

Speech of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury

IN PROMISING AND MOVING THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
APRIL 22, 1855.

The Most Reverend CHAIRMAN, who was hailed with cheers on rising, spoke as follows:—It gives me great pleasure to be here to-day. I have come from the country on purpose to be here; and, at the same time, I have to regret very much that I must undertake a task which was not originally intended for me. The adoption of this Report was to have been moved by the eloquent Bishop of Exeter, and although we are all satisfied that he in doing his duty is relieved by being thus to-day, we cannot but regret for ourselves that we are missing an opportunity of hearing him put in his own magnificent language such remarks to scenes and events as have marked the Society's history this year, remarkable as it is for the greatness of its enterprise and for the vastness of the scale upon which it proposes to go forward. If this Society proceeds as it has begun it must become very great indeed. The work appears to me, from all I can learn about it—and I have studied the Report very carefully—to be done in a thorough, steady, earnest, progressive way, and I am sure that the Spirit of the Lord is animating those who are doing such work under such great difficulties. (Hear, hear.) Beginning modestly, and having so vast an enterprise before us, if we only will possess the spirit of prayer, and live in the faith that God will give great things into the hands of those who trust Him, we may believe that the work of this Society will be one of the greatest hereinafter that shall have been accomplished in the history of the promotion of Christianity. (Cheers.) The various scenes of the labours of this Society are extraordinarily picturesque. We have upon this platform the presence of those who stretch out their hands, as it were, from the very beginning of the Society to this day, and whose work in the past, and whose state of preparation for work in the future, present together wonderful scenes in the Society's life. We have here Admiral Boscawen (cheers), who found the bodies of Allen Gardiner and his devoted crew, who was well acquainted with the early history of the Mission, and assisted in planting it. Admiral Selwyn, too, is here (cheers); and we have also Mr. Hood (cheers), who is about to step into the dangerous place vacated by the lamented death of Mr. Lockyer. The Bishop of the Falkland Isles is a person round whom, as chief agent of this work, our interests centre. The Bishop of the Falkland Isles! A little spot in geography, but his church in South America, all but British Guiana, just as if there were a bishop of the Isles of Scilly, who had the episcopal care of the whole continent of Europe. One of the first picturesque associations of this day is what we have heard about the "Allen Gardiner." To Admiral Marsden I am sure it must come with a strange, thrilling feeling to think that he whose memorials he brought away more than that sad and most devoted mission field has, as it were, invested—and will, I trust, for generation after generation invest—with the interest of his own, and with the living spirit of his influence, the land for which he died. This little vessel, whose adventures are told in the Report—told so graphically by the Bishop—is a living Allen Gardiner to Terra del Fuego.* Such a region! I recollect that my first acquaintance with it began upon a headland in Scotland, where I was reading Peinners Cooper's "Sea Lions," and the description of Cape Horn and the natives filled my imagination upon the wild headland where I was just at that moment. It is among the inhabitants of that wonderful region that the work of this Society began; and we have been hearing of the immense call for teachers, and the field that is opening out at the other end of this little diocese of the Falkland Isles, where a marvellous work is in progress at the Isthmus of Panama. This Society would have great claims on the public, and on their liberality, if all that was known about it was that it was the only Church of England agency which attempts to deal with either the heathen or the Christians in South America. But also this Society touches so many points of general interest that we have additional ground for encouragement. When we think that it drew the attention of Charles Darwin, and made him, in his pursuit of the wonders of the Kingdom of nature, realise that there was another Kingdom just as wonderful and more lasting (hear, hear); and when we think that it drew his earnest support

* The voyage in question was made in the "Messenger," a 10-ton cutter, especially intended for the Bishop's use at the Falkland Islands.—Ed.

