

have to blame ourselves for rashness and fool hardiness in undertaking a work and encountering dangers, to which God had not called us. We have endeavoured to look at this matter with all the light that we possess, and with due calmness. We do feel that one error has been committed in the management of the Mission, to which we shall hereafter advert. But after all that has yet taken place, we have no hesitation in expressing our decided conviction, that as far as the occupation of Erromanga as a mission field is concerned, the Church and Mr. Gordon were perfectly justified in what they have done. Mr. Gordon's heart had long been set on that island as a field of labour, and he had made it the subject of many prayers. When therefore he arrived there, and found the way open for a settlement, while other fields to which the Church had looked seemed closed, scarcely any other conclusion could be adopted, than that the Great Head of the Church was pointing to that as his destined sphere of labours. And though undoubtedly dangers were to be apprehended, yet those dangers were, *so far as any human eye could see*, only such as the first missionaries were exposed to on other islands, where the gospel has reaped its richest harvests. We believe that when the Missionaries of the London Society landed on Tahiti—when the Wesleyans landed on the Fijis,—when Mr. Geddie landed on Aneityum, or Messrs. Paton and Copeland on Tana, their situations was to all human appearance nearly, and in some instances quite as dangerous as Mr. Gordon's, when he landed on Erromanga. That the result has been different must be ascribed to the inscrutable purpose of Him, who "doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." The course of events since Mr. Gordon landed, amply confirms this opinion. For more than three years he laboured among the people, with no greater perils than the Missionaries on some other islands of the South Seas have encountered. Indeed we question if he did not suffer more personal violence at the hands of the Irish Romanists of Halifax, while labouring as a city missionary there, than he did during these three years from the savages of Erromanga. There was thus time amply sufficient to show, that as far as safety was concerned, the Church was entirely warranted in the step she took. And when we add that the last sad event was not the result of any thing in the ordinary or normal state of affairs there, but that the immediate occasion of it was an extraordinary dispensation of divine Providence—something entirely apart from the original state of things there, and what no human sagacity could have foreseen, viz., very remarkable ravages of disease and death among the natives, we think we have enough to show, that though the result has been so sad, we have no cause of reproach in having occupied Erromanga as a mission field. We believe after all that has happened, that the Church but followed the leadings of Divine Providence, and that now she has to accept the event as a dispensation of his hand and to seek to profit by it accordingly.

But when Mr. Gordon saw that his life was in danger in remaining longer on the island should he not have left? We know that in some instances the Apostles and modern Missionaries, when their lives were in danger, sought safety by removing to other spheres of usefulness; and that, in so doing, they but followed the directions of their Master. We doubt not that there will be many among that extremely numerous class in the world who are very wise after the event, who may be disposed to conclude that Mr. Gordon should have followed a similar course. But we are persuaded that every intelligent Christian, who examines the whole circumstances, will say, that matters were not in such a position on Erromanga that he would have been warranted in so acting. The Apostles and modern Missionaries have felt themselves called to