

## ART. II.—THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

## ITS ORIGIN.

IT is a question whether there is any institution in the world that has engaged so much affection, and called forth so many prayers, as the Church Missionary Society. Of all Protestant institutions, whether religious or philanthropic, it is the one that certainly receives the largest amount of contribution and is most probably maintained by the largest number of contributors. There are tens of thousands of zealous friends throughout the country who are deeply interested in its welfare, and many amongst the number who are exercising great self-denial for its support. Some are persons of high distinction and wide-spread influence, while others are in the humblest walks of life, who are influential only with God; but all are united in one common desire to maintain and extend the sacred work in which, with one heart, they take so deep an interest. It is right, therefore, that the Church Missionary Society should have a foremost place in our new Magazine, and that its true character should be brought clearly before our readers.

This is the more important as there are some who stand aloof from it because they believe that it was formed in antagonism to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and who consider its formation as an act of opposition to the previously existing missionary agencies of the Church. But it requires a very slight acquaintance with the real history of missionary work in the Church of England to convince any one that such was not the case. This Paper, therefore, shall be devoted to an examination of the state of things that led to the formation of the Church Missionary Society.

In order to understand its origin, it will be necessary to review the previous work of missions in the Church of England. For some reason or other there was very little done for the extension of the Gospel for the first century after the Reformation. The Reformers appear to have been so much occupied with the great conflict with Rome that their attention was not directed to the claims of the heathen world. There was, however, a holy line of devoted men, who, by their true missionary spirit, were faithful witnesses for the Lord. Such men as Hariot, who went with Sir W. Raleigh to Virginia in 1585; Hunt, who followed in 1606, and Bucke in 1609. But the real systematic commencement of English missionary work was made by the Puritans in the time of the Commonwealth. The first English missionary society

was called "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, and the Adjacent Parts." An ordinance of the Long Parliament in 1649 formed the corporation of the company. A Lord Protector's letter was afterwards sent round to all the parishes of England requesting contributions, and a sum of about 11,000*l.* was collected, with which certain estates were purchased. Charles II., on his accession to the throne, gave the company a royal charter. After a time Robert Boyle became the governor. He was a member of the Royal Society, and one of the leading philosophers of his day. So highly was he esteemed, that, though a layman, he was offered a bishopric, and urged to receive holy orders in order that he might accept it. But, though a philosopher, he was not one of those who exalt their philosophy above the Word of God. Like his contemporary, Sir Isaac Newton, he regarded the study of Divine truth as the highest of all philosophies. To him is ascribed the saying respecting Scripture: "That it is a river in which a child can wade and an elephant swim." This was the Society that sent forth those apostolic men, Eliot and Brainerd, the former of whom has been called "The Apostle of the Indians;" and its missions still exist. I have myself visited one of them in the Indian reserve on the banks of the Grand River in Canada, and there conversed with the chief of one of the six tribes, who has since become the highly-valued clergyman of an English congregation in the diocese of Huron.

The next great institutions for the spread of the Gospel were the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, founded A.D. 1698, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in A.D. 1701.

Thus, by the commencement of the eighteenth century there was a certain amount of Church organization for foreign work, but in the great mission field there was very little done. The primary object of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was the extension of Christian knowledge through books and education. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was established for the benefit of English colonies, the colonists themselves being the primary objects of its labours.

But neither society was permitted to rest long without having the claims of the heathen forced on its attention, for there was a contemporaneous movement taking place in Denmark. It should never be forgotten that the Danes were the brave pioneers who led the way in our Indian missions. In the year 1621 the Rajah of Tanjore had allowed a Danish commercial company to purchase Tranquebar and a small surrounding territory, on the coast of Coromandel; and about the time of the formation of the two English Societies, Dr. Lutkens, one of the chaplains of Frederick the Fourth, King of Denmark, set before his Majesty the duty

of providing for the conversion of his Indian subjects to the Christian religion. He immediately received the king's commands to carry the suggestion into effect. Dr. Lutkens, therefore, was the real originator of English missionary work in India. When he had obtained the royal consent his first object was to find suitable men for the missions; and through the help of Dr. Franck, Professor of Divinity in the University of Halle, he was directed to two students pre-eminently qualified for the work, Ziegenbalg and Plutschou, who sailed for Tranquebar as the first Protestant missionaries to India in the year 1705. The beautiful spirit of faith in which they went forth is indicated by their account of their thoughts during a storm in the Bay of Biscay:—"The sight we had of the marvellous works of God cheered our spirits not a little; and the more the stormy and roaring seas broke in upon us, the more were the joy and praise of God increased in our mouths, seeing that we had so mighty a Lord for our Father, whom we may daily approach, and as confiding children put up our prayers to Him." Such language may teach a wholesome lesson to many of our modern Christians who are frightened out of all their joy by the first appearance of a storm.

