the design, or at least the secession of all its clerical promoters.

The question, then, is, In what respect was this Meeting irregular or uncanonical? What were the circumstances, and what the laws applicable to those circumstances, that warranted the Archdeacon in a measure of interference, which, if not justified on the grounds claimed for it, he himself must allow to have been an

outrage on the rights of private judgment, and a flagrant departure from the decorum ordinarily observed in civilized society.

1. The Archdeacon appears to found his claim of jurisdiction over the Meeting, on the circumstance of our Missionary Society being a *Church of England Society*. He will not, indeed, allow, what he states to be its pretensions to the title; but he obviously assumes his right of interference on that ground. Now it is manifest, that the Society never affected or pretended to represent the Church of England; still less to act by any commission or delegation from that venerable authority. It neither is, nor ever assumed to be, any other than a Voluntary Institution, supported by the free contributions of individuals, in conformity with the doctrine and discipline of the Church. No mistake could arise, on this head, to any one at all acquainted with its design, principles or proceedings. All misapprehension was effectually precluded, by the publicity with which the Society has uniformly acted. The title *The Church Missionary Society*, never meant—it was never intended to mean—a Society supported by the collective authority of the Church of England; but simply, a Society conducted by members of that Church, and by members of that Church only. It merely imports that the individuals who compose the Society are attached, not to the Lutheran, or Calvinistic, or Presbyterian, or baptist, or Moravian, or Methodist religious communities, but to the English establishment; and that it is the christian religion, as taught by that establishment, which they wish to diffuse among mankind. For many years, the title was “The Society for Missions to Africa and the East, conducted by members of the established Church.” When the rise and progress of other Missionary institutions, and the extending labors of its own, made a shorter and more definite name desirable, *The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East* was gradually, and almost imperceptibly, substituted. Thus the familiar title, *The Bartlett's Buildings Society* is sometimes used for the longer and less convenient appellation, *The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, meeting in Bartlett's Buildings*. In short the Church Missionary Society is a voluntary association, formed for a lawful object, but not pretending to be established by law—conducted with a due respect to constituted authorities, but preferring no claims, as of right, to their countenance or patronage. In all points which fall within the province of ecclesiastical enactment, its members conscientiously submit to the canons and usages of the Church: in matters, like those of voluntary charity, which the wisdom of the Church has left, with a thousand others, to the decision of private conscience and feeling, they claim, as Britons and as Protestants, the right of being guided by their own. In

effect, every voluntary Society conducted by members of our Church, rests, in these respects, precisely on the same grounds. No institution of this nature possesses, or can claim, any ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Such a jurisdiction could be conferred on it only by a direct grant from the legislature, which no existing Society in our Church, however highly respectable, and whether incorporated by charter or not, has received.

Such being the nature of the Church Missionary Society, and such the object of the meeting, it is not very easy to discover in what manner the Archdeacon had acquired the jurisdiction which he claimed over it, or what was that official title by which he felt himself warranted to reprove and inveigh against its proceedings. The lawful jurisdiction of an Archdeacon of the Church; the visitatorial authority by which he is empowered to inspect the state of the churches, and “the sufficiency and ability” of the parochial clergy; the judicial functions by which he takes cognizance of scandalous or notorious immorality—in which respects he is figuratively called *The Bishop’s Eye*: all these rights and powers he possesses without dispute. But it is not apparent how any of these, or all of them together, should entitle him “officially” to force his denunciations on such an assembly as has been described—an assembly pretending to no ecclesiastical commission or character; not a meeting of the clergy in visitation, nor a chapter of the canons of a cathedral, nor, strictly speaking, a religious meeting of any kind; but simply a voluntary association of benevolent persons met to form a charitable institution, under the protection of the laws of the land. If this meeting acted irregularly, it was amenable, not to the Archdeacon of Bath, but to the civil power.

The peculiarity of the case, however, is, that the meeting was held under the sanction of the civil power; the Guildhall having been expressly granted for the purpose, by the Mayor of the city: and yet it was under such circumstances that the Archdeacon of Bath entered, with the avowed purpose of compelling the assembly to hear his vehement censures; thus claiming, without even a plausible argument, and exercising in a manner which in fact bordered on a breach of the peace, a right which, had it been peremptorily resisted, he would certainly have had no legal means of enforcing.

2. If the Reverend speaker thus mistakes the nature of his authority as Archdeacon, it is natural that his other assumptions should be equally erroneous.

The opinion which he seems to entertain, that the proposal of a Missionary Association at Bath went to impose the measure on the clergy, is altogether destitute of foundation. No such intention was ever entertained. The design was to give an opportunity to

such persons to attend, as might be disposed to aid the Society with their subscriptions. The idea of there being any thing irregular in the establishment of such an association, because the majority of the clergy of the neighbourhood did not happen to be present, is wholly untenable. The Society appeared as a suppliant: not to claim or impose, but to explain, petition, and entreat. No voluntary Society ever received universal support. The friends of the proposed measure never expected to unite every suffrage in its favour, until its spirit and proceedings had become known, and it had outgrown the uncertainty and suspicions which naturally attach to an infant undertaking. All other Societies in our Church, however ancient they may now be, were formed at first by a few individuals, and had, like our own, to pass through a season of doubt, and difficulty and objection.

3. The Archdeacon equally mistakes, when he confounds the circumstance of the clergy declining, or omitting from whatever cause, to join the proposed institution, and their actually disclaiming and protesting against it. He ventured, indeed, to issue his Protest, not only in his own name, but in that of his Diocesan, the Bishop of Bath and Wells; but by what authority does not appear. Certain it is, that the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in a letter to which his respectable name is affixed by his own hand, and addressed to the provisional secretary of the intended association, though he declines the particular office of patron, which had been offered to him, does so in terms of courtesy and respect.¹ His Lordship fulminates no Protest against the Society, nor does he even hint the slightest disapprobation of it; though he would naturally have done so, if he had thought and felt with the Archdeacon of Bath. Nor does it appear that the Reverend Gentleman had any better title to include in his protest the names of the clergy of his jurisdiction, than that of his Diocesan. He expressly says, that he had neither directly nor indirectly communicated to any of them his intention of appearing at the meeting. If this disavowal be really what, in fairness, it ought to be, it must imply that he had not communicated to the clergy even his intention of entering an official Protest against the Society. With what propriety, then, could he afterward enter, as he does, this very Protest in their names? Mr. Archdeacon Thomas is unquestionably called upon, by this apparent inconsistency, to produce his authority for employing the names of his venerable Diocesan and of the vast majority of the clergy. If he received such authority, he can, of course, prove the fact; and, till he does so, the assumption which he makes must be considered as utterly unwarrantable.

¹ See His Lordship's letter, in an address from the Bath committee, printed in Appendix I.

4. But the most extraordinary, and really indecorous part of the Archdeacon's denunciations, is that which he ventures to make against the Honourable and Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, who took the chair at the Meeting.

