

unwonted efforts which have of late years been made for extending the blessing of religious education throughout the ignorant and neglected districts of our northern population, and for bestowing on overgrown parishes the privilege of regular Gospel ministrations, and an edifying and efficient parochial superintendence—efforts which have, in various instances, been blessed with a spiritual revival, not less remarkable than it is gratifying to the pious heart; the zealous exertions which have been made to relieve the spiritual wants of our expatriated countrymen in Canada and Australia, and which, although attended with difficulties and discouragements, continue still unrelaxed, and promise ultimately to produce the most important consequences; the impression already made on the vast regions of heathen India, and the enlarging prospect of success, under the labours of your enlightened and zealous missionaries, which we are privileged to entertain; and lastly, the measures adopted by the preceding General Assembly, and sanctioned by you for the important object of enlightening and converting the people of Israel, once so high, favoured, and still reserved for a glorious destiny—measures which have been so judiciously followed up by your committee, and which seemed only wanting to comprehend all the great objects of missionary enterprise that a christian church can embrace, at home and abroad—these varied, important, and successful exertions of christian benevolence, at once display a principle of spiritual life and vigour in the church, and afford an evidence that the Saviour's blessing rests upon its labours. Nor can I omit to notice other transactions of this venerable court, which evince the same spirit of christian benevolence. The zeal with which you have seconded the efforts made by some of our inferior courts as well as by associations and private individuals, for checking the fearful progress of Sabbath desecration within the bounds of the church—the testimony you have borne against the unspeakable atrocities of the slave trade, with which unhappy Africa is still cursed, and to which, after all the efforts that have been made to abate its horrors, near half a million of her wretched inhabitants continue to fall a yearly sacrifice, and under the effects of which the whole population—a hundred millions of immortal souls—are sunk in hopeless barbarism; and the anxiety you have shewn to countenance and support the Presbyterian churches of England, Ireland, and America, which have claimed your aid or craved your friendly co-operation—your solicitude, I say, and your judicious intervention in regard to these important objects, are worthy of your character as a church of Christ, and entitle you to the gratitude of your fellow-creatures.

Fathers and Brethren! While it is doubtless both useful and gratifying to call to remembrance the gracious dealings of our Divine Head towards our ecclesiastical Establishment, in the protection he has bountifully vouchsafed, and the Christian spirit he has been pleased to infuse, a more painful task re-

mains to be performed. The Church is still beset with difficulties, and troubled on every side: "without are fightings, and within are fears." Nevertheless, we are comforted with the undoubting conviction, that the combined efforts of Papists, Dissenters, and Infidels, which are the natural consequences of the awakening and increasing spirit of Christian devotedness within the walls of our Zion, are but one of the means which her heavenly king employs still farther to excite the faithfulness of her members, and to purify her from remaining corruption. Rest assured that so long as she proceeds in a course of spiritual improvement—so long as, with humble prayer and unflinching fortitude, she perseveres, through good report, and through bad report, in rectifying abuses, in removing obstacles, in stirring up Christian virtues and graces, in affording new means of religious instruction and missionary enterprise, at home and abroad, and in zealously "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints," "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The Heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; worldly politicians may combine with ambitious sectaries to plot her destruction; but He that is for her is greater than all that can be against her. She will rise more graceful and more mighty from the conflict, and will discover in future, as she has experienced in times past, that the fire of persecution, while it consumes her bands and enables her to walk more freely and more firmly, shall not pass upon herself to injure her; for the Son of God will walk with her in the midst of the furnace: and the more intensely the flame glows, only so much the more shall she be warmed and enlightened, melted and purified.

Right Reverend and Right Honourable,—I cannot conclude without reminding you that additional faithfulness and devotion to the cause of our Divine Master are required of us. While the frame-work of our Church, being founded on the Word of God, and beautifully adapted to the important purposes of parochial instruction and spiritual edification, is worthy of admiration, and deserves all your zeal, such are the evil dispositions with which it has to deal, such the weakness of the human instruments by which its functions are exercised, and such, also, the inadequacy of its provisions for supplying the spiritual wants of a rapidly increasing population, that much lamentable defection prevails among its members, much lukewarmness, many corrupt practices, much open profligacy. These require to be restrained and corrected with a paternal hand. On you, Fathers and Brethren, this important task devolves; and my earnest prayer for you is, that, on returning to your respective parishes, you may carry along with you a portion of that quickening spirit, which your important labours, while assembled in this place to consult and provide for the spiritual welfare of our much-loved country, were calculated, if prosecuted in a devotional frame, to cherish in your hearts. To all of you high interests are entrusted by our Spiritual Head,