But the people of Denmark do not appear to have realized the absolute necessity of steady help for the maintenance of a mission. The funds provided were insufficient, and the greater part of them were lost, as two ships were wrecked, each containing a remittance of a thousand crowns. The result was that the missionaries were reduced to great extremity, and their case was laid before the newly-founded Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The Danish mission in India lay very clearly far beyond their appointed province; but Christian love has the noble art of bursting, or over-leaping, boundaries; so the managers of the venerable Society for once disregarded their charter, and sent a present of 20*l.*, with a case of books, and letters of encouragement. This gift may seem small in modern times, but it was considered so great then, that the Governor of Madras would not entrust it to Ziegenbalg's messengers, but required him to come himself to Madras in order to secure its safe delivery.

But the letters were more valuable than the money, not only because they express a beautiful Christian spirit, but because they establish a remarkable proof of the close bond of union between the Church of England and the Reformed Churches on the Continent. In one of them it was said:—

May the Lord bless you whom He hath counted worthy to sow the first seed in a work which, in time, may grow to be the tree in whose branches the birds of the air may build their nests! . . . We may go forth boldly, but it must be in the name of Christ. We may go

on, but it must be in His strength. When all who profess the name of Christ throughout the world shall hold together, as members of one body, in holy love, they will show forth great strength, and exercise a mighty, though secret, influence over the heathen, who then cannot but hear, see, and feel that there is a power residing in us to which they are strangers.

But the 20*l.* was soon gone, and the chartered boundaries began to reappear, so the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were unable to renew their help. The appeal was then made to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, but it was considered that they also would be stepping out of their proper sphere in appropriating to a Danish Mission to the heathen moneys contributed for Promoting Christian Knowledge in Great Britain and the Colonies. But the love of the Lord Jesus Christ was once more too strong for their rules, and the difficulty was overcome by opening a special fund for the Danish Mission. The result was, that from the year 1710 to 1826, when the Mission was handed over to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had the high honour of leading the way in English missions to India, in maintaining the spirit of union with the Protestant Churches of the Continent, and in supporting some of the noblest missionaries ever known in Christendom—such as Gerické, Jænické, and Swartz!

But the eighteenth century was a dull, dark period, and the missionary spirit appears to have made very little progress till near its close. During the century the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent out to the colonies some admirable men, including, as some may be surprised to find, John Wesley. But at the close of the century there was very little life in either of the two Societies, and their incomes were miserably small: that of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge amounting to 2280*l.* 7*s.*, and that of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel 706*l.* 0*s.* 1*d.* The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was, as I have just stated, still supporting the Danish Mission in Tranquebar; and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was carrying on its own appointed work amongst the British possessions; but, with one exception, I meet with no record of any systematic effort for the conversion of the heathen. Those who were outside the British possessions were never thought of, and even those within the colonies appear to have been left to the zeal of any of the missionaries who might be labouring amongst the colonists in their neighbourhood. Thus, there was a zealous man who took an interest in the Maroons in the Bahamas; and a most devoted man, Mr. Stewart, afterwards Bishop of Quebec, who showed a warm-hearted missionary spirit towards the Indians in the neighbourhood of Kingston, in

Canada. But the only effort especially for the heathen mentioned in the Reports, was the payment of 50*l.* to a Mr. Philip Quake, "missionary, catechist, and schoolmaster to the negroes on the Gold Coast." This 50*l.* was half his salary, the remainder being supplied by the residents of Cape Coast Castle, amongst whom he appears to have laboured as a kind of lay-chaplain. As objections have been made to the employment of lay agency, and to co-operation with the non-Episcopal Reformed Churches of the Continent, it is important that the practice of these two great Church Societies should be carefully observed and remembered.

Thus, towards the close of the eighteenth century, there was very little being done by the Christians of England for the evangelization of the heathen world. The heathen within the British Dominions were in some cases cared for by the devoted men who were labouring as clergymen amongst the colonists; but, with the exception of the contributions to the Danish Mission at Tranquebar, the whole mass of the heathen outside the British Dominions were left to perish in all the miseries of heathenism. There was the whole Continent of Africa with its teeming population weltering in its blood, through the curse of the slave-trade. There was Palestine, India, China, Japan, and almost the whole of Asia, without one ray of Christian light. There was Australia, the islands of the Pacific, and New Zealand, without one witness for the truth; and neither of the existing Church of England Societies could regard any one of these vast spheres as falling within its province. Was there not, then, a need for some fresh organization that might devote its whole attention to the heathen world, and that might go forth as the bearer of the everlasting Gospel without any reference to chartered boundaries? Was there not a vast gap to be supplied? And ought not all loyal members of the Church of England to be thankful that at length it pleased God to rouse His people to a sense of their duty; and to lead them, without any interference with any existing institution, to make a fresh effort to fill the void?