What interference there could be with ecclesiastical jurisdiction, in simply being the chairman at a voluntary meeting of a benevolent society, does not immediately appear, and is unfortunately not explained by the Reverend Protester. Surely it never could occur, to any unbiassed mind, that the yielding to the wish of the friends of the proposed association, to direct the proceedings of their meeting, was any invasion of episcopal authority. Any other nobleman or gentleman might have been invited to the same brief and harmless duty. Such circumstances take place in every city of every diocese of Great Britain, without the slightest offence or unbrage.

The choice fell on the Bishop of Gloucester merely from the natural and high respect entertained for the character and rank of his lordship. As one of the vice-patrons of the Church Missionary Society, he was almost necessarily led to comply with an invitation which related to a proposed branch of the parent institution; and especially in the chief city of a diocese, in which his lordship held the distinguished station of Dean.

But, in fact, any one who had heard of the name of the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, of his assiduity in his parochial duties previous to his elevation to the Episcopal Bench, as well as in the discharge of his high ecclesiastical functions since that event, of his zeal for the establishment of National Schools, his activity in espousing the cause of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the British and Foreign Bible Society, and his ardor for forwarding the salvation of the heathen world, would immediately be induced to apply to him for aid on such an occasion as gave rise to the Protest. Undoubtedly it was impossible for a man of his lordship's principles and character, when he was once requested to take the chair at such a meeting, to decline the task: undoubtedly he could never endure that the proposed society should in any measure fail of success, because he refused to give it any aid which it might be in his power to furnish.

But these statements, though more than sufficient to silence the voice of intemperate censure, are rendered unnecessary by the circumstance that his lordship actually did consult the Bishop of Bath and Wells previously to his consenting to preach on the subject at Bath, and acquainted his lordship with his design of attending the Meeting. The following short statement under his own hand is to be seen at his lordship's bookseller's in London, which places

the whole question on totally new ground, and makes the indecorum of the Archdeacon's language the more reprehensible:—

“ We have authority from the Prelate, who took the chair at the desire of the meeting of the friends of the Church Missionary Society at Bath, to declare, that, having previously mentioned to the Bishop of the Diocese his intention of attending the meeting, as well as submitted his design of preaching for the Society, to his lordship's decision; he had not the slightest reason to suppose, that in taking those steps, he was acting in a manner disrespectful or displeasing to his lordship: the introduction of whose name, as protesting against the meeting, is firmly believed by the Prelate above mentioned, to have been entirely unauthorised and unjustifiable.”¹

After this statement, it is needless to say, that there was no sha-

¹ In the haste with which the first impression of this pamphlet went to the press, an inaccuracy occurred in reporting the “Statement” of the Bishop of Gloucester, which, though it was corrected as soon as discovered, (that is, after only a small part of the impression had got into circulation), and though the six editions since published have been wholly free from it, and though it does not seem material after all, yet I think it proper to explain. In the statement of the Bishop, as originally left at the Bookseller's, it was related that, having consulted the Bishop of the Diocese “upon the subject of preaching for the Society, he had not the slightest reason to suppose that in taking that step, or in attending the Meeting, he was acting in a manner disrespectful or displeasing to his Lordship; the introduction of whose name, as protesting against the Meeting, is firmly believed by the Prelate above-mentioned to have been entirely unauthorized and unjustifiable.” Besides this Statement, however, I had been favoured with the sight of a letter from the Bishop of Gloucester, in which was added this fact, “that he had previously acquainted the Bishop of the Diocese with his intention of attending the Meeting.” Understanding that this letter was meant to be supplementary to the statement, and believing that the statement was immediately to be re-written, and to include the additional fact (which in truth has been done), I thought myself authorized to give my edition of it that addition which was intended, and which made it more fully descriptive of the circumstances. It was, however, suggested to me, that I had been incorrect in stating the Bishop of Gloucester to have consulted the Bishop of Bath and Wells on the propriety of his attending the Meeting; the truth being, that the consulting had referred only to the more strictly ecclesiastical matter of preaching for the Society; while the Bishop of Gloucester, not apprehending objection to his mere attendance at the Meeting, had only mentioned his intention of so doing, without making it a matter of formal consultation. Though I thought this distinction, as I still think it, quite immaterial under the circumstances of the case, yet I felt myself called on immediately to correct the error I had inadvertently made; which I did, by publishing, in the far greater part of the first edition, and in all those that have ensued, the first statement of the Bishop of Gloucester, without addition or alteration. For this, I am happy now to substitute that which has since been substituted by his Lordship himself; the original of which is open to the inspection of any reader, at Mr. Hatchard's.

dow of interference with the jurisdiction of his Venerable Brother on the part of the Lord Bishop of Gloucester : even the slightest suspicion of it, which could by possibility have been suggested by an unfriendly and invidious observer, had been precluded by the previous communication between the two Prelates. How the Archdeacon can escape the charge of a rash and indefensible accusation against his superior in the Church, I will not attempt to explain.

The question then recurs, What is the authority of this Protest of the Archdeacon of Bath? None whatever. He appears to have had no more right to assume any jurisdiction over this peaceable and lawful meeting of benevolent individuals, for a simple and legitimate object of charity, than he would have had to interrupt an assembly convened for planning a bridge or projecting a hospital : he might, in fact, almost as well have advanced a claim of right to enter the private abode of individuals, in order to regulate the detail of personal beneficence.

The Reverend the Archdeacon, however, forgetful of these obvious principles, and assuming a variety of positions, every one of which turns out to be unfounded, ventured to overstep his lawful authority, and to make a Protest, which loses all its weight the moment the real circumstances of the case are explained ;—a fault this, surely, of no common magnitude. Respect, indeed, is always due to measures, however erroneous, if they have been suggested by an honest zeal, and a strong and imperative sense of duty. But when the act to which zeal and duty impel men, is itself that of protesting against intemperate zeal and a mistaken sense of duty in others ; when a censor stands up specifically to point out the distinction between a well-informed and an ignorant piety ; when such a censor is invested with an office of respectability in the Church, and his denunciations derive weight from his public station ; and, above all, when such a person comes forward to deliver an address composed in the calmness of the closet, and therefore with every advantage of previous deliberation ; it is plain that we have a right to expect more than common caution and reserve, a mind well informed on his subject, and arguments sound and perspicuous in support of his assertions. I will not stop to say how totally the Archdeacon has failed in all these respects.

