

examine his own motives, which, if the same proceed of ambition or of avarice, he may assure himself it cometh not of God, and therefore cannot have confidence of God's protection and assistance against the violence both of sea and infinite perils on the land. But if his motives," he adds, "be derived from a virtuous and heroical mind, preferring chiefly the honour of God, and compassion for those who are tyrannised in most wonderful and dreadful manner over their bodies and souls; and from a willingness to help those who in this realm are distressed; all these," he confesses, "be honourable purposes, imitating the nature of the munificent God, wherewith He is well pleased, who will assist such an action beyond the expectation of man." A similar testimony is pronounced, as we have before said, by another writer, in a report which he drew up of the same enterprise; and notwithstanding that some of the pleas advanced by him, are no doubt overstrained, yet it is certain that the main object which that "chief adventurer," as he is called, had in view, in this first attempt to plant a British settlement abroad, was the extension of Christian truth, by the extension of the Christian name.

Nor are these the only witnesses which remain, to tell us of the earnest aspirations which were felt, and which were expressed in that day, for the true welfare of England's first colony. There was a man named Richard Whitbourne, who stood as a spectator upon the shore of the chief haven which I have named in the island, at the very moment when Gilbert took possession of it on behalf of this country. He was at that time in command of an English vessel, which lay with many others in the harbour. Before, and many times after that period, he visited the same haven, in the exercise of his commercial calling: and, in the twelfth year of James the First, namely, the year 1615, he went out thither under a commission from the High Court of Admiralty, for the purpose of correcting certain disorders which had sprung up in the fishery. In the course of the same reign, he published a Discourse which is now extant,—though rarely to be met with—upon the history and character of the island. This work

is well worthy of notice on account of the curious and interesting matter which it contains with reference to the subject of which it professes to treat; but particularly do I cite it now for the testimony which it gives, as to the feelings with which the possession of that colony was at that day regarded by the temporal and spiritual rulers of our Church. It contains, at the outset, a copy of a letter from the Privy Council, accompanied with a reference from James the First to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, recommending to them that a copy of Whitbourne's treatise might be distributed throughout the several parishes of their provinces, for the encouragement of adventurers into the plantation, and also, that they should promote, in the most favourable and effectual manner collections to be made in all the same parishes, for the purpose of defraying the charges incurred in different ways by the writer in question. He himself also, as would appear abundantly evident, if we had time to cite the passages, never fails to present to his readers that which was certainly present to his own mind, namely, the obligations laid upon them all to promote, in a distant island, that knowledge of the truth which was the glory of their own Church and country. Let me refer only to two out of the many which occur to me. He says, in one place, of the savages of Trinity harbour, "If they might be reduced to the knowledge of the true Trinity, indeed, no doubt it would be a most sweet and acceptable sacrifice to God, an everlasting honour to their king, and the heavenliest blessing to those poor creatures who are buried in their own superstitions. The task thereof would prove easy, if it were but well begun, and seconded by industrious spirits. No doubt but God himself would set His hand to rear up and advance so holy, so pious, and so Christian a building." Again, in another place, where he is engaged in showing that the settlement or plantation in that island would be the means of bringing its poor misbelieving inhabitants "to the knowledge of God, and to the light of His truth, and to civil and regular government," he adds, "This is a thing so apparent, that I need not enforce it any further, or labour.