But, considering the enormous magnitude of the work, how small was the beginning! When we look around at the present missions of the Church Missionary Society encircling the world, and then look back eighty years at its commencement, we may well say, as the Word of the Lord said to the Prophet Zechariah, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" The idea of the new Society was first suggested in the house of the Rev. W. Goode, Rector of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, the father of that eminent theologian, W. Goode, the late Dean of Ripon, and that devoted man, Francis Goode, the author of "Goode on the Better Covenant." It was afterwards discussed at a meeting

of the Eclectic Society, a small clerical society held in the vestry-room of St. John's, Bedford Row. On March 18th, 1799, the subject of discussion was, "What methods can we use most effectually to promote the Gospel among the heathen?" The subject was opened by the Rev. John Venn, Rector of Clapham, the father of that great, noble-minded Christian statesman, Henry Venn, who for thirty-one years as its honorary secretary guided with consummate wisdom the affairs of the Society. He laid down three principles—

1. That success must depend entirely on the Spirit of God, and that God's providence must be followed, not anticipated.

2. That all success must depend on the persons sent on the missions. They must be men made by God.

3. The mission must proceed from small beginnings, and not enter on a large scale at first.

After which he submitted certain resolutions for the consideration of the meeting.

The Rev. Josiah Pratt advocated the adoption of the resolutions, "as breathing a quiet, humble, dependent spirit." The Rev. Charles Simeon, in a most characteristic manner, proposed three questions, "What can we do? When shall we do it? How shall we do it? and urged the meeting to immediate action.

The Rev. Thomas Scott, the commentator, gave the caution: "We must not expect too perfect missionaries."

The Rev. W. Goode summed up the discussion by saying that the difficulties only proved that there was no missionary spirit abroad, and urged them without delay to "form a plan and publish it."

The practical result was that on the 12th April, 1799, a meeting was held at the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street, for the foundation of the new Society. There were present on that occasion seven rectors, one fellow of a college, two lecturers, two ministers of proprietary chapels, one curate, three other clergymen, and nine laymen—in all twenty-five brave men; without wealth, without the patronage of the great, without any agents to carry on their work, and, above all, without experience; but prepared to go forth in the Lord's name boldly to grapple with the heathenism of the world, for the simple reason that they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they knew that He had said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and that they trusted His promise, "I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

Such was the origin of this great institution, and such the commencement of the sacred, scriptural, and most blessed work, which it is our privilege to labour by God's grace both to maintain and to extend. Our position is, of course, entirely different to theirs. We have both encouragements and difficulties to

which they were total strangers. But, thanks be unto God! we have the same principles, the same hope, the same call from God, and the same blessed Saviour to be the Leader and Commander of His people. It is more difficult sometimes to maintain than to originate; but we may take courage from their experience, and remember that the same Lord who carried them through difficulties which seemed at the time to be insuperable, can help us through any difficulties which may arise, and enable us to hand on the sacred work unchanged in its principles, and vastly increased in its efficiency.

EDWARD HOARE.

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### ART. III.—THE IRISH UNIVERSITY ACT.

#### I.

**A**FTER many vain attempts and fruitless efforts to grapple with the question, a Bill has received the Royal assent, intituled "An Act to Promote the Advancement of Learning, and to Extend the Benefits connected with University Education in Ireland." Its passage through Parliament has been watched with no little anxiety by many persons, who, though willing to credit the Government with the best intentions, are unable to believe that it is possible to satisfy the so-called demands of the Irish people, without making concessions to the claims of the Ultramontane party, fatal to the advancement of sound learning in Ireland. It cannot be denied by any person acquainted with the subject that the claims of the Ultramontanes involve the submission of the education of Roman Catholics to the absolute authority of the Latin Church; nor can it be doubted by any well-informed and impartial person that education so conducted would narrow the mind and dwarf the intellectual stature. Under the most favourable conditions the aim would be rather to cultivate the memory than the reasoning powers of the pupils—the exercise of the latter being inconvenient; and when the standard could safely be kept low, without unfavourably attracting public attention, the results—as in Italy a few years ago—would be utterly unworthy to bear the name of education in any civilized country. No Government could long retain the confidence of the English people whose conduct justly exposed them to a suspicion that they were prepared to yield in this particular to the demands of the Roman hierarchy, whether advanced in their own name or in that of the people of Ireland. Suspicion is easily roused on this question, and it was perilous even to touch the subject. It is therefore not