But this is not all. Even if the Archdeacon had erred in judgment, as to the nature of the proposed Society, and the extent of his jurisdiction, the consequence of the mistake would have been quickly remedied, if he had preserved any thing of a right temper in the expression of his sentiments. The intemperate proceeding of forcing himself upon the Meeting, was little calculated to sustain the just dignity of his character, or to effect the object which

he professed to have in view. If it was his simple design to prevent what he considered to be irregular, was it not most proper to exert himself first in private? Were there no opportunities of previously remonstrating with the leading persons concerned? Was it decorous—I had almost said, was it honorable—to receive the clergymen¹ of his jurisdiction, who waited upon him before the Meeting to solicit his favor for the Society, with no single notice of disapprobation—for I am persuaded that every reader will be astonished to find that this was really the case—and then to come forward with an unexpected and rude claim of interference? Was it just, was it generous, to leave the Right Reverend Prelate who was called to the chair, and the clergy of the neighbourhood, in total ignorance of the intended protest? Was it decent to insist on delivering this censure before the Secretary had been allowed even to explain the nature of the proposed Institution? Above all, was it becoming—and, to use the Archdeacon's phrase, was it canonical—to insult a most amiable and dignified personage in his own presence? Was it suitable for an Archdeacon to arraign before a numerous assemblage a Bishop of the Church? Was contumely a necessary part of an interference which, as official, should, of course, have been calm and dispassionate, resting on undisputed authority, and proceeding with dignity? What right had the Archdeacon of Bath to determine, by his mere assertion, what is regular and what is not; to decide, at once, on the supposed conduct of another; to remind, with an air of insult, a Prelate of our Church, that, as dean of Wells, he owes canonical obedience to his Diocesan, and even to charge him with a breach of the duties of his exalted station?—for it may be necessary to state that he actually imputed to the Honorable and Right Reverend Prelate in the chair—deliberately imputed to him—“an indifference to the dignity of the high office to which he had been but a few years consecrated, as well as a contempt of ecclesiastical order.” Is this the most natural way to express reverence for the episcopal office? Is this to act as a well-informed member of the Church of England? Is this to conduct himself as an inferior clergyman ought to do towards his superior in the Church?²

I press these questions because the conduct of the Archdeacon, even allowing that in point of substance he may have been right, forms the first example in this country of an open and unprovoked insult, offered by a clergyman in a public assembly to a venerable Prelate of the Church of England. But when we consider that his view of the case appears to have been radically erroneous—

¹ See the Address of the Bath Committee, in the Appendix, No. I.

² See an extract from the Protest in the Appendix, No. II.

when we consider that every one of the data on which he seems to have proceeded was wanting to a conclusion, which all of them together would have failed to authorise—when we recollect also, that the particular occasion of this meeting was to aid in conveying the ineffable blessings of Redemption to mankind; a design calculated of all others to kindle the warmest charity of the Christian's heart—and when we add to this, that the manner and spirit of the address would have discredited even the best cause—then we shall be able to form a just estimate of the conduct of the Reverend person on this remarkable occasion. And surely the reader will agree with me, that the unfortunate intemperance of a proceeding which almost reminds us of the conduct and demeanour of the officials of the Church of Rome in her plenitude of power, can only be rivalled by the coolness with which the Archdeacon—after having forced his unauthorised way into an assembly with which he had no concern, and affronting every single member of it, from the President in the chair to the humblest contributor present, and after having been heard from the beginning to the end of his invective with a degree of patience which no other audience would have exhibited—assumes the tone of an INJURED PARTY, and declares he did not calculate on being so insulted by a Church Society.¹ Yet perhaps even all this may seem less surprising than that the Archdeacon, after obtruding himself on a meeting avowedly meant to consist of the FRIENDS of the Society, only to inveigh against their proceedings—and after indulging himself, under the guise of protesting against the irregularity of any such meeting, not only in detailed, and I think I may say declamatory, accusations of the motives, as well as the measures of the Society and its supporters, but in surmises, and conjectures, and questions, concerning which he in terms “professes himself utterly ignorant:”—that, after this, I say, without affording one moment for a reply even to his questions, he should indignantly have quitted the Hall, should instantly have proceeded to publish his Address in the form of a pamphlet, should have allowed it to be placarded in the very streets of the metropolis, and to occupy the columns of the most popular journals

¹ It is proper to state, in reference to the Archdeacon's assertion that “he was hooted, hissed, and insulted in the grossest manner,” that no marks of disapprobation were testified by the assembly, until his personalities and vehemence of voice and gesture forced from them some involuntary tokens of displeasure; which, however, were so restrained by the interposition of the Right Reverend Prelate in the chair, who requested an uninterrupted hearing for the Reverend Speaker, that it may be truly said—and for this fact, which has been stated to me on the most incontestable authority, I appeal to the many hundreds present—that the most exemplary patience and forbearance were exercised toward the Archdeacon.

of the empire,—and then should gravely observe that “he did not go to the meeting for debate,” and that “it is not usual for a person to wait for an answer to his own protest!”¹

But it is time to proceed to the other main branch of the inquiry. The Archdeacon, besides interposing to stop what he conceived to be an illegal measure, brings forward certain reasons to support his cause. He comes down now into the field of argument; and it will be our concern to examine whether his facts and reasonings here, are more correct than we found them to be on the subject of ecclesiastical authority.

1. The Reverend Author states, that the Church Missionary Society was *originally unnecessary*, because the Incorporated Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts was and is in existence and in action.

Is it possible, then, that an Archdeacon of the Church of England should be ignorant that that venerable and most useful Society directs its labors, in conformity to its charter,² to the supply of our foreign plantations, colonies, and factories, with ministers and schoolmasters? Does he not know that it has nothing to do with Missions to Africa and the East, and scarcely any thing with Heathens any where? Was, then, the Church Missionary Society unnecessary? What, when almost the whole world lay in darkness and the shadow of death, and untold nations implored the compassion of Christians!

The reader is requested to observe, that the Reverend Author is not now advancing any objection against the conduct or spirit of our Society. This is not the topic. He roundly asserts, that the very design was **ORIGINALLY UNNECESSARY**—the design of enlightening and blessing five hundred millions of our fellow-men in **ASIA** and **AFRICA**—gifted with the same reason, and capable of the same happiness, as ourselves—because a Society for instructing the Christian settlers and colonists of **BRITISH AMERICA** was in activity! Surely he must have other ideas of Christian charity from those commonly entertained. Is then a Society, which has not a single English clergyman engaged as a missionary amongst the Heathens, and which collected the last year very little more than 1000*l.*, and this for the use of our fellow-Christians of one particular province abroad, sufficient to exonerate the members of our Church from the duty of establishing other societies for the salvation of the Heathens in the other immense regions of the world? Or is the Archdeacon prepared to state, that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was also unnecessary?

¹ See Advertisement to Protest, 2d Edition.

² See the Abstract of the Charter in Appendix, No. III.

His language implies, that he is either totally forgetful or ignorant of the existence of the East-India missions of this venerable Institution.¹ And can a person who betrays a want of information so deplorable on the leading facts connected with his argument, be the man who is entitled to pronounce a solemn censure on the plans founded on the more enlarged information of his brethren?

It may undoubtedly be an unnecessary measure, in the judgment of some few persons, to disturb themselves in their accustomed habits and usages; unnecessary to make painful exertions; unnecessary to do more than discharge their quiet duties at home. But not so felt the first apostles and martyrs of the Christian faith: they counted not their lives dear unto themselves; they burnt with an inextinguishable ardor for the salvation of men: and we trust that we may at least be allowed to emulate the holy zeal and love, the intrepidity and constancy, the self-denial and voluntary privations, of these primitive examples of the Church.

