

EVANGELISTIC WORK AND THE STATE OF RELIGION.

The Presbyterian Churches of Britain have been lately directing their attention to the state of religion throughout their bounds, and have adopted various agencies in order to revive the religious life of congregations and to carry the Gospel into the homes of the careless. It is impossible to separate these two ends of a Church's activity. The influences for good exercised upon a christian congregation cannot fail to make themselves felt upon the careless and indifferent in the neighbourhood. He whose heart is filled with love for the souls of men and the glory of his Divine Master will not confine his efforts to them that stately meet in places set apart for the worship of God, but will long to compel guests from the high-ways and hedges to come to the appointed Gospel feast.

In a late number of the RECORD we noticed the efforts put forth by the Irish Presbyterian Church for reviving its people and bringing life into regions where the spiritual death that Popery cherishes reigns. The English Presbyterian Church also has been vigorously prosecuting evangelistic work. Liverpool and Manchester have followed the example of London, in arranging for an occasionally recurring week of preaching in a number of the churches. The United Presbyterian Church has not been unmindful of the home field, while throwing itself so zealously into the work of foreign missions. But the most thorough and systematic of all schemes is that of the Free Church of Scotland, which is thus alluded to in the pages of the *Free Church Record*:

"The Assembly's appointment of ministers who should act as evangelists in other congregations than their own was a happy arrangement. It encouraged those flocks that sought more abundant life, and enabled them to find aid for continuous meetings. Therewith many earnest spirits were stimulated to special prayer and simultaneous work for souls. All the congregations that have been visited have been refreshed. In not a few there have been marked cases of awakening. But the plan has had an equally important reflex influence on many in the ministry. All who have had health and leisure to devote to evangelistic work speak of the personal benefit they have found in trying to speak very earnestly and very plainly the most urgent messages from God, and that among the prayers of Christian people.

"Most of our cities and towns have taken some advantage of this scheme, and some country presbyteries have been visited. This has been arranged this year from the centre in Edinburgh. This is well. The use of evangelistic meetings held in nightly series for a week or two is now well known. Ministers, encouraged by the *imprimatur* of the Assembly, are alert in taking advantage of the first indications of desire for such meetings. It is now known who have energy to spare for this work. Probably in future the plan will be more self-working, though those who have aided hitherto in making arrangements will be as willing as ever to advise and aid. Thus it seems that an extraordinary and tentative effort has helped to develop a mode of mutual aid and edification that is likely to prove a blessing to the Church.

"With the remarkable and spreading work of grace on the coasts of Banff and Moray, and the revived zeal for church-extension, and the rescue of the lapsed and lapsing masses in Glasgow, we may hope that 'days of refreshing' from the presence of the Lord, will soon be known throughout Scotland."

There has for a long time been a complaint that the Presbyterian Church is not the Church of the poor, and that it has been lacking in the