THE PROTECTOR
AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION: BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE."—Prov. xiv 34.

Vol. 1. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Wednesday, August 5, 1857. No. 23.

The Protector and Christian Witness,

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From the News of the Churches.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON INDIA.

Two discussions have taken place on the affairs of India during the last month, one in each House of the British Parliament, on subjects far more interesting to the religious community at home, and to the Christian world at large, than usually form the theme of India debates. In the House of Lords, a rumour of the Governor-General having subscribed to a missionary society, has drawn out the last relics, we fondly hope, of the thunder that, fifty years ago, used to reverberate with such sound and fury against the monstrous tendencies and frightful danger of missionary societies in India. The House of Commons has had a quieter and much less discreditable discussion, on a subject of very great interest, introduced by a petition from Bengal missionaries—the social condition of the cultivators of land in that Presidency. Whatever else they may indicate, both discussions attest the fact of Christian progress. They show that the element of Christianity is coming into contact both with the political and the social condition of India. The ameliorating influence of Christianity, which is not confined, and not meant to be confined, to individual souls, but to extend to all the relations of men, political, social, and domestic, is making its influence sensibly felt upon the springs of political and social activity. The matters of detail to which the discussions referred, may, for the time, be disposed of either one way or another; but no vote, whether of Lords or Commons, or Board of Control, or Legislative Council, can stem the advancing tide, of which, we fondly hope, these discussions are the signs.

The attempt to introduce the social system and civilisation of Europe into India would, in any circumstances, be a most interesting problem. The project is not a thing of yesterday. It dates so far back as the times of Alexander the Great. If any justification can be found for Alexander's unprovoked invasion of Persia, India, and other Asiatic countries, it is in the desire he is known to have cherished to fuse the nations of Europe and Asia into one, invigorating the feeble and languid races of the one by the intelligence and energy of the other. It is well known that Alexander found the problem surrounded with enormous difficulties; and that in his attempt to solve it, he accommodated himself to oriental ideas and usages, to a degree extremely offensive to his Macedonian officers and countrymen. The sudden death of the conqueror left the problem unsolved. After an interval of nearly twenty-two hundred years, another and much more remote European country, whose commanding position in India is a still greater wonder than the rise of Macedonia, finds itself engaged in working out the same problem, though in a very different way. For many years, the policy of Great Britain has been to conduct operations in India apart from religion. Instead of indicating any desire to change the religion of the country, the British rulers of India have been forward to convince the people of the reverse. Idolatry has been positively countenanced; money and soldiers have been furnished to do honour to idols and their festivals. But, step by step, it has been found necessary to recede from the position attempted to be maintained. The public patronage of idolatry has, after a long struggle, been abandoned. The religious practice of widow-burning has been prohibited by law. The old laws respecting the rights of widows, and the succession to property, founded though they were on religious considerations, have been changed. The railway, with its indiscriminating carriage, [illegible] Modern science, taught in all the Government schools and colleges, places the old notions of the Shastres in an attitude utterly ludicrous and indefensible. Apart from missionary teaching altogether, it has been becoming as clear as day that India cannot be made to share the civilisation of the West, and yet retain the superstitions of its fathers. All efforts to introduce into India the science, the social system, the political rights, the freedom, the intelligence of Great Britain, cut at the roots of the ancient religion. If the natives have even a shred of intelligence and foresight, they must see this clearly. The existence of missionary societies, and the labours of missionaries, may quicken their apprehensions, but are not the immediate source of them. The missionaries might be expelled, but Brahminism would not breathe much more freely. The Christian element, that underlies and penetrates the institutions of Great Britain, would still prove too powerful an antagonist to the Brahmins. It would not indeed be competent to the task of constructing, but it would be competent to that of destroying. It would not suffice to introduce a positive Christianity, but it would be sufficient to dry up the vital springs of Brahminism. Its influence would not be rapid, but it would be sure. It will, indeed, require much greater powers of persuasion than are possessed by British nobemen, to convince intelligent Hindus that the designs and doings of the British in India, apart from the missionary societies, bode no hurt or peril to its ancient religion.