To Christians possessing such feelings, nothing appears so necessary, as to send the Gospel to all the accessible parts of the world—nothing so necessary, as to awaken the tardy love of Christendom in such a cause—nothing so necessary, as to invite, by new associations, the contributions and efforts of all around:—*necessity is laid upon such, yea, woe is unto them, if they promote not the most extensive diffusion of the Gospel of Christ.*² If labors such as these are superfluous, then were the pious missionaries who first visited our own shores, when our ancestors wandered in their painted skins, and offered their sons and daughters unto devils, engaged in an useless project. But surely it cannot be endured for a moment, that the descendants of the converts of these very missionaries should consider it as unnecessary to carry the Gospel to those heathen nations, who are in the same circumstances now, in which their own forefathers originally were. Forbid it, sacred charity, that such a thought should be entertained in a Christian's breast! Forbid it rather, O divine Mediator of mankind, that we should receive the infinite grace of salvation ourselves, to withhold it from a perishing world! Forbid it, O Thou eternal Father of Mercies, that the chilling deductions of a cold selfishness should oppose, for an instant, the exuberant designs of thy stupendous love to the whole of the lost children of men!

2. But the reverend Archdeacon is not content with pronouncing our society to have been unnecessary: he finds it to be as little happy in its structure, as in its original design. He proceeds to observe—

¹ Only a fiftieth or sixtieth part of the gross receipts, even of this much respected and useful Society, was expended last year on its Indian Missions.

² See Appendix, IV.

“ I said that I considered some of the rules and regulations of this Church Missionary Society, and especially the means which it employs to increase its funds, to be utterly unworthy of the name which it would assume; viz. that of a Church of England Society. For example—IS it worthy of the Church of England, is it worthy of the members of the Church of England, to authorise persons to go about, collecting pence and farthings from servants, school-boys, and apprentices, in order that the collectors of one shilling *per* week, or five shillings *per* month, may be elevated into members—of a Church of England Society? And, moreover, be tempted to the additional honor of voting at meetings, of receiving copies of the Annual Report and Sermon, and one number of the Missionary Register? This is the statement in Rule VI. of your Report.”

In this censure, it is not easy to guess, whether the reverend author means merely to say that there is something low and undignified in the office of the persons who collect petty alms for the Society; or whether he means farther to imply that the Society itself is disgraced by the very act of soliciting and encouraging such petty benevolences. It may be conjectured that both sentiments were, in a degree, in his mind. And yet, what is it that a minister of the Church of God can find ignoble in the office of exciting the humanity and philanthropy even of the lowest classes of society; of those who, though below the level of science and learning, are not below the level of Christian virtue? And yet farther, what is it that a minister of the Church of England can find to disparage or to ridicule in the humble and Christian contributions of his poorer brethren? Nothing, indeed, is more easy than to hold up both the givers and receivers of such scanty donations in an invidious light. How readily, for example, might the same ingenuity be employed in ridiculing the briefs read continually in our churches, by which the legislature directs the aid of the benevolent to be solicited from house to house, for the relief of different sufferers. How readily also might that ingenuity be employed in ridiculing the Easter offerings of the Church of England, “ which,” as Watson tells us, “ in many places, are by custom two-pence from every communicant, and in London a groat a house.” (Watson, c. 52.) I allude to the precedent, however, not merely to show the facility with which the humble subscriber to the Church Missionary Society may be ridiculed, but the propriety with which such ridicule is adopted by a member of that very Church which thus supports her ministers, by a member of that very body of ministers for whom such supports are provided; and adopted, too, by such a person, for the very purpose of ex-

cluding the Society from the legitimate pale of the Church of England.

If, however, this be a subject of ridicule, the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have laid themselves open to the same shafts. We find, p. 73. of their last Report, the following language:—"The Society, although it has existed above a century, may even at this time be considered as little known in some parts of the kingdom; and the Board is desirous by the establishment of *District Committees*, to extend its influence to every part; and to add to the funds, on which its utility must depend, both by inducing more persons to become annual subscribers, and by collecting from charitable persons in every rank of life such contributions as they can afford, although much below the sum of one guinea, which is necessary to becoming a member of the Society."

But, as has already appeared, in soliciting the humblest contributions for a good object, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has neither demeaned itself, nor swerved from the exemplar of the establishment to which its members belong. Surprising, indeed, would it be, if the Church of England alone, of all the churches of Christendom, rejected or despised the principle of drawing the benevolence of her poorer members into the common fund of Christian charity. Still more surprising would it be, if the Church of England could forget the scale by which her divine and gracious Master has taught her to measure the magnitude of private alms:—"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

To say the truth, the great mass of the people must generally be the most effectual supporters of extensive designs of usefulness. And it is a most pleasing reflection, that, in lending their assistance to such objects, the poorer classes of contributors, whatever benefit they may confer on others, are usually found to receive very important benefit themselves. Perhaps the inspired declaration, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," is nowhere more fully exemplified than in the effect produced on the dispositions and character of the poor, and especially of the younger part of them, by a participation in plans of benevolence. By calling them to the stated exercise of charity, it almost invariably forms them to habits

of arrangement and economy. By embodying their scanty contributions in great and lasting works, it not only gives to such exertions as their humble means will allow, a character of obvious utility, but it ennobles their minds, enlarges their range of enjoyment, and helps to wean them from that selfishness which their condition in life might make them liable to contract. A still higher advantage is, that, by interesting them in designs of piety, it insensibly directs their attention, under the divine blessing, to their own religious welfare: their hearts, softened by feelings of kindness, become sensible to more sacred impressions, and benevolence is matured into Christian charity. I will not, however, expatiate in praise of this system; of which it may suffice to say, that its obvious tendency is to draw our poorer brethren within the sphere of those promises which are so abundantly set forth in holy Scripture to deeds of mercy performed from a right principle—promises, comprising the richest grant of blessings in this life and of endless recompense in that which is to come.

But, perhaps, the contempt of the Reverend Author was meant to be directed less against these petty contributions, than against the persons employed to collect them. The dignity of the Church of England, it seems, is compromised, when such men are “elevated into members of a Church-of-England Society.” Doubtless it must be a question of expediency with every Society supported by voluntary contributions, what shall be the lowest amount of qualification that shall entitle persons to be ranked amongst its members; and it is a question which different societies, having reference to their respective objects, may decide very differently. This, however, is not the point considered by the Archdeacon: the question which he raises, is not that of expediency, but that of dignity—the dignity of the Church of England. He conceives it to be a signal degradation of the establishment, that the humble employment of collecting the alms of the poor should be considered by churchmen as an office of honor. Not so, it should seem, thought the Church herself, when, in the performance of the most solemn and deeply devotional of all her services, she enjoined her priests and her bishops to call on the people for their alms and devotions; to exhort those who have little, to give, nevertheless, out of that little; and receiving their donations at the steps of the altar, to present and place them humbly on the holy table. Not so, it should seem, thought the Apostle Paul, when he himself condescended to the performance of this degrading duty; when he “travelled” to collect from “the deep poverty” of the Christian churches “the riches of their liberality;” when he executed the trust reposed in him, not only with alacrity, but with joy, earnestly and affectionately recommending his associates in

this task to the esteem of the Christian world, not only as “the messengers of the churches, but the glory of Christ.” (2 Cor. viii.)

