

up which, while it had inherited something of its predecessor's violent passions, had little or no knowledge of religious things. Vice and immorality consequently ruled throughout the land. The pictures of the manners of the age preserved in the early minutes and correspondence of the S.P.C.K. leave us in no doubt as to the wickedness of the time. In a letter addressed to the Governor of Jamaica, drawn up by Dr. Bray, and adopted by the S.P.C.K. on January 6th, 1701, we read:

"That Inundation of Profaneness and Immorality which we find of late broke in upon us, puts all serious persons here into no small consternation at the prospect of those Judgments, which, according to the ordinary course of Divine Providence, overtake an Apostatiz'd People."

The term "apostatized" may seem an exaggeration; but when one comes to think of the absence of Christian schools at this time, the total neglect of catechizing in churches, and the prevailing apathy in regard to religion which had succeeded the wild extravagances of the Commonwealth, serious-minded persons must have regarded the great bulk of the English people as having fallen into such "barbarous ignorance" and "vile and un-Christian practices" crying "aloud for vengeance" that a new evangel was needed to reclaim them.

This state of affairs could not but exercise the minds of pious persons in all parts of the country and it seems the most natural thing in the world to read (S.P.C.K. minutes, October 17th, 1700) of the origin of the society in:

"The zeal of severall persons of the best Character in and about ye Cities of London and Westminster, and since that in other parts of the nation, to associate themselves in order to consult together how to put a stop to so fatal an inundation."

In such circumstances the S.P.C.K. was founded. The moment of its origin was in some measure propitious. It was while the strains of rejoicing on account of the Peace of Ryswick were resounding, on December 2nd, 1697, in the choir—then first opened for Divine service—of the new cathedral church of St. Paul, that "the zeal of severall persons of the best Character in and about ye Cities of London and Westminster" was working towards a new religious organization, which in the lull of warfare at the end of the century took shape as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge a society which, in furthering the "Gospel of Peace," tended to bring concord to all nations. The solemn thanks giving in St. Paul's yesterday for God's blessing on its two hundred years' labour, directs the attention naturally to its small beginnings.

THE SERVICE AT ST. PAUL'S.

The public commemoration of the founding of the society took place in London in threefold form—a celebration of the Holy Communion, with

sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a special service in the evening, with sermon by the Dean of Norwich, at St. Paul's, and a meeting at the Guildhall in the afternoon. The morning service at St. Paul's was in keeping with the quiet and unostentatious way in which the most venerable of our Church societies has carried on its work for the last 200 years. There were no special embellishments of any kind. The Archbishops and the Bishops present wore their ordinary Episcopal dress with black chimeres, and there was nothing special either in the order of the service or the music. Nevertheless, the service was rendered with all the dignity and reverence which always characterizes the high celebrations at St. Paul's, and the address of the Archbishop, as well as the solemnity of the choral celebration which followed, must have deeply impressed all present. The Archbishop of Canterbury, before whom the Primalial cross was carried by the Rev. G. S. Pownall, was attended by a transear, and was accompanied to the altar by the Archbishops of Rupertsland and Capetown. The colonial Archbishops were respectively gospeler and epistoler. After the Nicene Creed the Archbishop of Canterbury preached from St. Matthew xiii., 31, and two following verses

At the close of the sermon, the Archbishop and all the other prelates proceeded to the altar, where his Grace continued the service. There were a goodly number of communicants. During the administration the hymn, "Once, only once, and once for all," was sung.

THE MEETING AT GUILDHALL.

There was a large attendance at the afternoon meeting held at the Guildhall, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor. The proceedings were begun at three o'clock with prayer, offered by the Bishop of Marlborough. The hymn, "Thou, Whose Almighty Word," was then sung.

QUOTES FROM THE SPEECHES.

The Archbishop of Canterbury,—

I am quite certain that a very large number who have received very great blessings indeed in consequence of the operations of this society are altogether unconscious of the source from which those blessings have come under God. It is a society which, among the religious societies of this country, stands in the very first rank, as it goes back to be the earliest of them all. There were societies before of a religious kind—many local societies all over the country—but this is the first which really represented the whole Church of England, and from the beginning it has always worked for the whole Church. And with what wonderful success and with what wonderful blessing!

The great Society for the Propagation of the Gospel very often stands more conspicuously before men's eyes than this. The National Society we speak of every day, and we are coming across its work almost at every turn. And yet these two societies are only off-shoots of the great Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge undertook both those tasks in the beginning. It undertook to look to the Christianity of our kinsmen and fellow-countrymen in the colonies of the empire. It undertook to look to the heathen in those colonies. It undertook to look to the education of the children all over England, and it undertook to be constantly supplying a stream of admirable literature to encourage all who were willing to study the revelation made to us by God

The society began with the labours of five extraordinary men. There was one man who took the lead, but of whom I will answer for it very few in this country have heard: one man who gave himself entirely to the work and died in the doing of it, an incumbent of this very city, known well and known widely, but specially known among the citizens of London. He was the inspiring *animus* of the society in those days; but how completely has his work been hidden by its success. "The Society" has done all this, but the name of the man who did so much when the society began is hardly ever mentioned, and yet it would be difficult to find anyone who laboured more assiduously or more skillfully in the great task which he had undertaken, and it would be very difficult to name another man who could stand by the side of Dr. Bray and be compared with him. Such is the work of this society. It has, as it were, wound itself into the very life of the Church of England, and it still represents the true character of the Church.

The Lord Chancellor,—

I think it is not unimportant to show that some members of the laity as well as of the clergy recognize the inestimable benefits conferred upon this country by the society in whose honour we are met to day. I could not help thinking, while his Grace was speaking, that among the other effects of success, besides the obscuring of the names of the founders, there is the fact that perhaps one does not sufficiently appreciate the condition of things which existed at the time that this society was founded. We are all now enamoured of the name of education. There are few persons now who do not recognize the necessity of education of a religious character. But when I remember what his Grace has told us was the origin of this society, and when I look round at this crowded meeting