When, therefore, Lord Ellenborough, in the House of Lords, holds up his hands in horror and consternation at the alleged fact of the Governor-General having subscribed to missionary societies in India, he strains at the gnat, when he has swallowed the camel. Supposing it to be true that Lord Canning has done so, what is there in the act essentially different, or likely to be viewed by the people as very different, from what Governors, and even Governors-General have long been accustomed to do? Has it not long been quite customary for some of them to attend at the examinations of missionary institutions, and give them their open sanction and encouragement? Have they not been laboring hard to promote the erection of European schools and colleges, where doctrines are taught that reduce the Shastres to the level of old wives' fables? Have they not been passing laws that declare some of the most solemn rites of Hinduism to be at variance with the first principles of justice and humanity, and therefore, worthy of destruction? Where is the great difference, whether in reality or in appearance, between the act of Lord Canning, and that of Lord William Bentinck, when he resolved that the English language should be the medium of instruction in Government colleges? or that of Lord Dalhousie, when he passed the measure for grants in aid of education, thereby directing a considerable share of the public funds into the coffers of the missionary societies? If there be any difference, it is rather in favor of Lord Canning than against him. These other acts are official, his Lordship's is private. The money he has given, or is said to have given, is from his private purse. Are the natives so dull as to be incapable of understanding the difference?

Lord Ellenborough indeed asserts, that a Governor-General can do nothing in his private capacity; all his actions are public and official. He is the only great man in India; others may think themselves great, but they are mistaken. All power is believed to be in his hands; and whatever he signifies a desire to see accomplished, the people believe is sure to be. This is the major proposition of Lord Ellenborough's argument—established, we doubt not, to his Lordship's entire satisfaction, while he himself was Governor-General of India. What a cruel thing it was for the Court of Directors to summon him from a position of such princely, almost Divine authority! No wonder their offence was unpardonable. But what is the minor proposition of the syllogism? The Governor-General subscribes to a missionary society—he shows the people of India that he desires them all to be Christians; therefore, as he desires it, Christians, one way or other, they shall all be forced to be. Rather smart logic this! Lord Canning wishes success to the quiet, persuasive endeavors of the missionary societies, therefore, he will use the most frightful compulsion to change the religion of the country. He encourages those holy and benevolent men who are trying to convince the understandings, and change the hearts of the people; therefore, he will countenance a terrific assault on the understandings and feelings of the native soldiers. He approves of the endeavors to win men by love; therefore he will range against them all the engines of fiery persecution. Did Lord Ellenborough forget that the Hindus are proverbial for their acuteness, when he represented them as sure to draw, from Lord Canning's alleged contribution, such monstrous inferences as these?

The Marquis of Lansdowne was almost betrayed into the extraordinary admission, that the alleged act of Lord Canning would be a sufficient ground, if found to be true, for recalling him from his office. He, indeed, ate up his words when Lord Ellenborough attempted to hold him to them, as much as to say, that though that might be his private opinion, it was not an opinion to which he could give official effect. He knew that it would be a proceeding which the public opinion of the country would not only not sanction, but strongly condemn, and even refuse to tolerate. Still, he indicated, clearly enough, the feeling of his own mind, and of politicians of his school. The race of politicians is not extinct that regard Christian missions as not only a fanatical crochet, but a crochet of the utmost danger to what they consider and call the really substantial interests of the country. A man in Lord Canning's position occupies a place of much difficulty. It is always difficult for an alien to rule a subjugated country. It is especially difficult for a Christian governor to rule a heathen country. In any circumstances, great circumspection and prudence must be necessary, and much precaution must be used against the scandalous perversion of the most simple acts. Lord Canning's position is rendered doubly difficult by his being exposed to such remarks, and such a spirit of criticism, as those of Lord Ellenborough. By the way, where were the Bishops when this assault, as it really was, on the objects of missionary societies needed to be repelled? Their absence or their silence may have been accidental; but it has long been remarked, that on such occasions as these, they are seldom to be found. At all events, our Christian readers will see, that if the Governor-General of India be disposed to encourage the missionary societies, he occupies a position of such difficulty as calls very loudly for their sympathies and their prayers.