My readers will forgive me if I feel warm on such a topic as this; but I cannot suppress my concern at the exhibition of such a misapplied appeal to a false principle of dignity, in a protest publicly delivered by a person in ecclesiastical authority; and which may be read by all the different classes of persons in this country, many of whom are ready enough to impute to us a disposition to overvalue the temporal distinctions connected with our national Church. If there be any ground on which the rich and the poor may properly meet together, surely it is on the ground of that benevolence which ministers to the wants of our common nature. The collectors of the Church Missionary Society to whom the reverend author alludes, may not be persons of elevated rank or station; but are they to be considered as disqualified for fellowship with a benevolent Society, because, frequently under the pressure of laborious occupations, and perhaps amidst many exigencies, they devote a portion of their time to gather the contributions of their neighbours; thus retaining, unabated, their zeal for God and their love toward man? Yet these are the characters concerning whom the Archdeacon of Bath—in publicly addressing an audience of which they might be supposed to form a part, and with all the solemnity of official censure, aided by the deliberation of previous composition—scrupled not to say, that they could not be “elevated into members of a Church-of-England Society,” without derogating from the dignity of the Church. Members of a Church-of-England Society! Wherefore not, if they may be members of the Church of England herself; of whom, as of her divine Master, it is the characteristic that she opens the mysteries of the Gospel wide to the unlearned and the poor? Wherefore not, if they may one day be members of the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, where we are told that many of “the last shall be first, and of the first last?” Wherefore not, if they may be members of Christ himself, who is “the Head of the Church,” and who has condescended to say, “Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me?”

3. The remaining objections of the Archdeacon will require only a brief notice. They are of that general and desultory kind which it is not difficult for any writer to affix on any cause. For instance, when he is pleased to denominate the chief friends of the Church Missionary Society, a “sect,” and to resolve its supporters into a “party” in the Church, there is no considerate reader who will not immediately perceive, that, if we were to condescend to the use of language of this vague and injurious nature, it might not be difficult for us to find epithets in retaliation. But the only

questions I ask, are—Are the doors of the Church Missionary Society closed to any member of the Church of England whatever? Or are there any of its rules which in the remotest way allude to any doctrines distinct from those of the Church of England? If not, then I submit it to every candid reader, I submit it to the calm reflection of the Archdeacon himself, whether, in attempting to affix the name of “party,” where all party is excluded by the very constitution of the Society, he has himself been wholly free from that spirit which he ventures to reprobate?

But I forbear to enlarge; for really, whatever the Reverend Author may think of our feelings for the Church of England, I am deeply concerned that the Church should be so much injured by one who professes to be more than ordinarily interested for her welfare. Surely the language of the Archdeacon tends directly to disincline the whole country to the performance of one of its highest duties, the engaging in active exertions for the salvation of mankind. The establishment of the Church Missionary Society has been the first attempt in our own times, to assist in redeeming the Church from the reproach of neglect and indifference towards the heathen world; and it is lamentable to reflect, that this first attempt should be met with prejudice, and misrepresentation, and obloquy.

The Archdeacon, again, when he proceeds to ask why only two Prelates of the Church have espoused our cause, in fact asks, why certain dignitaries have not as yet joined a voluntary benevolent Society. He might as well ask why only fourteen Bishops were found in the lists of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in the year 1756, about sixty years after its establishment, when the British and Foreign Bible Society, in a fourth part of that time, engaged an equal number of prelates in its support;—or why so many prelates still decline uniting themselves with the two Archbishops and the Bishop of London in the support of the Naval and Military Bible Society;—or, indeed, why any other number of dignitaries have not stood forward in befriending any other charitable institutions. This, if I may adopt the Archdeacon's words, is a mystery easily fathomed, when we reflect that new institutions in the Church are at first candidates for the patronage of its distinguished members; who doubtless consider that there is an evident advantage in allowing such societies to go through a noviciate, before they pledge themselves in their support.

On the subject of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Calcutta's not espousing the Society's Missions in India, the Reverend the Archdeacon avows his ignorance. It may be proper, then, to mention, that the proceedings of our Society there were

entered on long before the establishment of that see; and that the peculiar delicacy of the bishop's situation, in a scene perfectly novel, and where he has perhaps to consider the prejudices of many European residents against the propagation of Christianity among the natives, has prevented his Lordship from countenancing in so ostensible and prominent a manner as might have been expected, even the missions of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, on the very spot where they have been laboring for so long a series of years. In fact, his Lordship, we believe, considers himself as appointed to superintend exclusively the chaplains and churches under the authority of the Company. Over English clergymen, not chaplains officiating in India, he has not as yet assumed the episcopal authority. It is manifest, from the whole tenor of our Society's proceedings, that we shall rejoice when his Lordship shall see it expedient to do so. In the mean time, all our Missionaries are under the protection and legal regulations of the several local civil authorities; and stand in somewhat of the same relation to the Society at home, as the chaplains do to the Honorable the East-India Company. The persons to fill the chaplaincies are appointed by the Company; and so far they may be considered as in the employment of that Company; though the administration of the episcopal functions, according to law, is vested in the Right Reverend the Bishop. I need not say more on the subject, except that the circumstance of the uniformly exemplary conduct of our Missionaries, against whom no complaints of disorder or irregularity have ever been preferred, serves still farther to commend the prudence and sobriety of the proceedings of the Society. The Archdeacon is not, perhaps, aware, that the only commendation bestowed on Missionary efforts, in his Lordship's primary charge, is bestowed on those undertaken at the sole expense of our Society, and conducted by a converted Moham-medan, under the discreet and pious guidance of one of the Honorable Company's chaplains. Nor has he, perhaps, been informed, that the very persons who had a large—perhaps the largest—share in the efforts which led to the actual establishment of the English episcopacy in India, and who fought the battle of Christianity both in and out of Parliament, when that question was agitated, were among the friends and members of the Church Missionary Society. So easy is it for a respectable person, like our author,

' "Among the missionary proceedings of the present day, I have met with none which have been conducted with a happier combination of zeal and judgment, than one of your own body has displayed."—Bishop of Calcutta's Primary Charge: 4to. London. 1817. pp. 19, 20.

A note to this passage expresses that the person alluded to is the Rev. Mr. Corrie.

unacquainted with the real state of a great question, to commit the most considerable mistakes at every step.

With regard to the Society's corresponding committee in India, let the boards and committees of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and of all other institutions, reply to the censures of the Archdeacon. It is obvious that the affairs of a distant mission can be conducted only by maintaining a correspondence with its friends at home.

