

attemptable, especially that of the town and castle of Gibraltar'¹; alone among leaders of England he had at once a definite intention to create by strength of arm an English Empire overseas, and capacity to take practical steps towards effecting his purpose. Soldier, statesman, imperialist—what was the main driving force behind him and his plans? There can only be one answer, that directly or indirectly, with or without self-deception, it was religion. In all things he resolved and acted as being an instrument of God's will, as personally responsible to the Almighty for himself together with the nation committed to his charge. When he shaped his policy against Spain, he was, like the Elizabethans before him, spurred on as fighting for the true Faith, as the champion of right against darkness, of spiritual freedom against the bondage of Romish superstition.

Among later British statesmen perhaps the one who most nearly approached Cromwell in the extent to which religion penetrated his political views and coloured his foreign and colonial policy was Mr. Gladstone, as far removed from Cromwell in character and temperament as he was in time and circumstance. No less than Cromwell he regarded himself in all his words and works as an instrument of the Almighty, and both men alike, strong in will and discerning in intellect, inclined to see the finger of God pointing along the path which had already commended itself to them for mundane reasons.

Before Cromwell entered on his Western design, the Long Parliament had, in 1651, passed 'an Act for

¹ Letter of April 28, 1656. Carlyle, *ut sup.*, Part IX, p. 159.