The debate in the House of Commons turned on a petition from missionaries in Bengal, praying for a Commission to inquire into the social condition of the rural population of the Presidency, whom they represented as suffering greatly from the oppressions of the zemindars or landowners, from the remoteness of courts of justice, from unequal taxation, and defective protection of life and property. The motion for a commission was made by Mr. Kinnaird, seconded by Mr. Dunlop, but was negatived on a division, it being stated that the whole subject was under the consideration of the Indian Government. Very probably, this alleged consideration is the unacknowledged result of this petition. The subject was first brought under notice at the Conference of Bengal Missionaries, in a paper, by a member of the Conference, on the obstacles to the progress of missions arising from the zemindar system. The ryots, or labourers, are greatly under the influence of the zemindars; they suffer much oppression and injustice; their condition is, in all respects, most unfavorable; it has forced itself on the notice of the missionaries; and the present petition is the result. It is an interesting circumstance, that this subject has been brought forward by a body of Christian missionaries, whose attention has been forcibly drawn to it in the course of their labors. It shows how Christianity and social arrangements act and react upon each other. It such a cause. There are not wanting men to tell them to attend to their own business, and let *such* matters as these alone. There are not wanting, too, considerations that show the inexpediency of Christian missionaries or ministers throwing themselves prominently into agitations for political and social reforms, and the danger of their being tempted to forsake, in heart at least, what undoubtedly is their direct and proper work. On the other hand, it is very certain, that social obstructions to the progress of the Gospel are often so great, as well as so iniquitous in themselves, that every Christian man, and especially every Christian minister, is bound to raise his voice against them. Christianity, too, often appears in one of its most winning aspects, when it is seen in league with the oppressed and miserable, exerting its mighty energies for their emancipation and relief. Mankind generally are not far enough advanced in education, to be able sufficiently to appreciate a religion solely on the ground of the spiritual good which it brings. It is a great assistance to the masses, when visible and palpable physical benefits appear combined with spiritual blessings. To exhibit this combination in the clearest form, was one great object of the bodily cures which our Lord performed. The Church has now no other way of accomplishing that object, but by aiding in the promotion of salutary social improvements, or other works of temporal benevolence. Under the auspices of men so spiritually-minded as the Bengal missionaries, there is no great risk of such movements degenerating into mere secular or political agitations. The endeavor of the missionaries is a most interesting one, and in due time we hope to see it crowned with success.

FRANCE.

Paris, June 19, 1857.

The success of the different Protestant Associations, whose anniversaries were mentioned last month, must have been very great, for the Catholic press has denounced them with much more anger than heretofore. The Univers has even given a list of them, in order to excite the Romanists to organize similar ones; and, of course, this organ of Popery has seized so good an opportunity for libelling Protestantism, and throwing out the most invidious insinuations against it. Thus, it mentions the fact that our societies receive pecuniary help from England and America, in order to hint that there is nothing national in us, nothing patriotic, and that we are paid by foreign powers. It then adds: "The Government may be assured that the Catholic societies will not be affiliated to any foreign organization. None but French hearts will be found amongst their members."

This base insinuation has called forth the following answer from the *Revue Chretienne*, in its last Number:—"It becomes you well indeed to speak of your French heart in religious matters, and to decline an affiliation with foreigners, you, the Ultramontane party, whose principal dogma is an absolute submission to a foreign prince, for whatever concerns the Church. What are you but a society affiliated to a foreign power? There is nothing national in you; your affections, the objects of your admiration are on the other side of the Alps; *there* is your centre of light and of truth; there, piety according to your own heart; so much so, that you spurn with a holy horror every one of the national traditions of your Church. Do not, therefore, look for the mote in your brethren's eye, when you have a beam in your own. It is precisely this affiliation with foreigners, this Italian Christianity, which has but two articles of belief—the Pope and the Virgin; and but one article of morals—blind obedience to Rome,—which excites against you an increasing repulsion. Do not attribute to anything else the severe lessons which have been inflicted upon you, in the countries which seemed especially to belong to you, and in which you had long ago proclaimed your victory. You do not know, Ultramontanes, with what indignation and hatred the hearts of men are filled in reference to you. What with your claims to universal domination, your insolent challenge to conscience, your apocryphal miracles, your Saint Cupertins, and your Virgins of La Salette,—you are hastening on to your ruin!"

