

prayers and supplications ascend to the exalted King and Head of the Church, that He may appear in his glory to build up his Zion. Then to use the beautiful and expressive imagery of the ancient prophet when predicting the future prosperity and happiness of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, "Then shall the wilderness and the solitary place be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose—they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

Defence of Missions in India.

We have heard and read a good deal, of late, about the mutiny in India, and its connection with the cause of Christian Missions. By some of our best educated families, as well as by some of the leading journals, this revolt is almost, if not altogether, attributed to an apprehension on the part of the natives that an attempt was about to be made by the Government, even in opposition to the most positive pledges, to coerce them to embrace Christianity. How this story may have originated—how far it may have aided the cause of the mutineers—through what tortuous process it may have passed before it assumed its present form, or whether it has much, if any, foundation in fact—are questions we cannot easily determine. Nor do we propose, on this occasion, to do so. Our object, rather, will be to examine this subject in the light of Scripture and of published facts, with the view of enquiring whether we are warranted, as some have argued, in immediately suspending, and completely removing, our Missionaries from India.

Were it true that the Indian Government really attempted to entrap and Christianize the natives, however censurable their official interference may have been, still this would form no valid objection against the propagation of Christianity in a legitimate manner. Hitherto, however, not a single instance has been brought forward in which the Government has been inculpated—till this is done, there is no ground for complaint on this point. We admit the fact that some officials in the Indian army have spoken privately and in their private capacity, perhaps occasionally even rashly and intemperately to the natives, on the subject of the Christian religion, but this neither compromised the Government nor violated any existing treaty. Every man, we apprehend, under the protection of British law, is not only at liberty to worship God as he pleases, but also to embrace every favorable opportunity of making his religion known to others. Nor will any one in this country, and surely much less in India, who is really a Christian and burning with love for the souls of men, refuse to teach those who are living in the grossest darkness, alike ignorant of their duty and their God. For these reasons, then, to ascribe this revolt to the official interference

of the Government, when it has not been proved that they have used their authority in a single case in an illegitimate manner, or to trace it to the influence of Christian Missionaries on the native mind, when the fact is notorious that, in the Presidencies, where Christianity is most extensively diffused, disaffection and rebellion are unknown, or to argue from these premises that our Missionary operations should be suspended, when not a shadow of a crime has been alleged against any of these noble-hearted men, is conduct the most reprehensible, and worthy of the severest condemnation.

Nor is this all. The same individuals to whom we have referred, imagine that we are absolutely prohibited from introducing Christianity into that interesting portion of our dominions. They suppose that, in consequence of the treaty binding us not to interfere with the natives in the exercise of their religion, we are also bound to leave the native population to live in the darkness in which they have been enveloped for many ages. But to this construction of the treaty, the Government never gave its assent, for, whilst it is true the Government has engaged, under the most solemn promises, not to disturb the natives in their religious worship, it is not true nor does it necessarily follow, that it has either guaranteed to maintain their religion intact, or to close the portals through which Christianity may enter. Nor could it do this, even if it would, and to attempt it would be an act of suicide. Freedom is the birth-right of every British subject, and wherever he penetrates, there will his intelligence and Christianity, sooner or later, be developed. Of necessity, then, there will be a collision between truth and error, whether the individual be lay or clerical, and whether employed and countenanced by Government, or not. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. To suppose, then, that we are called upon to forbid the publication of Christianity, is to labor under a delusion, and to wish us to do so, is adding a gratuitous insult to a gross offence. In guaranteeing peace and tranquillity to the natives, we simply fulfil the terms of our compact, but we leave their religion to stand or fall amid the advancing intelligence and increasing light against which it has to contend. Were we to do otherwise—were we to hold India merely as a source of wealth, without attempting to enlighten her, or were we to forbid our Missionaries from setting foot on her shores—we would not only incur the wrath of the Almighty, for our unfaithfulness, deprive our Constitution of that strength and our laws of that justice which Christianity imparts, but rob the natives of incalculable blessings, both here and hereafter.

But these men, not satisfied with the negative aspect of the subject, would positively forbid us to teach or preach Christianity among the natives; but to this, as a Christian Government, we cannot subscribe. Christianity is aggressive in its nature, and

as Christians we are not at liberty to retain it exclusively to ourselves, or to throw obstacles in the way of its more rapid and extensive dissemination. As Christians, we must attack error wherever it presents itself. As a Church we are specially bound to instruct those who know not the truth. To suppose, then, that a Christian Government is called upon either to discountenance or suspend Missionary operations, to hold principles which legitimately lead to these results, is to hold opinions the most dangerous, irrational and absurd, any one can possibly entertain.

We conceive it follows from what we have said, that we fail in the discharge of our duty, if we do not attempt to Christianize our Indian empire. It is of the utmost importance that the native population should be instructed in all branches of learning, but especially in Scriptural truth, and at the same time the greatest possible care should be taken that, in all our intercourse with them, no countenance be given to the idea, either directly or indirectly, that we are violating any treaty into which we may have entered. In these circumstances, then, the question is not whether this revolt is to be ascribed to the propagation of Christianity, but whether the methods employed have been the best calculated to further the end in view. On this latter point, probably, grave doubts may sometimes be entertained. But even granting this to be true it constitutes no valid argument either for interfering with or suspending Missionary operations, when legitimately pursued. If others have erred and incurred blame, they does neither release us from our responsibility, nor justify us in failing to fulfil our duty. Our duty to the natives is still as binding now as it was before the commencement of the present war. It remains unaffected by any thing that has happened, as well as by any treaty that exists, and that duty, as Christians, we are bound to discharge. All, then, that we require, is, that the Government do not interfere with the Missionaries, or do anything to countenance the idea that any treaty has been violated. Let our Missionaries be free and unfettered to preach the Gospel, and we have no fears for the result. The present outbreak may retard the good work for a season, but it forms no plea for the removal of our Missionaries, and the discontinuance of their work. So far as we have been able to discover, the natives have no ground of complaint either against the Government or our Missionaries, hence the causes of this widespread disaffection must be traced to other sources. Let not, then, these false grounds of complaint form any pretext for disturbing the work in India, which has been auspiciously begun. Let it be continued. Let not our Missionaries be discouraged by their present trials. Let them look to Him who ruleth over all, and He will strengthen and uphold them, and speedily deliver them out of all their distresses.