

among them. It will be seen that he commences his labours under most favourable circumstances, the people in one quarter being christian, though in great need of being taught "the word of God more perfectly." The field is large, it being supposed that the island contains some 40,000 inhabitants, more than Tanna, Erromanga and Aneityum together. The people are considered a superior race, having more of a Malay cast than the inhabitants of some of the other New Hebrides islands, and exhibiting more mechanical ingenuity. But with the wide field of heathenism around, there is all need of the church being earnest in prayer for God's Spirit to descend in his quickening and saving power.

THE PLACE OF THE SERMON IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

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Worship is between the individual soul or the Christian Assembly, and the Most High. It is not an interchange of sentiment between man and man, nor an instruction of man by man; it is the adoring homage paid by man to his Creator. Both in public and in private, there may be worship without preaching or even reading. On the other hand, there may be reading or preaching without worship; and there may be occasions on which it is expedient and profitable to have either the one or the other apart. Nevertheless, the connection between the two is so close, that they are practically indissoluble, and there are abundant grounds, both in Scripture and in the precedents of eighteen Christian centuries, for their association. Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of love—of the feelings; but it is equally distinguished from all false religions by being the religion of light—of the intellect. *The fundamental relation of the sermon to the worship of the congregation is, therefore, plain.* It is part of that "preparation of the heart," by which the emotions, purified from the grossness of superstition, and enlarged and elevated by knowledge, become the best and highest expression of man's whole nature. It tends to secure that

worship shall not be merely of the feelings but of the understanding, not offered up to an unknown God, but to One on whose face, to speak reverently, the lamp of Scripture, held in the hand of the preacher, has thrown revealing light. Strong feeling, unless it is mere exaggerated sentiment, is the child of knowledge, the handmaid of truth; and as the preacher passes from attribute to attribute of the Divine character, from manifestation to manifestation of the Divine power and goodness, he suggests at each step new cause for adoration, gratitude and praise. Preaching is thus, as Edward Irving calls it, the "food and nourishment" of all other parts of Divine worship. To exalt it too highly is impossible. It is the "royal ordinance of the kingdom." The Reformers and the Puritans did not err in attaching to it unbounded importance. "Here," says the divine just quoted, addressing the Christian minister, "put forth all thy knowledge, all thy wisdom, all thy strength of manhood, with all the gifts and graces of the Divine nature. Take thy liberty: occupy thy commission; beat down the enemies of the Lord; wound and heal; break down and build up again. Be of no school; give heed to none of their rules and canons. Take thy liberty; be fettered by no times, accommodate no man's convenience, spare no man's prejudice, yield to no man's inclinations, though thou shouldst scatter all thy friends, and rejoice all thine enemies. Preach the gospel! not the gospel of the last age, or of this age, but the everlasting gospel; not Christ crucified merely, but Christ risen; not Christ risen merely, but Christ present in the spirit, and Christ to be again present in person. Dost thou take heed to what I say? Preach thy Lord in humiliation, and thy Lord in exaltation; and not Christ only, but the Father, the will of the Father. Keep not thy people banqueting, but bring them out to do battle for the glory of God; and of His Church; to which end thou shalt need to preach them the Holy Ghost, who is the strength of battle."

When we say that the sermon ought to be part of the preparation of the heart for worshipping God, we do not circumscribe or confine it. On the contrary, we open up a field as wide as the Scriptures of truth and the conscience of man, on which the preacher may expatiate. And, since it is a preliminary, an accompaniment, an aid, of worship, rather than worship itself, the sermon admits of greater latitude in thought and expression than would be consistent with reverence in the act of offering up prayer or praise to God. Subject always to the imperative requirements of solemnity and earnestness, the preacher is warranted by Scrip-