

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF SEAMEN.

(Continued from last week.)

Such then, in a few words, are the spiritual needs of the seamen, such his spiritual destitution. And what direct provision has been made for them by this Christian nation, of which they are, under God, the enrichers and natural defenders? Almost none. The large class of king's ships, it is true, are provided with chaplains, and not a few pious and benevolent captains, both in the navy and merchant services, have laudably endeavoured to bring their crews to the knowledge and practice of piety; but the habit of devotion cannot be effectually kept up, nor made lastingly profitable, unless, during that most dangerous of all the seasons of their life, their temporary sojournments upon shore, the duties of religion be impressed upon them with more than ordinary solemnity. Their habits are so peculiar, they are generally, so distinct from landsmen, both in appearance and notions, that it is easy to imagine the objections which disinclined them from resorting to our Churches, even where there is room (which is seldom the case) for their reception, and there was no very obvious method of supplying this defect: at length, however, the pious ingenuity of some, who well understood both the wants of seamen and their peculiarities, suggested the expedient of a floating place of worship. It must not be dissembled, that the first projectors and supporters of that measure were amongst our dissenting brethren, nor let them upon this or any other occasion be defrauded of the praise due to their Christian benevolence. If it be said, that the Established Church has moved more slowly in the same good work, let it be remembered, that it is not only natural but necessary that such a body should, in these matters, move with great caution and deliberation, and not till after due inquiry. But a movement has been made, and I congratulate you and myself, as presiding over this important diocese, as far as England is concerned, that it has first been made in the port of Liverpool. The example first set in the port of Dublin, and then of Liverpool, has not been lost upon other places. In more than one of the principal ports of England, measures have been taken, with the concurrence of the ecclesiastical authorities, to furnish seamen with the like opportunity of religious instruction and education. May the Lord prosper and carry forward the good work! But may we not reasonably expect from this highly favoured town, a larger, a far larger measure of countenance and support to our pious designs, than they have hitherto received? To what is it indebted for its unequalled prosperity? In the first place, to the kind providence of Him who is the Giver of all good gifts; in the second place, I will admit, to the enterprise and integrity of its merchants; but lastly, to the labors and perils of these brave men, the instruments of your commercial greatness, who now come before you as suppliants for that which, without impoverishing you, will make them rich indeed; if, in return for the earthly dross of gold and silver, which they are the means of pouring into your coffers, you will be instrumental in imparting to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. I am not aware of any objections to this undertaking which have not been refuted, either in the able report which has been read to us, or in the remarks which I have now made, one, alone, excepted; namely, that we are encouraging a spirit of fanaticism in seamen. No person is more opposed to fanaticism than the truly pious Christian; no person is more disposed to act according to the rules of sound prudence and wisdom; none more sensible of the mischiefs which result from the perverseness of human nature, mingling the ingredients of a corrupt reason and unholy passions in the pure matters of eternal life. It is with the express intention of preventing or counteracting fanaticism that we have opened a place of worship, where sailors may partake in the benefits of sound religious instruction and scriptural forms of worship. If there be any who suspect the tendency of such an institution towards fanaticism, I would invite them to attend it on the Lord's day, to witness the sobriety and serious demeanor of the congregation, their fixed and deep attention to the offices of devotion, the sound and practical instruction of their minister, and then let them say whether such proceedings can lead to any thing but good. As Bishop of the diocese in which this great seaport is situated, I do most sincerely deplore the prejudice which has existed against this society, and the com-

parative neglect with which it has been treated; this I say, not by way of reproach, but of earnest expostulation and friendly entreaty to the opulent inhabitants of this town, being satisfied that such neglect can only have proceeded from an entire misapprehension of the nature and objects of this institution for want of due inquiry. As to myself I wish to state distinctly my firm conviction, arising not only from serious consideration of the subject before the institution was formed, but from careful inquiry since, that it is worthy of all commendation and encouragement, and that its support is a duty incumbent upon the merchants and ship-owners of Liverpool. Anxiously do I hope that all who are here present will leave this assembly under a firm persuasion of the usefulness of this institution, and of the obligation in that case incumbent on themselves, not only to render it their own support but to do their best to dispel the prejudices which prevail against it, and to draw over many friends and contributors to the Marine's Church Society.

Mr. Gladstone, after having warmly advocated the cause on behalf of which his Lordship had so powerfully pleaded, seconded the motion.

Admiral Murray moved the third resolution—an expression of the sincere interest the meeting took in the objects of the institution.

The Rev. Mr. Buddicom seconded this motion. He said the very fact of the report having been adopted, that report having been read, and embracing and enforcing so strongly all the arguments that could be used in behalf of the society, he felt there was little occasion for his making any remarks; but yet having been privileged to be an attendant on the meetings of the committee, and feeling the warmest interest in their labors, he did himself the pleasure to give expression to his sentiments. The words of the resolution were, that the meeting feel deeply impressed by the importance of the objects of the society: He heartily hoped and trusted that this sentiment would be truly felt in the breasts of all present, that it would not be merely uttered or assented to by their lips. That man knows little of human nature, and has profited little by observation or experience, who doubts that men, in whatever station or circle their duties lie, will obey the obligations imposed upon them better from conscientious motives than from the mere habits of their occupation, or natural or instinctive impulse. Much has been said on the subject of the courage and endurance of the seamen, and it was a question, whether religious principle would augment or diminish these, would improve or deteriorate the valuable character of British seamen. The history of the British navy, in ancient and modern times, speaks with equal and irresistible force to this argument. We need only peruse the narratives of Franklin, of Parry, and Lyon, to see most luminously demonstrated the triumph of moral courage over animal vigour. In Franklin's narrative we read of the hardy Canadian sinking under those fatigues and privations which the British sailor, stimulated by moral and religious feeling, supported; and if we look into the Memoirs of Peppers, relative to the affairs of the British navy, in the time of Charles the Second and James the Second, we shall peruse an equally forcible lesson. Peppers describes the state of the navy, in its moral discipline, in the most woful terms; and it was then that the British navy suffered the greatest disgraces, feeble in power as it was lax in discipline and moral restraint. Contrast the navy then and now, and it will appear how intimately connected are habits of order, sobriety, and restraint, with warlike power; it will appear how important are the means here in consideration to promote the best interests of the navy as an arm of our power. But passing by temporal considerations, we must fix our attention on those that are eternal, and call to our recollection what should never be absent from it, the momentous importance of religion and moral propriety to the eternal state of man. Conventionally, until of very late times, the seamen has been altogether left out of such considerations; he has been put on a footing with the leper under the ancient law, cast out from all the humane considerations, as a natural outcast of society, in a religious point of view; because his profession, in some degree, withdrew him from the communion of religious worship, no effort was made to atone to him for this inevitable deprivation. But it is our duty, on the example of Christ, to seek out the outcast, and to constrain him