and his gratitude towards the Mission, that alone—to have drawn the attention of so great a man of science to this subject, occupied with such different things, and to have obtained from him that opinion which we are all familiar with as often quoted—in a wonderful thing to have done for the whole cause of missions. (Hear, hear.) Another greatly interesting fact about this work is what we have been listening to with respect to the Argentine Republic, and all that Colonel Lannere has been doing. His last word is "civilisation." For a long time past we in England, and the Anglo-Saxon peoples that belong to us, have been carrying what we call "civilisation" to the ends of the earth, and a very happy-go-lucky affair in many an instance have we made of it. To us it ought to come with a great feeling of shame that this Argentine Republic is moving about civilisation with some understanding of what it really is—that is, setting clearly before itself what are the great aims to be gained. When we think of the territory that we have ourselves acquired by fire-water, and the unscrupulous way in which we have possessed ourselves of territory after territory—I may almost say of continents after continents, of river after river—by doing the poor unhappy natives with fire-water, we must admit that it is a great thing to see the Argentine Republic putting forth, as one of its regulations, that everything in which the Indians are concerned is to be conducted with the same strict honour as towards the white man, and that there is to be no sale of spirituous liquors under any circumstances. (Cheers.) When, also, we think to our shame that there are Indian tribes with whom the name "white man" is the one that they use for "har," when we reflect upon such an awful fact as that, told to me the other day by the Bishop of Minnesota, we must indeed feel full of hope for the future work in South America now that the Argentine Republic is ready to help, saying that there shall be no profit from the making of human beings drunk for the first time in their lives, and then drunk for ever; and that there shall be nothing gained by any transaction which would be dishonourable if conducted among white men. (Hear, hear.) Now we must leap quite away to another part of the world, and while some of our friends are questioning whether the Welsh Church is worth preserving, it is something to read that that Church is doing a great work upon that continent (cheers); and to read the quiet observation with which the Report ends, and which says they do trust that the work begun by the Welsh Church will be a great means of religious union on the other side of the world, and they have reason to think that these are not vain words. (Hear, hear.) Again, we find ourselves in the midst of a strange body of Indians, who gather together with the cross in their centre, and worship it as a god. They seem to do so, at any rate; and to have strange remnants of baptism and of the Holy Communion—things that have floated down from the time when the first Jesuit missionaries taught them, and then were obliged to go away and leave them. There has been left in the hearts of these wild children of the forest a strong and burning inclination towards receiving the real meaning of all that remains with them, and which is at present but a kind of service-cremency. Then, again, Panama must be near to the hearts of us all. It is but yesterday that Mr. Lockyer, of the University of London, went out there, full of hope, and fell so soon a victim to the climate. We trust that with more precautions and care his successor may be preserved to direct and to do the work for many years, and to sow the seed of great future good. (Hear, hear.) I should be sorry to sit down without paying a tribute to Bishop Stirling himself. I saw something of him when he was here last, and I was much impressed with the single-hearted, powerful surrender of a very holy soul to the work which it was impossible for him to face, except by the simplest reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and on God's good providence. You can scarcely read the account of his voyage in the *Illustrated Messenger's* book, when he got into that great reef, without feeling that God's presence is most closely with him, and that He had hidden him amid the war of elements in the hollow of His hand. (Hear, hear.) I was myself present at the consecration of Bishop Stirling in Westminster Abbey. I shall never forget it. It was on St. Thomas's day, one of the darkest winter mornings that I ever was at church in. The darkness hung over the Abbey until just the end of the service when it broke up into a very bright ray. In the midst of that bright ray I was going round the choir, the ceremony being over, when I saw a little scene that touched me to the very quick. There was a little girl waiting at the corner of the choir. Bishop Stirling came out in his new bishop's dress. His little daughter, the child whom I had caught sight of a moment before, sprang forward and clasped him round the neck, her eyes full of tears

and her face full of love, to welcome her father as a bishop, and to know at the same time that it was a parting. (Hear, hear.) Since that moment he has always been in my mind. I never knew him to speak to till I saw him the other day, when we knelt down together in my room and prayed for constant guidance and help for him. I trust there is no supporter of the South American Missionary Society who, while giving him and his work all possible material support, forgets to give him his most earnest prayers. He is in my heart-rod, and ever will be. I remember that when a boy I was on the top of the central tower of St. Omer, at Rouen, and looking over the clerical seminary below, where a large number of the students were to be seen, I talked to my guide about the misdirectness through which the French clergy were passing at that time—so poor, so hindered in the work of education, so starved almost, officials high and low making it difficult for them to do their work at all, despised by such a large proportion of the population in their then temper, and I said, "It really is wonderful, considering all these men go through, that there are still some found to come forward to fill up their places and to carry on work which involves a life of so much disappointment, vexation, trial, and even suffering." My guide, a simple French peasant, looked at me with a smile, and said, "Où / monneur, il s'en manque pas." May God grant that it be so with your missionaries! (Hear, hear.) May we be able to say of them, as we have good hope of doing, that for the love of God and the glory of His great name, and that man may believe in Him who died on the cross, *Il s'en manque pas*. May they never fail! You must remember that the future of this Society depends on you, on those whom you interest in it, and on those whom you bring into it. We must earnestly commend the secretaries to the local Associations, that they may support them well, and may increase that really trifling sum which is at the disposal of the Society to deal with South America in the name of the Church. But do not forget, at the same time, that what you do and say, and the way you live, and the way in which you manifest your interest in the great missionary work which you love, may increase this Society manifold. (Cheers.)

EXTRACT FROM "DAILY NEWS" ARTICLE, APRIL 23, 1884.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury made an interesting statement at the meeting of the South American Missionary Society on Tuesday. 'It was this society (he said) which drew the attention of Charles Darwin, and made him, in his parents of the wonders of the kingdom of nature, know and realize that there was another kingdom—that of Christ, which was just as wonderful.' The statement about Darwin's theological views is so little in harmony with the general impression in regard to them, that one would be glad to know the Archbishop's evidence for it. As to Darwin's South American experiences, it is generally supposed that they were acquired, not in connection with the South American Missionary Society, but when Darwin went out on board H.M.S. 'Beagle,' as naturalist of the expedition under the command of Captain Fitzroy."

