

Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodistic, or whatever name or form it may bear, is a ready-formed, standing society,—a permanent institution. Unless a Christian church operate in all these directions, and in others of a kindred character, according to ever-varying circumstances, there is a want, an imperfection in its economy; it fails to answer the end of its organisation and of its existence. As things now stand there is verily a fault among us; our evangelical and benevolent institutions, almost everywhere, sustain the character of distinct, separate, and independent bodies; or, at the most, the character of artificial adjuncts, mere voluntary appendages, with which neither churches nor pastors, as such, have any connexion or concern, rather than the character of an element, a constituent part of a complete church. This is a most lamentable evil—an evil which has spread like a canker among all communities, and diffused a paralytic impotence among the people of God throughout the whole British empire.

No man understood this doctrine more clearly, or felt the force of it more powerfully, than David Nasmith, at the outset of his career. In the twelfth chapter of this volume we found him declaring his sentiments in the following words:—"Our City Missions are of great importance; but they are necessary, I conceive, ONLY BECAUSE THE CHURCHES ARE NOT DOING THEIR DUTY; THE SOONER THAT CHURCHES ACT, THE BETTER—WHAT A DIFFERENT EFFECT WOULD THEY PRODUCE!" Again, in the same chapter, we hear him breathing out his compassionate zeal in these words:—"I LONG FOR THE PERIOD WHEN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, INSTEAD OF THESE VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS, FORMED FOR THIS PURPOSE, SHALL BECOME MISSIONARY BODIES."