The allusion in the above to the Virgin of *La Salette* will be easily understood, as we have often spoken of this supposed miracle. It is the more actual, because the tribunals have lately had to take a decision in reference to it. The Abbes Deleon and Carteller having published pamphlets, in which they maintained that the apparition of the Virgin on Mount La Salette was a fable, the supposed virgin being no other than Mdlle. Lamerliere, an eccentric nun, who delighted in running about in a strange attire,—this lady, urged on by the Jesuits, cited the two abbes before the tribunal, complaining that she had been calumniated and defamed. The judges, fearing the scandal for the Church, have not allowed the proceedings of the court to be made public, but they have given a verdict in favour of the defendants, declaring that there was neither calumny nor defamation. This, of course, will not prevent the priests from continuing the imposture so long as any shall be found credulous enough to pay them. The water of La Salette, said to cure most diseases, is still on sale, and the originators of the whole plot realize large profits.

Saint Cupertin, who is also alluded to above, is a new saint, whose name has been made very popular through the distinguished patronage of the *Univers*. This very clever and holy man, who lived in a small town of Italy, is affirmed to have possessed, amongst many other wonderful talents, the power of remaining suspended in the air for hours at a time. His feet rested upon the earth with reluctance; and his ascensions were so frequent, that "it is impossible to say whether he lived more upon or above the earth."

This and similar incongruous and absurd fables, including dozens of miracles, were published as the truth by a paper which pretends to be serious; and they naturally exercise a very marked influence on the risible faculty of the French. For some days, Saint Cupertin, the nimble juggler, was the talk everywhere. The daily papers took up the matter; some joked, whilst others scolded. The *Journal des Debats* and the *Siecle* especially, contained most severe articles, complaining that such nonsense should be published in the name of religion, and declaring that if Christianity could be shaken, it would certainly be by the blows dealt against it by such writers.

One might suppose that so general a reprobation would have cured the Ultramontanes, or taught them, at least, to keep their saints and miracles to themselves, instead of throwing these holy things to heretical dogs. Not so, however. Scarcely has the clamour against Saint Cupertin subsided, than a new saint is proclaimed. This time it is a lady, *Sainte Colette*, who lived in a convent of the Jura Mountains, some four hundred years ago, and there "wrought one of the most extraordinary miracles ever heard of since the apostolic ages." Being away on business to the neighbouring town of Besancon, it was revealed to her that a nun of her convent had just died, in consequence of a sin which *she had not confessed*, so that her doom would have been sealed at once amongst the damned, had not the Holy Virgin obtained a delay of some hours. Thus divinely instructed, Saint Colette returned immediately to the convent, addressed the corpse in the name of Christ, and brought it back to life. The nun, having risen again, got out of her coffin, confessed her sin to a priest, received the absolution, thanked the saint for thus saving her from eternal damnation, then re-entered her coffin, and, being ready for heaven, died a second time.

I must be excused for occupying the columns of the *News* with such fables. I am, however, obliged to mention them, in order to give an idea of the spiritual food furnished by Popery to its ignorant adherents in this country at the present time. Alas! alas! that millions

The Pope's Prerogative Usurped.—On Ascension Day commences the annual festival at Argenteuil, of the tunic without seam worn by our Lord. It is advertised to remain exhibited for the veneration of the faithful until Whit-Monday, when it will be carried in solemn procession around the parish. After mass during the nine days, the special prayer in honour of the holy coat will be used. Plenary indulgence is attached to the devout who visit on certain days this wonderful relic, whose claims are thoroughly established by its having cured miraculously several sick pilgrims, miracles acknowledged authentic by the Bishop of Lausanne and Geneva! All this within half-an-hour of Paris.

All medals, however, and *all* indulgences, are not to be trusted, nor all mass books either! The Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons has been moved to draw up a circular, warning the faithful against "vile speculators," who have dared to usurp the Holy Father's prerogative, and make a promise of 1080 days' indulgence on certain conditions to those who wear a certain medal! Now, this medal is false, and the indulgences are false; they are both condemned at Rome! The fact is, that it is a sort of spiritual piracy of the Pope's monopoly. Holy Mother Church may, with decency and order, speculate on her children's purgatorial tortures; but for another to enter the trading field, and help to reap her golden harvest, *no*, that is sacrilege; she has taken out her patent, and woe to him who imitates her. "All means seem good," says my Lord de Bonald, "to that shameless cupidity which uses things sacred and things profane in its guilty speculation! False indulgences, false prophecies, false prayers, false miracles,—even sacrilegious tricks, condemned and rejected by the Church, enter into the criminal plan of the speculator, to insure his success. The faithful must be warned against the frauds of certain traders in pious articles." Should they not be warned against the Mother and Mistress of all such traders, patented or no?

