

for Christ's sake and the Gospel, ready like those brave Jesuits who first worked in Canada among the Indians, to become one with the people they are sent to teach, ready to share the roughness of their life and diet, if only they can win them for their Master. Until by God's grace and mercy we can secure missionaries of this type, consumed with such desire for their Master's sake, our pioneer efforts out here, will, I fear, prove as fruitless of solid Christian converts as our woefully expensive mission efforts in Africa, India and New Zealand.

The late Bishop Douglas, of Bombay, realized this so strongly in the case of India that, so long as fourteen years ago, he appealed to the earnest Christians of England through the then Archbishop of Canterbury, to find him some men of that character, and suggested missionary brotherhoods as offering the best nursery for such self-devotion, and the most efficient method for giving consistency and an organism to self-sacrifice. He lamented the fact that the idea of self-sacrifice was almost driven out of the English Church. He attributed its loss to the strong revulsion of feeling which arose in men's minds at the time of the Reformation when their souls were sickened with the abuses of the monastic system. "Not content," said he, "with correcting abuses and purging out corruption, or even with abolishing the orders, we went to the limits of the opposite extreme, and so far at any rate as body and outward system is concerned we got rid of sacrifice." This he looked upon as a terrible disaster to the Church, especially in her missionary efforts and among a people who could not believe in the earnestness of a religion without asceticism or sacrifice. He then implored men to come out not for what he could give them but in answer to the Master's call "to leave all and follow Him." These were his memorable words: "I do not ask for monks, but for men who will forsake all for Christ's sake. I ask for a brotherhood of men who will turn their backs once and forever upon the world, and who, seeking only Christ and His cause, will go wherever the Church sends them, and do whatever the Church bids them, as soldiers obey their King, counting not even life dear, if they may run a course, noble while it lasts, and leading them in the footsteps of that Lamb whom they will follow whithersoever He goeth."

Other thoughtful, devout men of a very different theological school from the late bishop just quoted have recognized the urgent need there is in our Church of more entire dedication to religion.

Even Archdeacon Farrar, a churchman of the broadest type, said in a sermon at Westminster Abbey for the Bishop of London's Fund, July 21st, 1884, when considering the problem how to grapple with the sin and heathenish ignorance of the vast population of England's large towns. "There is needed a new order of mission clergy, consecrated, not by earthly, irrevocable vows, but by mighty self-sacrifice, and by the hands of invisible consecration to celibacy and poverty—the celibacy and the poverty not as now, compulsorily imposed, which

eat into men's souls like fire, but humbly accepted in voluntary response to the call of God." (Church Eclectic, vol. xiii, page 1081.)

(To be continued.)

## GIBBON AND PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

IT is impossible to read the history of early Christianity, and its struggles with the world, without coming to the conclusion that its rapid development was something altogether phenomenal. Never before had history to grapple with such a problem, and when Gibbon set himself to the task of writing the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* he found himself face to face with this very question. Always anxious to travel out of his way in order to give a quiet sneer at Christianity, or to represent it in the worst possible light, he nevertheless is obliged to notice its phenomenal growth and extending influence upon the times embraced by his great work; and the five reasons given by him in the fifteenth chapter of the first volume of that work seem to us on the whole, even from his own standpoint, complimentary to the religion for which he evidently did not entertain too much respect. He attributes its rapid growth in the first place to the "inflexible and intolerant zeal of the Christians." Now considering that this zeal was directed against idolatry and the worst forms of degraded superstition, necessity demanded of it that it should be inflexible and intolerant. The Christianity of early days was vigorous and uncompromising. Hence its success. It would be well for it if some of the old inflexible zeal could come back again. An unbelieving historian thus reluctantly pays a high tribute to the powers of Christianity. It is the revival of those powers that we wish to see in the present day. It is the true missionary spirit. If a Christian begins to preach the Gospel in China, or India, or Africa, he finds that the only course left open for him is to cry conversion from the dead works that he sees around him to the living faith which he feels within him. This is his "intolerant zeal." Would to God that we had more of it!

The second reason for the success of Christianity as given by Gibbon, is the belief of the Christians in a future life, "improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth." Whatever the latter part of the above sentence may mean, it is certainly a worthy cause for the successful growth of a religion that, while not ignoring the present life, it fixes its brightest and most glowing hopes upon the future. It showed how ready was the human mind, especially in the dark days of oppression and hollow-heartedness of the declining Roman empire, to grasp the solid hope and "important truth" of a life to come. The great Missionary Apostle, St. Paul, put it well when he said, "If in this life only we have hope we are of all men most miserable."