

good. The hurricanes of last season will have purified the atmosphere; the weak and sickly will all have been swept away, and nothing but the strong and healthy left; and consequently it may reasonably be expected that the sickness and mortality will be greatly less for some years to come. It has been found in this country that when cholera, or any epidemic, has cut off an unusual number of people in any particular districts, the bills of mortality in such places are greatly lighter for some years afterwards. So that, if the average for three or four years is taken, the mortality is not greater than if no epidemic had occurred. I do not expect the mortality to be so low in the New Hebrides as to neutralize the effects of this year's epidemic, but I do expect the rate of mortality for two or three years to come to be very low, and consequently the prejudices of the natives against Christianity will be easily overcome. Now, then, is the time to strike against heathenism: and by all means let it be done. It is, however, a principle recognized in all secular warfare, that it is unwise to undertake any military expedition unless the means employed be fully equal to the requirements of the undertaking. A king with only 10,000 men will not rashly engage in war with him who comes against him with 20,000. It is laid down as a first principle in military science that no commander ought ever willingly to risk a battle unless there is a moral certainty of success, otherwise he is playing with the lives of his soldiers. In the first stages of missionary operations almost all Societies and Churches have committed mistakes and fallen into errors, generally through ignorance, and consequently they have experienced sad disappointments and severe losses: they have gained their wisdom often by dear-bought experience. One common error with Societies and Churches is to send out far too few missionaries, and one common error with the missionaries is to attempt far too much. Among the supporters of Missions there is frequently a feeling of impatience, a strong desire to walk not by faith, but by sight—a longing after the marvellous and the romantic in the results of Missions. Ere the process of sowing the seed is well begun they are looking for the ripened grain: hence missionaries are under strong temptations to undertake more than they can well accomplish. There is also abroad, as at home, the grasping rivalry of different Churches, each afraid of the monopolizing spirit of the other, and preferring to leave large fields, half heathen, under themselves, rather than that they should be christianized by any one else. I am very desirous that your Church would put forth a special effort at this time. You have advertized for two additional Missionaries, and this is so far well. But I would like you not only to double, but to even treble your previous number. I am persuaded, however paradoxical it may appear, that you would maintain ten or twelve Missionaries with less difficulty than three or four. Seven or eight could be more easily got to go out together, than one or two alone. Such an effort would excite the attention of the Church, and a very simple organization would raise all the funds. I do not know the precise number of your membership, but a rough approximation is quite sufficient for my purpose. Say that you have 10,000 members, and this is probably below your actual number. Sixpence a month or three half-pence a week from each member would amount to £3,000 a year, and would maintain twenty Missionaries on the New Hebrides at £150 sterling a year each; and there is not a servant girl in your Church, but could contribute that sum. Let the decimal principle of Moses be adopted, appoint rulers of hundreds and rulers of tens. Let each congregation count its membership and let a collector be appointed for each nine members; let every ten collectors be under an active elder; let them meet for a Missionary Prayer Meeting, say on the 1st Monday of each month, each collector bringing in five shillings, which could be collected monthly or weekly as might be found most convenient for the contributors. I have taken no account of the adherents, who would more than cover all the deficiencies of the poor, the sick or those unable or unwilling to contribute. The Missionaries might be easily forthcoming; say that you fix upon ten as your number, you might call five ordained ministers and five of those who are, or who soon will be preachers: such a demand would soon create a new supply. The example would soon tell on this side of the Atlantic. I have heard the Bishop of New Zealand, while preaching a Missionary sermon in Auckland, hold up your Church as an example to the colonists of New Zealand. Our Church