There are other topics on which I might enlarge; but I fear my readers may be already weary of these details. I will only add, then, on the professed zeal of the Rev. Archdeacon Thomas for the cause of missions—in which he states, that he yields to no member of the Church Missionary Society—that his ardor in that cause would at least have been more manifest, if he had himself been a member of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. But it is a singular fact, when connected with the statements of his protest, that the name of the Archdeacon does not appear in the last list of the members of the Society last mentioned—a circumstance which, though I admit, it may serve sufficiently to account for the errors into which the Archdeacon has fallen, respecting the nature of that excellent institution, as well as with regard to many leading facts connected with his entire argument, does not seem equally well to explain the zeal with which he recommended this very Society to his audience, and his readiness in charging upon them an ignorance of its existence. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that these reproaches should have been directed against an assembly, the Right Reverend President of which was already actually enrolled amongst the members of that Society, which the Archdeacon was contented to admire and to recommend. I will not stop to press this circumstance to its inferences on all the arguments and assumptions of the Reverend Protester.

Upon the whole, I trust that it has been shown, in the foregoing pages, that the Archdeacon's claim of jurisdiction over the proposed Association at Bath, and his protest against it, are equally destitute of any weight or authority whatever; and that his facts and arguments adduced to support his right of interference are erroneous. I flatter myself also, that his manner of executing what he imagined to be his duty, has been proved to be as indecorous, as the grounds of it were insufficient. I hope, in the mean time, that the necessity for the establishment and efforts of the Church Missionary Society has been shewn to have been urgent, the rise and proceedings of it laudable, and the objections advanced against it trifling or inconclusive.

But on such a subject this will be far from satisfying the truly

benevolent mind. To have repelled the attack of a misinformed assailant is a small matter. The stupendous cause of all the unconverted nations of the earth is involved in the question which has been treated—a cause which is sometimes injured by descending to too minute details of argument. In such details we may possibly err; but, in the general appeal to the members of our Church on the imperative duty of missionary efforts, it is impossible to mistake. For these reasons I have already endeavored to restrain the warmth which I could not but feel at the harsh and even acrimonious language of the Archdeacon's Protest. Perhaps I have not been sufficiently on my guard. But my deliberate wish is to consult the great question of missions generally. I would far rather be less triumphant in my argument, than injure the success, and diminish the universal acceptance, of this cause. I feel that the interest of millions is at stake; and I should be ashamed of being too much moved with our own personal grievances, when the mighty injuries sustained by these vast neglected regions of the earth, which, with a tardy kindness, we are at length calling on our countrymen to redress, are passing in review before us. There never was such an importunate cry of pity raised from all the divisions of the Heathen world, as that which now addresses itself to the conscience and feelings of Britons. The whole earth is waiting for the salvation of God. A general disposition to inquire into the records of our faith is manifesting itself. Facilities for establishing missions in the most distant quarters are presented. The success which has attended the Missions of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, as well as those of other institutions, inspires us with the warmest hopes. Men of holy constancy and zeal are not found to be wanting, when due encouragement is afforded them. The dawn of prophecy already breaks on our view, and invites us to new tracts of exertion, and new scenes of labor. The unparalleled success of the British and Foreign Bible Society is preparing our way. And whither can the fainting eye of human misery turn, but to this great Protestant empire, which God appears to have aggrandised, at the present momentous period, with the design of employing her as the herald of mercy to mankind?

Where, then, is our love to our fellow-creatures, if we do not rise to communicate to them that unspeakable blessing, which has first visited us, that it may be sent on to others? Where is our humanity, our benevolence, our compassion, if we spring not forth in this office of grace? What! shall the unlappy widow still perish on the funeral pile—shall the helpless infant still sink under the hand of its parent—shall the deformed orgies of Juggernaut continue to prevail, and the bones of the wretched pilgrim whiten

its plains—shall the horrid rites of cannibalism yet subsist, and temples for the worship of devils be openly reared—shall all the disgusting ceremonies of impurity and blood remain in undiminished force—shall ignorance and vice, and despair, brood over the fairest portion of the globe, and the prostrate understanding and savage passions of man bind him a slave to earth?—and shall Britons hesitate to convey to the several sufferers the knowledge, and grace, and life, of an eternal redemption? We plead, it is true, the cause of unknown strangers, in urging this great question; but of strangers who are children of the same common parent with ourselves, and who might now, if God had pleased, have been in circumstances to communicate to us the very blessings which they supplicate at our hands.

Englishmen do not know enough the state of the Heathen world: they do not enough consider the immense obligations which their religious blessings bring with them; or they could not be unmoved, in the degree in which they still are, at the sorrows of mankind. Where is our love to our dying Redeemer, if we remain indifferent to the communication of that grace which He came down from Heaven and expired on the cross to purchase?—Where is our most ordinary wisdom, if we neglect the opportunity which the Providence of God affords us, of consecrating our national greatness to the divine glory? Where is our regard to our own Church, if we labor not to plant her more deeply in the affections of our own people, by diffusing her mild and parental sway over the Heathen lands? Where is our very sense of shame if we allow other Confessions of Christians to outstrip us in this holy race; and consign to a doctrine and discipline which we profess not wholly to approve, that task of conversion which should in all reason be our own? Where is our patriotism, if we desire not to involve and bind up our country with the prayers and benedictions of mankind?

Let us awake, then, from our sloth. The indolence and selfishness of Christian nations have too long impeded the tide and current of life. Unnatural quarrels, the magnifying of small matters, and interminable disputes on subordinate points, have too much absorbed their attention. Now, at length, let all the Protestant communities come forward to take their share in this "work of the Lord." Let our own Church, the glory and bulwark of the Protestant Faith, lead the way. Let the members of our two venerated Societies occupy the foremost ground. The friends of the Church Missionary Society are actuated by no undue partiality for their own particular plans. Human judgment—fallible in its most unbiassed operations—will lead the best of men to different conclusions as to the comparative merit of this or that mis-

sionary institution. Let only the great work be wisely and vigorously prosecuted, and none will more sincerely rejoice than ourselves. Let, then, our two revered Societies redouble their efforts. Let them fairly appeal to the good sense, feeling, piety, and gratitude of the nation. Let them no longer confine themselves to their present limits, but boldly enter on new spheres of action. Let one or two, or more, distinct missionary establishments be formed for the different quarters of the world. There is room enough for all. Charity would hail and bless the day. Then, engaged in the actual work of Missions, minor objections would fade away, and unnumbered difficulties would be removed. Every thing would be practicable, under God's blessing, if we were fairly in earnest. A more copious effusion of the grace of the Holy Ghost might be expected to descend. Our parishes and congregations at home would feel the sacred influence: a general revival of pure and scriptural piety would take place: prayer would be more abundantly and more fervently offered up at the Throne of Mercy: a holy unity and order would accompany and strengthen the warm emotions of love and zeal: the glory of our reformed and apostolical Church would break forth all around; and the cause of missions, undertaken by its members as by one man, might usher in, perhaps, that day of prophetic rapture, when all "the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

APPENDIX I.

Address from the Committee of the Bath Association.

