

to preach for him on the Monday after his communion and give some account of the Mission to his people. "I have just been reading," he says, "of the recent disasters which have (under God) overtaken the Mission in the New Hebrides. * * One feels that a mission so inaugurated is destined to a glorious future." These are just such trials as almost all Missions, at some period or other of their history, have passed through. The Tahitian Mission, in its early stages, was often distracted and broken up by the wars of the natives, and in its later stages it has suffered from Popery and France. The Rarotongan Mission suffered very severely from hurricanes and sickness. The Samoan Mission suffered greatly from a ten years' civil war. The New Zealand Missions have often suffered and been broken up from war and other causes. The Madagascar Mission passed through the ordeal of a bloody persecution. The Caffre war sorely tried the South African Missions. The Indian rebellion entailed fearfully heavy trials and losses upon the Missions to the East. And the melancholy death of the Helmores and Mrs. Price has arrested for a time the Mission to the Makololo. But those trials and those losses, although they have fearfully retarded, yet they have never permanently arrested the onward progress of Christianity. On the other hand they have often given it a stronger impulse, by attracting more attention to the claims of Missions, awakening a deeper interest and warmer sympathies in their behalf, and leading those conducting the Missions so tried to a more careful adaptation of the means at their command for securing the ends which they were seeking to accomplish.

It would be presumption in us to say what God's final purposes may be in those terrible calamities. But this we know, that by such fearful judgments God often removes impediments to the progress of his work: he takes away the incorrigible, and trains and stimulates the hopeful. After a certain point, moral depravity, like disease in the human body, is beyond the power of all ordinary means—beyond the power of all human remedies; and as a limb is amputated to save the life of the body, so the worst portion of society must be cut off to save the rest. Hence there is mercy in judgment. Witness God's mode of dealing with the old world at the flood, with Sodom and Gomorrah, with the children of Israel in the wilderness, with the kingdom of Judah at the captivity, and with the Jews at their final dispersion by the Romans; their polity was dissolved that Christianity might be established in the world. The principles of God's government are the same in every age. And so fearfully obstinate, cruel and degraded are the native races in those seas, that God's judgments, such as hurricanes, pestilence and bloody wars, must often cut off the incorrigible, in order that the means of grace may be effectual and the less hardened may be saved. When John Williams was lamenting to an intelligent Christian native that the ravages of war had thinned the population of one of the islands, the native, who knew the character of his countrymen better than the missionary, shrewdly remarked to the effect that it was perhaps well, that if the heads of chiefs had not fallen the lives of missionaries might have perished, and the people would have remained in heathen darkness. One of the most intelligent of my teachers on Aneiteum has oftener than once remarked to me, in reference to the epidemic that passed over the island about nineteen years ago, that God, at that time, took away the chief opposers of the gospel. "A number of the chiefs," he said, "used to beat us boys, and threatened to kill us, if we went to the Samoan and Rarotongan teachers, and we durst go to them only at night; but God sent the sickness and these men are all dead." In all such national judgments the innocent must often suffer with the guilty, if they are not sufficiently numerous to save a guilty land: and God sends temporal judgments to prove and purify the good, as in the case of Job, as well as to punish and destroy the wicked.

I look upon the present as an exceedingly favourable juncture for making special efforts on the New Hebrides. The most formidable sources of opposition have been removed. Mr. Gordon wrote that nearly all the chiefs were dead on Erromanga. Mr. Paton said nearly the same thing about Tanna. The middle-aged, those who are invariably the worst opponents of Christianity, have been cut off, while the young, those who are the most hopeful, the most easily impressed, have been left. For some years after this the public health is likely to be unusually