

MISSIONARY REGISTER

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NOVA-SCOTIA.

Vol. I.]

JUNE, 1850.

[No. 6.]

THE FAITH OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AT ROME.

"I thank my God," says the Apostle Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, "through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." We have no account of the introduction of the Gospel into the Imperial City. The probability is, that the truth was first made known there by converts to Christianity, resorting from the Provinces. It is not impossible, that some of those who were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, or even some who had enjoyed our Saviour's personal ministry, might have carried back the knowledge of the Gospel. Their number, of course, would soon be increased, by the constant confluence of strangers from the Provinces to the Capital. At all events, it is evident, that at the time the epistle to the Romans was written, there was a flourishing church there, the piety of whose members was widely celebrated. "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." "Your obedience is come abroad unto all men."

It is evident, from these statements, that they had not only embraced the gospel, but that they had reached a high standard of christian attainment—that as a body, they were distinguished by works of faith and labours of love. We need scarcely remark, that their conduct is an example to Christian Churches in every age. Too many professed Christian Churches have little better than a name to live, and instead of their faith and obedience being

known abroad, are scarcely distinguishable, except by their profession, from the world around them. Instead of this, there is always a call upon us, to go on toward perfection. The expression of the Apostle shows, in a remarkable manner, the purity of the Roman Church at this period. "I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all." Of how few churches, in the present day, could the Apostle have said this.

The situation of Rome, as the Metropolis of the Roman Empire, and the centre of the world, gave the Christians of that city greater prominence. Their faithfulness would thus bring greater honor upon christianity, and their unfaithfulness deeper reproach, than if they lived in more obscure localities. Their influence, too, would be more widely diffused. By their faithfulness, their brethren throughout the world would be encouraged, and the word more widely disseminated.

In like manner, some churches, from their position, have a more extensive influence than others, and of course their responsibility is greater. But every church in its own sphere is a light amidst surrounding darkness. It is a city set on an hill, that cannot be hid; and it should be the aim of all its members, that the savour of their piety should be diffused around—and that by their harmony and love to each other—their attention to the ordinances of religion—their liberality on behalf of schemes of benevolence, and their abounding in all the exercises of piety, they may make their light so to shine