“ BATH CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

“ It is with the deepest pain and regret, that the Committee feel themselves called on to take this public notice of certain circumstances which occurred at the meeting held for the formation of this Society, on Monday last. They deprecate from the very bottom of their hearts, as Christians and as churchmen, the remotest approaches to strife or contention in a cause, in which nothing but the purest Christian love and harmony should be seen to prevail; and they trust, both individually and collectively, their conduct will ever be found in unison with their professions. But they regard it as a duty they owe to the meeting itself; to the Hon. and Right Rev. Prelate who filled the chair; to the public at large; as well as to themselves, not to remain silent on the occasion.

“ The Committee scarcely need observe, that they refer to the very unexpected and extraordinary interruption given to their proceedings by the Archdeacon of Bath, and the written address he chose to deliver to the meeting. As the Archdeacon, for reasons best known to himself, withdrew instantly on concluding his address, and would not remain to hear a single word in explanation or reply, it was deemed the fairest and most proper course to him, as well as the meeting, not to pursue the subject, but to pass to the business of the day.

“ As it might be thought, from the Archdeacon's conduct and address, that no communication had been made, either to the Bishop of the diocese, or the Clergy of Bath, respecting the formation of this Society, the Committee beg to observe, that, as soon as the measure was resolved on, a letter, of which the following is a copy, was sent to the Bishop:—

“ (COPY.)

“ MY LORD,

Norfolk Crescent, Bath, Nov. 19, 1817.

“ I am requested by the Committee of the Church of England Missionary Society, to solicit the honor of your Lordship's patronage to the formation of an Auxiliary Association in Bath, to aid the charitable efforts of the Parent Society. The Bishop of Gloucester has kindly condescended to promise to explain the nature of this institution from the pulpit of the Octagon Chapel, on Sunday morning, Nov. 30th, and preside at a public meeting on the following day. Your Lordship will confer much honor upon the Association, as well as materially benefit its success in Bath, by kindly undertaking the office of patron.

“ In the name of the Committee,

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

“ CONOLLY COANE.”

“ *To the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells.*”

“ And the following answer was received:—

“ (COPY.)

“ REV. SIR,

“ *Palace, Wells, Nov. 21, 1817.*

“ I lose no time in acknowledging the receipt of your letter; and request the favor of you to inform the Committee of the Church of England Missionary Society, with my respectful compliments, that I beg leave to decline the office of patron of the Auxiliary Association in Bath, to which they have done me the honor of offering to appoint me.

“ I am, Rev. Sir,

“ Your faithful humble servant,

“ B. of BATH and WELLS.”

“ *To the Rev. Conolly Coane.*”

“ It is unnecessary for the Committee to remark, that the bishop declined accepting the office offered him in the handsomest and politest manner; nor is there a word of objection or disapprobation of the measure.

“ The next step taken was to depute two officiating clergymen of the place, the Rev. Mr. Richards and the Rev. Mr. Player, to wait on the archdeacon of Bath, and solicit his countenance and support to the intended association. The archdeacon received these gentlemen in the most warm and friendly manner; and though he appeared to decline taking any part in favor of the Society, yet he certainly signified no express disapprobation of it; nor did he say to either of them, as officiating ministers in his archdeaconry, a single word on any impropriety in their belonging to such an institution. The rectors of Bath, Walcot, and Bathwick, with other officiating clergy of the town, were either personally waited on, or addressed by letter on the subject. The rector of Walcot behaved in the mildest, most candid, and gentlemanly manner; and the same was the case with regard to the rector of Bath.

“ The Committee have deemed it necessary to enter into this detail of their proceedings previously to the formation of the institution, both to shew that they were not deficient in any mark of attention and respect to the bishop or clergy of the place; and, though they had to lament that want of concurrence which would have been so highly desirable in a cause which appears to them equally calculated to promote the best interests of the Church and the Gospel, yet that it was impossible for them to contemplate from any quarter any active hostility or opposition. Some judgment, then, may be formed of their surprise, and, we would add, grief also, when the archdeacon appeared at the meeting in the manner he did, and delivered his address; though the Committee will venture to say, that none, but those who were present, can adequately enter into the sensations excited at hearing that address—at the sentiments it contained, as well as the spirit in which it was conceived, or the tone and manner in which it was delivered. As the archdeacon will probably publish this address, the Committee forbear entering on this part of the subject at present: they only hope it will be given literally to the public as it was delivered, without curtailment or alteration; and then the public will have to judge for themselves.

“ The Committee, however, cannot conclude this address, without advert-
ing to one point of most material import, not only to themselves and the Society they have recently formed, but to every similar society throughout the kingdom, and to the rights of Englishmen at large. The archdeacon, in the opening of his address, talked of coming there by right, as archdeacon of Bath; and, in the course of it, he permitted himself to say, that he would, if he pleased, call in the peace officers to dissolve the meeting. The Committee would wish to ask the archdeacon, what ecclesiastical power or control he conceives himself to have over a meeting convened, in the usual form, by public advertisement, and assembled under the protection of the civil law,

and at the Guildhall, with the permission of the chief magistrate of the city? The meeting was either legal or illegal. If legal, what possible right had the archdeacon to interfere;—or, whence does he draw any such right of interference or control over the proceedings of such a meeting? If illegal, is such a meeting amenable to ecclesiastical jurisdiction; or have the lay members of the church no power to assemble, for any charitable purpose, but under the direct sanction of ecclesiastical power? If such be the constitution of the Church of England as by law established, they desire that it may be distinctly pointed out. The archdeacon was, indeed, heard by sufferance, even to the end of his most extraordinary address; and that by a meeting whose proceedings were interrupted without leave or apology, and where he was not entitled to speak, unless in conformity to the advertisement, by which friends only were invited: he was heard, though professing to come there in support of a presumed ecclesiastical authority; and whilst he himself was at the same time violating all ecclesiastical discipline, by insulting a bishop of his own church, and a superior in the same diocese, who listened to him with a patience and calmness which could be derived only from one source.

“As this is the first, so the Committee trust it will be the last time they shall have to address the public on this occasion: they more gladly and cheerfully return to the discharge of their proper duties, and look with confidence for the support of a Christian public, in the great and glorious undertaking in which they are engaged.

“In the name of the Committee,

(Signed)

“J. O'BRIEN.”

“*Bath, Dec. 4th, 1817.*”

APPENDIX II.

The words of the archdeacon are—

“I said that this Society tends to the subversion of ecclesiastical order; and to promote and augment divisions among the members, and especially the clergy of the Church of England. Can a stronger proof of this assertion be offered than is, at this moment, exhibited before your eyes? Here you have the right reverend the lord bishop of Gloucester presiding in the chief city of the diocese of Bath and Wells, over the formation of a Society which the lord bishop of Bath and Wells disclaims. Does the honorable and right reverend vice-patron of this Church-of-England Missionary Society know this fact? If not, by what rule, not of apostolical authority, but of common propriety, does he invade the province of his venerable brother? By what right does he come hither, thrusting his sickle into another man's harvest? Perhaps he thought the husbandmen asleep! I trust that he will find us waking and watchful.—But if his lordship did know the sentiments of his venerable diocesan as well as mine, (for the Dean of Wells is as much under canonical rule as any other clergymen,) I ask, if his lordship did know the sentiments of his venerable diocesan as well as mine, could he give a more decisive proof of his indifference to the dignity of the high office to which he has been but a few years consecrated, as well as of his contempt of ecclesiastical order?”