To his statement the following replies were sent and published in the *Daily News* of April 24th and 25th:—

"MR. DARWIN AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

"We have received several letters in regard to the Archbishop of Canterbury's reference to this subject. The Rev. R. J. Simpson, Secretary of the South American Missionary Society, 11 Serjeant's Inn, writes:—'On February 3, 1847, Mr. Charles Darwin paid in to the funds of this Society, through his old friend Admiral Sir R. J. Salween, the sum of £5, and I have reason to believe he further contributed smaller sums yearly for the same object, in conjunction with former friends associated with him in the "Beagle."' Mr. Simpson says that Admiral Sir R. J. Salween, who was present at the meeting of the Society on Tuesday last, was on board the "Beagle" with Mr. Darwin, and he sends a long extract from a speech, made in 1841, in which Admiral Salween referred to some of his doubts as shipwrecked crews performed by Fuegians, and said that, on certain facts being communicated to him, Mr. Darwin wrote that 'he could not have believed that all the missionaries in the world could ever have made the Fuegians honest.' A year or two ago (said Admiral Salween) something which he had read in one of the

Society's magazines led Mr. Darwin to write to him on that subject. He had long said that nothing could be done by means of mission work, that all the pains bestowed on the natives would be thrown away, and that they could never be civilized. He afterwards admitted that he was wrong, and at the period to which he (Admiral Selwyn) had just alluded he wrote: 'I had always thought that the civilization of the Japanese is the most wonderful thing in history, but I am now convinced that what the missionaries have done in Tierra del Fuago in civilizing the natives is at least as wonderful.' Mr. Charles Hill, writing from 13 Bedford Row, W.C., says that the Archbishop's statement 'was probably based on the following passage from page 137 of a deeply interesting memoir of Captain F. W. Stephens, R.N., late of H.M.'s ship "Thetis," by Mr. B. Heywood, and published by Nisbet & Co.: "Many years ago the noted naturalist Darwin held that the Fuegians were incapable of receiving Christianity or civilization, but the work of this mission so changed his views on the subject that he became a contributor to the Society, that is the South American Missionary Society."—Capt. Parker Snow, writing from 1 Victoria Villas, Stanley Beach, encloses a copy of a letter which he received from Mr. Darwin in November, 1881. Mr. Darwin said: 'I hope that you may succeed in publishing a new edition of your cruise in Tierra del Fuago. You saw so much more of the natives than I did, that wherever we differ, you probably are in the right. Indeed the success of the missionary establishment there proves that I took a very erroneous view of the nature and capabilities of the Fuegians.'

—MR. DARWIN AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
 "To the Editor of the 'Daily News.'

"SIR,—Your article in the Daily News of yesterday induces me to give you a correct statement of the connection between the South American Missionary Society and Mr. Charles Darwin, my old friend and shipmate for five years. I had been closely connected with the Society from the time of Captain Allen Gardiner's death, and Mr. Darwin had often expressed to me his conviction that it was utterly useless to send Missionaries to such a set of savages as the Fuegians, probably the very lowest of the human race. I had always replied that I did not believe any human beings existed too low to comprehend the simple language of the Gospel of Christ. After many years—I think about 1865, but I cannot find the letter—he wrote to me that the recent accounts of the Mission proved to him that he had been wrong and I right in our estimate of the native character, and the possibility of doing them good through Missionaries; and he requested me to forward to the Society an enclosed cheque for £5, as a testimony of the interest he took in their good work. On January 20th, 1874, he wrote: 'The success of the Tierra del Fuago Mission is most wonderful, and charms me, so I always prophesied, when failure. It is a grand success. I shall feel proud if your Committee think fit to elect me an honorary member of your Society.' In the same letter, in reply to remarks of mine on the success of his men, he says, 'Thank God, all gives me complete satisfaction.' On June 23d, 1874, he wrote: 'I am very glad to hear so good an account of the Fuegians, and it is wonderful.' On June 16th, 1879: 'The progress of the Fuegians is wonderful, and had it not occurred would have been to me quite incredible.' On January 2nd, 1880: 'Your extracts (from a journal) about the Fuegians are extremely curious, and have interested me much. I have often said that the progress of Japan was the greatest wonder in the world, but I declare that the progress of Fuaga is almost equally wonderful.' On March 24th, 1881: 'The account of the Fuegians interested not only me, but all my family. It is truly wonderful what you have heard from Mr. Bridges about their honesty and their language. I certainly should have predicted that not all the Missionaries in the world could have done what has been done.' On December 1st, 1881, sending me his annual subscription to the *Orphanage* at the Mission Station, he wrote: 'Judging from the *Missionary Journal*, the Mission in Tierra del Fuago seems going on quite wonderfully well. I have much pleasure in sending you these particulars.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

"Bournemouth, April 16th."

"R. J. Selwyn (Vice-Admiral).

We print these comments in this leaflet free, as many may wish to do with to have the exact report of the Archbishop's speech, and also the exact facts in regard to the connection of the late Mr. Chas. Darwin with the Society and its work in Tierra del Fuago.

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Hon Secretary, Rev R. J. Selwyn, M.A. Clergy Hall, Bournemouth