

pensation of God's Providence, and to glance at some of the impressions which, as such, it is fitted to produce.

The long protection which our Missionaries in the South Seas have enjoyed, has perhaps rendered the Church easy concerning their safety, and left us unprepared for this event. Perhaps too we have not had a sufficient sense of the divine care so long exercised over them. At all events this has come upon us unexpectedly. And yet it is an event, the possibility of which the Church ought always to have kept in view, and for which we ought to have been prepared. Christ warned his disciples in sending them forth for the conversion of the world, that they must not only expect to encounter opposition and trial in the work, but that they should be prepared to suffer even unto death for his sake and the gospel's, "Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves." "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death and the father the child." "Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth Gods service." The history of the Church in every age has shown that this *may* be the fate of the most zealous of God's servants. The preaching of the gospel had scarcely begun when a persecution arose, in which one of its most energetic champions, as well as others less known, were called to seal their testimony with their blood. And the persecution about Stephen was soon followed by a second, in which one of the very chiefest apostles, as well as others were called to receive the martyr's crown. We know that others of the twelve, and it is generally believed that most of them, ended their earthly career in a similar manner. We need not refer to the numbers that, previous to the triumph of Christianity over the Paganism of the Roman Empire, perished by sword or flame, or the still greater number, who in the struggles of revived Christianity against Popery, at the era of the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, poured forth their blood like water for their faithfulness to the Saviour. In the great missionary movement of the nineteenth century, the protection extended by the governments of Christian countries to Missionaries labouring in heathen lands, has commonly preserved them from any extensive slaughter. But yet even in our own day there are instances sufficient to teach us that the heralds of the cross must jeopard their lives on the high places of the field, not only by pestilence and famine, but also by the hands of their fellow men. The massacres of the Christians in Madagascar, the martyrdom of so many missionaries during the mutiny in India, the murder of Lowrie by pirates in China, the fall of the lamented Graham in the streets of Damascus, the death of Williams and Harris on Erromanga, the slaughter of Missionaries by Indians in the far West, the hanging of faithful ministers in the Southern States, who have dared to lift up their voice on behalf of the slave, and now the massacre of our own Gordon and his wife, admonish us that Satan's enmity against the servants of God reaches even to the danger of their lives, and that God *may* permit him to accomplish his end, designing doubtless to overrule it for the divine glory.

It is unquestionably the duty of the Church and her missionaries to avail themselves of every lawful means that Providence sets before them, for their safety. It can never be our duty to rush heedlessly into danger; and the example of Christ and his apostles, shows that it may be the duty of Missionaries to provide for the safety of their lives by a change of the scene of their labours. "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." And now that this mournful catastrophe has taken place, it becomes us seriously to enquire, whether we have suffered thus, while in the way of our duty and while following the guidance of divine Providence, or whether we