

But of its endeavors to give the gospel to the heathen, notice chiefly is here to be taken. That this was a part of its design is abundantly clear, if it were only from the careful and elaborate "Directions to the Catechists for Instructing Indians, Negroes, etc.," which at an early period it issued; although it was for some years less distinguished in this sphere than the other, chiefly because its agents were absorbingly occupied in setting things in order among their own countrymen, but partly through the error of leaving to the same persons the very diverse duties of ministering to Christian congregations and seeking the conversion of the heathen. Bray, who founded and endowed an institution of great value, which exists to this day under the title of "Bray's Associates," for the support of negro schools in Nova Scotia, Philadelphia and the Bahamas, was not likely to overlook their interests in any society which he helped to found. We find, accordingly, in the early history of the S. P. G. Society, repeated notices of their instruction and baptism; of schools for their benefit; and attempts to alleviate their lot and to protect them from contumely and wrong, especially in New York and the West India islands. Nor were the Indians overlooked. The zeal of the Rev. Morgan Godwyn, trained at Oxford, and successively a clergyman in Virginia and Barbadoes, as exhibited in a pamphlet he wrote in 1680, entitled "The Negroes' and Indians' Advocate," seeking for them admission into the Church, the chief proposition of which was "That the negroes, both slaves and others, have naturally an equal right with other men to the exercise and privileges of religion, of which it is most unjust in any part to deprive them," was characteristic of the sentiments of many, both before and after the formation of the society. The opening century showed several gratifying evidences of this. There were, for instance, some thirty congregations of Christian Indians, in 1705, in the south of New England, thirty-seven native preachers, some of them having been ordained by the Puritans. There were also seven or eight English ministers, who had learned the Indian tongue, and frequently gave instruction to Indian assemblies.* In the year 1700 was celebrated the first public commencement of William and Mary's College, founded, as the charter declares, "that the Christians of Virginia may be furnished with a seminary for the ministers of the gospel, and that the youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that the Christian faith may be propagated among the western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God." The society took up such work with great readiness, for, in its first report, grants are stated to have been made to two missionaries who were laboring among "the five nations of Iroquois, commonly called the Praying Indians of Canada,"† and Mr. Thompson is reported as having been "sent to

* See Hawkins' History.

† This continued, with some interruption from war, in one at least of the tribes, the Mohawks, all through the century, and with much success.