—Protest, p. 6, 7.

APPENDIX III.

The following abstract of the charter incorporating the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, will shew, that it is in no degree formed for the object of converting the heathen world, though some of its missionaries and schoolmasters on the extreme stations may have an intercourse with a few tribes of American Indians.

“ King William III. was graciously pleased, on the 16th of June, 1701, to erect and settle a corporation with a perpetual succession, by the name of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; for the receiving, managing, and disposing of the contributions of such persons as would be induced to extend their charity towards the maintenance of a learned and an orthodox clergy, and the making of such other provision as might be necessary for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts, upon information, that in many of our plantations, colonies, and factories beyond the seas, the provision for ministers was mean; and many other of our said plantations, colonies, and factories, were wholly unprovided of a maintenance for ministers, and the public worship of God; and that, for lack of support and maintenance of such, many of his loving subjects wanted the administration of God's word and sacraments, and seemed to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity, and others of them to popish superstition and idolatry.”

APPENDIX IV.

The peculiar interest taken by King George the First, in the primary endeavour to evangelize the Hindoos, will appear from the following letters addressed to the missionaries by his Majesty.

“ George, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To the reverend and learned Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, and John Ernest Grundler, missionaries at Tranquebar in the East Indies.

“ Reverend and beloved,—Your letters, dated the 20th January of the present year, were most welcome to us; not only because the work undertaken by you, of converting the heathen to the Christian faith, doth, by the grace of God, prosper, but also because that in this our kingdom such a laudable zeal for the promotion of the gospel prevails.

“ We pray you may be endued with health and strength of body, that you may long continue to fulfil your ministry with good success; of which, as we shall be rejoiced to hear, so you will always find us ready to succour you in whatever may tend to promote your work and to excite your zeal. We assure you of the continuance of our royal favor.

“ Given at our Palace of Hampton Court, the 23d August, A. D. 1717, in the 4th year of our reign.”

“ GEORGE R.

“ HATTORF.”

The King continued to cherish with much solicitude the interests of the mission after the death of Ziegenbalg; and in ten years from the date of the

foregoing letter, a second was addressed to the members of the mission, by his Majesty.

“Reverend and beloved,—From your letters, dated Tranquebar, the 12th September, 1725, which some time since came to hand, we received much pleasure; since by them we are informed not only of your zealous exertions in the prosecution of the work committed to you, but also of the happy success which hath hitherto attended it, and which hath been graciously given of God. We return you thanks for these accounts; and it will be acceptable to us, if you continue to communicate whatever shall occur in the progress of your mission. In the mean time, we pray you may enjoy strength of body and mind for the long continuance of your labors in this good work, to the glory of God, and the promotion of Christianity among the heathens; that its perpetuity may not fail in generations to come.

“Given at our Palace at St. James's, the 23d February, 1727, in the 13th year of our reign. “GEORGE R.”

The following is a translation of a letter of archbishop Wake.

“To Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and John Ernest Grundler, preachers of the Christian Faith, on the coast of Coromandel.

“As often as I behold your letters, reverend brethren, addressed to the venerable Society instituted for the promotion of the Gospel, whose chief honor and ornament ye are; and as often as I contemplate the light of the gospel either now first rising on the Indian nations, or after the intermission of some ages again revived, and as it were restored to its inheritance; I am constrained to magnify that singular goodness of God in visiting nations so remote; and to account you, my brethren, highly honored, whose ministry it hath pleased Him to employ, in this pious work, to the glory of His name and the salvation of so many millions of souls. Let others indulge in a ministry, if not idle, certainly less laborious, among Christians at home. Let them enjoy, in the bosom of the church, titles and honors, obtained without labor and without danger. Your praise it will be (a praise of endless duration on earth, and followed by a just recompense in heaven) to have labored in the vineyard which yourselves have planted; to have declared the name of Christ, where it was not known before; and through much peril and difficulty have converted to the faith those among whom ye afterwards fulfilled your ministry. Your province, therefore, brethren, your office, I place before all dignities in the church. Let others be pontiffs, patriarchs, or popes; let them glitter in purple, in scarlet, or in gold; let them seek the admiration of the wondering multitude, and receive obeisance on the bended knee. Ye have acquired a better name than they, and a more sacred fame. And when that day shall arrive, when the chief Shepherd shall give to every man ‘according to his work;’ a greater reward shall be adjudged to you. Admitted into the glorious society of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, ye, with them, shall shine, like the sun among the lesser stars, in the kingdom of your Father, for ever. Since then so great honor is now given unto you by all competent judges on earth, and since so great a reward is laid up for you in heaven; go forth with alacrity to that work, to the which the Holy Ghost hath called you. God hath already given to you an illustrious pledge of his favor, an increase not to be expected without the aid of his grace. Ye have begun happily, proceed with spirit. He, who hath carried you safely through the dangers of the seas to such a remote country, and who hath given you favor in the eyes of those whose countenance ye most desired; He who hath so liberally and unexpectedly ministered unto your wants, and who doth now daily add members to your church; He will continue to prosper your endeavours, and will subdue unto himself, by your means, the whole continent of oriental India. O happy men! who, standing before the tribunal of Christ, shall exhibit so many nations converted to his faith by your preaching; hap-

py men! to whom it shall be given to say, before the assembly of the whole human race, 'Behold us, O Lord, and the children whom thou hast given us;' happy men! who, being justified by the Saviour, shall receive in that day the reward of your labors, and also shall hear that glorious encomium, 'Well done, good and faithful servants; enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' May Almighty God graciously favor you and your labors in all things. May he send to your aid fellow-laborers, such and so many as ye wish. May he increase the bounds of your churches. May he open the hearts of those to whom ye preach the gospel of Christ; and hearing you, they may receive life-giving faith. May he protect you and yours from all evils and dangers. And when ye arrive (may it be late) at the end of your course, may the same God, who hath called you to this work of the gospel, and hath preserved you in it, grant to you the reward of your labor,—an incorruptible crown of glory.

"These are the fervent wishes and prayers of, Venerable Brethren,

"Your most faithful fellow-servant in Christ,

"GULIELMUS CANT."

"From our Palace at Lambeth, January, A. D. 1719."

I cannot here refrain from adverting to the admirable sermon of the present lord bishop of London, delivered last year (1817), before the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and which precedes their last report.

The circumstance also may be here mentioned—and I shall only mention it—that if the efforts of the Church Missionary Society were suppressed, the number of missionaries in India and its dependencies, supported by members of the Church of England, would not exceed three or four; while those supported by other religious communities in this country amount to above seventy.