"Mine's a Religion for all Weathers."—There's a fishing village on the coast of Cornwall, where the people are very poor, but pious and intelligent. Last year they were sorely tried. The winds were contrary, and for nearly a month they could not go to sea. At last, one Sabbath morning, the wind changed, and some of the men whose faith was weak went out toward the beach, the women and children looking on sadly, many sighing with sighs, "I'm sorry its Sunday, but,—if we were not so poor."

"But if," said a sturdy fisherman, starting up and speaking aloud, "surely neighbours, are your buts and ifs to break God's law?"

The people gathered round him, and he added, "Mine's a religion for all weathers, fair wind and foul. 'This is the love of God, that ye keep His law. 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' That's the law, friends. And our Lord came not to break, but to fulfil the law. True, we are poor; what of that? Better poor and have God's smile, than rich and have his frown. Go you that dare; but I never knew any good come of a religion that changed with the wind."

These words in season stayed the purpose of the rest. They went home and made ready for the house of God, and spent the day in praise and prayer. In the evening, just when they would have been returning, a sudden storm sprung up, that raged terribly for two days. After the tempest came settled weather, and the pilchard fishery was so rich and abundant, that there was soon no complaining in the village. Here was a religion for all weathers. Remember the words, "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed."

Laws of Health from the Bible.—Dr. Hall, in his *Journal of Health* for May, speaking of the importance of building houses in such a manner as to protect the inmates, refers as follows to the Bible:

"There is more sound practical hygiene, on this subject of healthy houses, in the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus, from verse thirty-four, than in all the skulls of all the health commissioners and common councils of all the cities of Christendom."

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

The sittings of the Free Church Assembly commenced on Thursday, the 21st of May. The Rev. Dr. M'Crie, Moderator of the last General Assembly preached from 1 Peter i. 25,—"The word of the Lord endureth for ever." Dr. M'Crie, as not now being a minister of the Free Church, but of the English Presbyterian Church, could not constitute the Assembly. The roll being made up, the Assembly proceeded to appoint its Moderator. Dr. Henderson proposed Dr. James Julius Wood, of Dumfries. The proposal being adopted unanimously, Dr. Wood was introduced, and took the chair. He then addressed the Assembly. He drew a contrast between the first year of the Disruption Church and the position she has now attained in all her departments of enterprise. He also adverted to the influence exerted by the Free Church movement on Churches beyond her pale.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

The Report on the Sustentation Fund for the ministry, which was read by Dr. Candlish, in the absence of Dr. Buchanan from ill health, showed that the whole sum collected for the year was £108,638 4s. 5d., or about £460 more than in the previous year. In consequence of a larger proportion of this money having been received than usual, from extension charges, whose subscriptions are returned to them, and form, therefore, an apparent, though not a real increase, and also in consequence of the increased number of ministers appointed to established charges, the dividend had to be made somewhat lower than last year, notwithstanding the small addition to the aggregate fund. Dr. Candlish read a tabular statement, showing the marked and steady increase of the congregations, at the lower end of the scale,—a fact that he regarded as of very great importance. He held the practise of monthly returns to be so essential, that he would deny a share in the Sustentation Fund to the minister whose congregation did not make a monthly return. The whole income of the Church for the past year amounted to £308,875 0s. 3½d., being about £800 more than the revenue of the previous year.

The Report from the Debt Extinction Committee stated, that "the sum (£50,000) necessary for entitling the Assembly to declare the Fund constituted, and to call in the subscriptions, had now been subscribed. But to provide for the contingent losses of a subscription payable over a period of five years, a further sum of about £500 would be necessary. Estimating what has been done by congregations clearing off their own debt, there cannot have been less than £100,000 subscribed for extinction of debt since 1854." The Committee hoped, that before the lapse of five years, the whole debt of the Free Church would be cleared off. Mr. Handyside read the Report of the Church Building Committee. The entire sum at the disposal of the Committee last year was £5103 16s. 11d., and there was a balance at present in hand of £2208. The total number of grants made by the Committee was stated to be twenty-five.

