

BISHOP OF OXFORD ON THE HAWAIIAN MISSION.

A few words as to the mission itself. It seems to me that the great thing to ascertain with respect to our Christian missions is this:—Is the hand of God beckoning us as a Christian Church at this moment to this particular mission? There can be no doubt in any Christian man's mind as to our general duty respecting missions. That point was on one occasion clearly settled by that great man the Duke of Wellington. An argument arose at dinner table at which he was present, and a man was laughing in an ungodly and worldly way at the employment of missions abroad, when there were so many persons little better than heathens at home. Thinking the great, strong, masculine mind of the old Duke would be on his side, he said, "Is not that so, sir?" When the oracle spoke, to the great horror of the inquirer, the answer was; "I thought that had been settled from head-quarters. Did not our great commander-in-chief say to His disciples, 'Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' Does not that settle it for you?" (Cheers.) It is quite clear to every one who admits the truth of the Scriptures that the general duty cannot be shuffled off. The question before us is this—where ought we to go at this time?—where shall we have God's blessing if we do go? If this question is to be answered by the ordinary rule with which God's word supplies us, it must be answered in this way—that we should plant the Church of Christ in its completeness in the Sandwich Islands. (Cheers.) First, because we are invited there in a way in which it is impossible to conceive any invitation to be more direct and impressive. We are invited by the King and the leading chieftains of the islands. They ask us to come, because they say, what we now have does not reclaim our people. They will not adopt the form of Christianity which has been given to them. There is another form of Christianity bidding highly for them—Roman Catholicism from France. We do not believe that that form of religion is pure; yet our people are adopting it largely. Will you give us your Church, in all its perfectness of discipline, in its purity of doctrine, that we may be reclaimed at once and saved from a superstitious corruption of the truth. That invitation coming as it does, convinces me that it is a Providential call. Then look at the wonderful facilities we have in answering this call. In the first place, there is no persecution, but a welcome from the leading powers. In the next place, the minds of many of the people are prepared to receive our message, and there is a strong disinclination to those who are teaching a rival view of the common faith. Next the climate is remarkably suited to our own people. And next—what has sometimes been urged as a reason against it—that the number of the people makes it possible for us to look by comparatively easy exertions to bringing them into the Church. When we look at the hundreds of millions to whom missionaries are sent, it may be said, what can they do? It is like firing a single shot against a mighty fortification, whereas in the other case we can really through the native Government and the comparative paucity of the people, in the course of a few years reach the whole of them; and if God blesses us in the attempt we can make these islands a branch of our Christian Church. All these things are proofs of God's call. There are two others. There is no instance since the day of Pentecost of national conversion in which there has not been this preparation—that the leaders of the nation must have desired the introduction of the Church. It was so in Germany. It was so in France. It was so amongst ourselves: and if you go through history you will find this to be universal. Then, God having prepared this people's mind to desire it, is an intimation that He means us to do this work. (Hear, hear.) Once again. The time is short, and that is a call.