

THE MONTHLY RECORD



Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia and the adjoining Provinces.

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137, ic.

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THE CHURCH AT HOME.

Parochial Associations.

In the act passed by the General Assembly on 2d June 1851, appointing collections for the Schemes of the Church, the following deliverance was given on the subject of Parochial Associations:—

"The General Assembly hail with the highest gratification the information which they have received, to the effect that in many parishes associations have been instituted for raising funds in support of the Schemes of the Church. They regard such associations as admirably calculated, if conducted on proper principles, not only to secure an increase of means for the diffusion of the knowledge of the Gospel among those who unhappily still ignorant of its blessed truths; but also to exert a most beneficial influence on the Christian condition of all who all become associated for this important object. The General Assembly, therefore, renew their most earnest recommendation that Parochial Associations may be instituted in all parishes in which they have not already established; and they would especially press on the members of these Associations, the great importance of accompanying all their efforts for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, with fervent and persevering supplication and prayer."

It is to the Parochial Associations, in support of the missionary enterprises in which she is engaged, that, with the blessing of God, the Church of Scotland has chiefly look for any great increase in the amount of the funds which are annually collected in her Schemes. Were these establishments in every parish in Scotland, and contributions taken—exclusively in small sums—by the members of every congregation, the collections at the church doors would not be diminished, the gross amount at the end of the financial year would be largely enlarged. This is very obvious, from the nature of the thing, and the

history of the associations, so far as they have been already formed. The rule that the very highest contribution shall not exceed 1d. per week, and that even smaller offerings will be gratefully accepted,—which is the regulation acted on in many of them, and which is applied equally to the rich as to the poor,—encourages many to give what little they can spare, who, from not being able to bestow as much as they desire, would from a false feeling, have been otherwise prevented from giving what they can. The circumstance, too, of being called upon in private by the collectors, and having information communicated to them by means of the printed reports, and the *Missionary Record*, on the subject of missions in general, and the Schemes of the Church of Scotland in particular, tends much to create a missionary spirit, and to increase their zeal in a cause which to be supported, requires only to be understood. The history, accordingly, of these associations, short as the period of their existence has been, confirms the truth of these remarks; and we find, in the course of the preceding year, rural parishes sending upwards of £50 to the different Schemes of the Church, which were accustomed to collect little more than a third of that sum previous to the establishment of the parochial association. What has been done in one rural parish, may, with a minister and eldership interested in the cause of missions, be done, more or less, and without any great exertion, in every parish in Scotland. The great mass of the people need only to have the subject brought before them, to admit the obligation of giving the widow's mite.

There is, indeed, an obligation laid upon all professing Christians to work together with God, in helping on the advancement of that blessed day, when the knowledge of the Gospel shall be diffused throughout all the earth. They who have really felt the power of the truth in their own hearts, will be anxious, and will be active, to make it known to their fellowmen. Instead of keeping it to themselves, or wishing that the knowledge of

it should be conferred within the limits of their own land, it will be matter with them of fervent prayer to God, that the spiritual happiness which they themselves enjoy may be equally enjoyed by all their fellowmen, and that the day may speedily arrive when the Gospel shall be preached to every creature under heaven.

This is incumbent upon all, in every country to whom the Gospel has been made known, and by whom its truth and its authority are professed; but it is peculiarly incumbent upon those who have been born and brought up in our highly-favoured land, and who have been reared from their childhood in the enjoyment of the privileges of our National Church. As professing disciples of the Lord Jesus, the call is peculiarly urgent upon them to do what they can to further the interests of the Gospel of Christ—to extend the knowledge of it both at home and abroad—and by their pecuniary aid, and persevering exertions, and fervent prayers, to do what in them lies that the glory of the latter days may be hastened; and as members of a distinct congregation formed under Christ the Head, opportunities are periodically presented to them in which their feelings, in this respect, may be indulged. From time to time does the Church of their fathers call for their contributions in support of these Schemes which she has set agoing for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom; and it will be the desire of every one by whom the truth has been received in the love of it, that the opportunities which are thus presented are improved by them aright—that they give on their behalf as God may have prospered them—that they read with interest the Reports with which they may be furnished, of the doings of His missionary servants in preaching the Gospel to the heathen—and that they may be fervent in their supplications at a throne of grace, that the efforts which are making for the moral and religious improvement of their fellow-creatures, both at home and abroad, may be crowned with a rich harvest of success.