

personal, to the arbitration of a select number of judicious friends, in whom they can exercise mutual confidence.'

"It was subsequently moved by Rev. S. M'All, of Nottingham; seconded by Rev. John Kennedy, of Stepney:—

"That various charges of unfaithfulness to the sacred principles of evangelical truth having recently been made against the body of Congregational ministers, this meeting deem it incumbent to express their deep and deliberate conviction that such imputations are unfounded and unjust; and they hereby record their assurance, that the ministers of our churches, as a body, maintain an unabated attachment to those great Christian principles on which they have been incorporated from the time of their formation; but, while the meeting would earnestly commend a faithful adherence to the essential truths of the gospel, and a prominent and unmistakable exhibition of them in the pulpit, they would earnestly desire that a charitable construction should be put upon the terms in which they are expressed, and that they should, on all occasions, be maintained and vindicated in a Christian spirit."

An address has been published by Mr. James, which he had intended to deliver at the autumnal meeting of the Congregational Union, which was to have been held at Cheltenham, entitled: "The Rivulet Controversy: A Tract for the Times; or, Speaking the Truth in Love." He attempts to reconcile the opposite parties, which he considers have allowed personal elements to enter too freely into the controversy.

The following are a few of the most important extracts from the address:—

"For years past, there has been gradually forming among reading, thoughtful, and devout men, both in the ministry and out of it, an undergrowth of conviction, impatient of, if not hostile to, many of those metaphysical forms in which the teachings of Christianity have been distorted and stereotyped by the dogmatism of theological schools.' I am afraid the meaning of this is but too obvious, and that, if followed out, it will lead to a new theology, not only in form, but in substance. I am happy, however, in the conviction, that the theological teaching of our colleges is the inculcation of a sound orthodoxy, and that, in the main, the doctrines held by our ancestors, the Puritans and the Nonconformists, are the divinity of our seats of learning. I believe the great body of our ministers still hold fast these momentous truths. But I will not conceal my apprehensions, and they are painful ones, that a few of our young ministers, in their anxiety to avoid a stereotyped phraseology, which, if the change be confined to this, would not be mischievous, are in some danger of giving up truths which were stereotyped nearly eighteen centuries ago upon the page of revelation, and were intended by the Author of inspiration to be stereotyped there for all ages and all generations. It is an age of liberalism and independent thinking, and this is finding its way into our ministry to such an extent, that, in the anxiety to get out of the old and deep ruts, some add the danger of getting off the rails. It is one melancholy symptom of the age, that orthodoxy, if by one party it has become almost a cant term, is by the other pronounced with a sneer, or

made the subject of ridicule and satire. In some cases, where a sound theology is retained, it appears to me to be held with too slight an idea of its vast importance as the means of all spiritual life. It is maintained as a creed, or a kind of religious science, which cannot be logically disproved; but it is kept sadly in the back-ground, as if we could carry on religion without it, and treated as a thing by itself, which has no vital connection with Christian experience. We hear, indeed, a great deal about 'spiritual life,' but it is a life apart from spiritual truth,—a kind of religious, poetic sentimentalism, or of merely a zealous activity,—a life and an activity that may be carried on upon almost any system of doctrine. A negative theology—I scarcely like to use a phrase so bandied about, yet it is a very oppressive one, and I can find no substitute for it,—is almost sure, if it be long maintained, to end in positive heresy. If the ground be not occupied with the plants of truth, the weeds of error will be sure to spring up. And I confess that, without being panic-stricken at all, I see many things, which way soever I look, that make me serious and sad. There is in some quarters, if not among us yet in other places, a mischievous operation going on, of chipping, and filing, and edging away Christian truths, until they square themselves to their places in modern philosophies. But all these attempts 'to render "Pauline notions" into the graceful equivalents of "modern thought," give us a philosophy which philosophers may well scoff at, and a theology which biblical theologians ought to denounce as little better than covert Atheism.' The whole evangelical church is coming into a crisis, and all the great verities of religious belief, which we thought had been settled, are going to be tried over again. May God carry us and all others safely through the crisis! I bear in recollection that our body a century and a-half ago, had one great lapse from truth. Most of the Unitarian congregations which now exist sprung out of those that were once Trinitarian. And it can neither be denied nor concealed, that some of the periodicals sustained by that body are already rejoicing in the hope of another defection. May their hopes never be realized; and, in order that they may not, may a spirit of enlightened and holy zeal for truth be poured out upon our ministers, and especially the younger portion of them; and may a spirit of earnestness and importunate supplication pervade our churches for the preservation of sound doctrine among us."

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POLYNESIA.

EXTENT OF NATIVE AGENCY.

All the missions in Polynesia have availed themselves largely of native assistance. The Episcopalians in New Zealand, the Wesleyans in Tonga, Feejee, and New Zealand, the Congregationalists in the New Hebrides, and the missionaries of the London Society, early adopted this agency. In New Zealand the Church Missionary Society employs 418 native agents; the Wesleyan Society has in its three missions just named, 75 catechists and 833 local preachers; the London Missionary Society has in Samoa alone nearly 200 natives, denominated teachers, each having the oversight of a village, conducting prayer meetings, and schools for its adults and children, and preaching two or three times a week. The employment of natives was not altogether the result of previous design. The aid was offered. The