

mation, and promote a revision of the ecclesiastical system of the Church of England. The following form of petition defines the object sought to be attained:—

*"To the Right Hon. the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled,*

*"The Humble Petition of the Undersigned, being Inhabitants of*

*"Showeth—That your petitioners view with extreme apprehension the dissemination and growth of Popish principles amongst a large number of clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland, as by law established.*

*"That your petitioners, ever mindful of the blessings they owe to the Reformation, are anxious to preserve the ritual, form, and ceremonies of the said church, as ordained by the statute in that behalf made and provided, and the several rubrics contained in the Book of Common Prayer.*

*"That your petitioners observe with alarm the great efforts which are at this present time being made by certain of the said clergy to evade the observance of the said statutes and rubrics; and that they, in many instances, openly violate the same by introducing into the services of several churches, of which they have respectively the cure, divers innovations, ceremonies, forms, and furniture, which, if not positively prohibited by the said statute or rubrics, or otherwise, have been heretofore unused or unaccustomed in the said Reformed Church.*

*"That your petitioners are advised that, although the said statute and rubrics are sufficiently definite and certain as a guide for the conduct of the clergy in the premises aforesaid, yet that they do not afford, nor does the law, common or ecclesiastical, otherwise supply any effectual remedy against infringements of the said statute and rubrics. That there is not in law any sufficient legal remedy either to punish such infringement of the statute or rubrics aforesaid, nor any adequate legal means to preserve or enforce any due observance of the same, except at a ruinous expense, and by a cumbrous and insufficient process, not only utterly inadequate to the wants of the present day, but by its costliness out of the reach of the great body of the people.*

*"That your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray, that your lordships will be pleased to afford them relief in the said matters, by enacting such laws as will ensure a strict adhesion to the ritual, practices, and ceremonies directed and ordained by the said statutes and the rubrics contained in the Book of Common Prayer. And that your lordships will be pleased to amend the law generally in that behalf, so as to supply an easy and inexpensive remedy in cases of wilful and perverse violation of the said statute and rubrics; and that your lordships will grant unto your petitioners such other relief in the premises as to your lordships shall seem meet."*

It is proposed to commence a public agitation in favour of these objects, and to convene a conference on a convenient opportunity. Mr. Westerton, the zealous church-warden of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, is one of the projectors of the movement, and the Hon. Col. Vereker is the honorary secretary of the committee.

#### PREFACE TO

#### VOL. VIII. OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTENDOM.

What shall be the topic of our preface? Shall we content ourselves at such a time as this with the ordinary commonplaces?

There is a propriety, no doubt, in offering our

annual acknowledgments as gracefully as we may, to our friends and supporters. They merit our thanks, and in sincerity we present them. Nor is it in the spirit of formality that we add the expression of an humble gratitude to the gracious Providence of God, which has conducted us successfully through another year. He alone gives strength and opportunity for labour and turns that labour to profitable account. Uninterruptedly, through His great mercy, our course has been pursued; with less than we could have desired of that simplicity of aim to His glory, which in all things should characterise His servants: but not, as we trust, without some advantage to His people, and certainly with manifold proofs of His blessing.

The year that is closing upon us will occupy from one point of view a bad pre-eminence in the records of history, as the period in which a long peace was terminated, and Europe again plunged in the terrible calamity of war; while from another, as we venture to hope, it will have to be regarded as the prelude to changes among the nations which shall indicate the presence of an Almighty and benign Agency, achieving though "by terrible things in righteousness," the liberties of Christendom, and the triumphs of Christ.

It is impossible, we conceive, to look upon the conflict which has so recently commenced, with one unmixed feeling, and that a feeling of profound regret. Deplorable as its immediate effects are in stimulating into fierce activity the malignant passions of our nature previously dormant; in arresting, or diverting from their ordinary channels, the beneficial currents of international commerce; in enhancing the cost of the necessities of life, and augmenting the weight of fiscal burdens; in carrying orphanage and widowhood into numberless families, with all the other forms of bereavement; and, above all, in hurrying vast multitudes of brave men to premature and sudden death; we confess, notwithstanding, to other feelings in connexion with the war, beside those of lamentation and sorrow. We look to the issues of the conflict with hope. It is morally impossible that it should not lead to changes, as well in the internal structure of Continental governments, as in their relations to each other, and such changes can scarcely fail to promote the great interests of mankind. In some cases almost any change must be advantageous; as, for example, in those countries where the human conscience is mercilessly trampled under the iron hoof of despotism; and, in other instances, in which as the result of former convulsions, some concessions have been made to constitutional government and religious freedom. We cannot but anticipate that another impetus will be given, and further progress be made. Few persons imagine that other parties besides the original combatants will not be drawn into the strife; and they who are best acquainted with the down-trodden condition of the inhabitants of such portions of Europe as the Italian peninsula, and the Austrian Empire, can scarcely refrain, if, indeed, they do refrain, from wishing that they may. There are certain gigantic evils which afflict mankind, for which, in the order of God's providential arrangements, war seems the only remedy. Terrible a calamity as it is, there are calamities that are greater; and whether we read the past history of nations, or look at the present condition of Christendom, or glance at the foretold and coming doom of certain vast systems of religious fraud and domination, which for centuries have sat heavily on its vitals, it seems as if the human race were destined to win their ultimate and permanent deliverance from these galling yokes only by war.