A discussion took place in reference to the calling and election of ministers. A committee was appointed to take the various suggestions on this subject into consideration. The chief difficulty regarded the power of congregational majorities to coerce minorities. The general impression appeared to be [illegible]

An interesting case, connected with Gaelic preaching, was brought before the Assembly, by an appeal from the Gaelic congregation at Rothesay. The Presbytery had authorized the preaching of an English sermon at one of the Sabbath services. Against this resolution a portion of the congregation appealed to the Assembly. The Rev. A. M'Bride stated the complaint. He contended that the constitution of the church in question entitled the Highlanders in Rothesay to full service in Gaelic, and that their circumstances made it a matter of necessity. The strong feeling which prevailed in the congregation against the introduction of English was shown by the fact that, on the first occasion of its being used, the minister had seen it necessary to procure the attendance of police officers in the church. The complainants from the congregation not being able to speak in English, Mr. Wilson, of Rothesay, with consent of the Assembly, addressed the Assembly for them. He argued the importance of continuing the Gaelic services, on the ground that the church in question is really the Gaelic church for the whole of Bute, which ought not to be deprived of it in order to hand it over to the English-speaking population. The Rev. Hugh Mackay, for the Presbytery, denied that there is any constitution for the Gaelic church of Rothesay. He contended that the change of services was called for by the change of circumstances. Dr. Candlish moved that the appeal be sustained, and the sentence of the Presbytery reversed. This motion was carried by a majority of 74 to 44.

MISSIONS.

Dr. Hanna gave the Report of the Home Mission Committee. The Committee had under its care sixty-six preaching stations throughout the country, over which they watch with an anxious interest. The great encouragement met with by the Evangelistic deputations sent out to populous and necessitous districts during last summer, was adverted to. Of this, most interesting illustrations were given, from the reports of the deputies. This year, already eighty-three ministers had agreed to be engaged in this work. In conclusion, he tendered his resignation, as convener, which was received with much reluctance.

Mr. M'Lauchlin gave in the Report of the Highland Committee. He congratulated the Assembly upon the improved state of the funds. He dwelt upon the want of obtaining suitable preachers in the Gaelic language, and stated that means were being taken to prepare young men specially for this sphere of usefulness. He alluded to the neglected state of the increasing Highland population in our large towns, and stated, as an ascertained fact, that many Popish proprietors in the Highlands were quietly removing the Protestant population, and introducing Papists in their stead.

Dr. Roxburgh read the Report of the Glasgow Evangelization Committee. He stated that the mission stations in Glasgow under this Committee now amounted to thirteen, five of which had ripened into regular charges. The total number of adherents at all the stations was about 5600.

Mr. Bonar presented the Report of the Colonial and Continental Committee, and verbally explained the extent of the Church's labours in the field. The income for the Colonial Scheme had been £4073, and the expenditure, £4063. The income for the Continental Scheme, with the balance of last account, was £1044, and the expenditure, £929. In Canada, Mr. Bonar stated that, whereas in 1844 the Church had only 23 ministers, there were now 8 Presbyteries, and 125 ministers. There were under the jurisdiction of the Synod, 150 churches possessed of not less than £100,000 worth of property. These churches contributed upwards of £30,000 to well digested schemes of Christian enterprise. They had lately sent a foreign missionary of their own to Bengal. They had also a Theological College, with an attendance of 60 students. In Australia there were now 40 or 50 ministers connected with the Synods associated with the Free Church. In New Zealand there were now 14 Presbyterian ministers, 11 of whom belonged to the Free Church. There were now 3 Presbyteries in that island, and the Presbytery of Otago had recently sent for 3 additional ministers, and 9 additional teachers, to be sent out and supported at their own expense. In reference to the rapidly increasing demand for laborers, Mr. Bonar stated, that last year 30 or 40 laborers seemed, in some degree, to meet the necessities of the field, this year 50 or 60 had already been expressly demanded. Mr. Bonar concluded by introducing the Rev. Mr. Campbell, from Natal, South Africa, who addressed