

bath is profaned by bees, dancings, hunting, fishing, gambling and such practices as cannot bear the light of Protestant truth.

I had almost forgotten to mention, that I find many Irish Presbyterians in this place attend the Residuary Church. This arises solely from their ignorance of the causes of the Disruption, and of the relation of the Irish Assembly to the Free Church. Can nothing be done to enlighten them on these points? Many who would shudder at the idea of patronage, Erastianism, &c., ignorantly support a party who countenance those errors, and are taught to believe that they are in a Church identical with that of their fathers. I will probably send you some statistics of this place at a future time.

M.

## LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND.

To the Editor of the Record.

GLASGOW, (Scotland) April 18, 1851.

DEAR SIR,—

Your leading article on Missions, in some of the most recent numbers of the *Record*, especially in the last one, must have given much satisfaction to every one who is concerned for the progress of the gospel in Canada, and the supply of ordinances to our destitute settlements.

It is good when the accredited organ of the Church speaks in so decided and earnest a tone, and urges the various sections of the Church to the prosecution of the cause, with a zeal worthy of its surpassing magnitude. We sincerely hope that the enthusiasm which fires the writer of the above articles, will be caught by the Church in general. It is certainly a melancholy consideration that one half of our adherents should be as you assert, destitute of a stated ministry, and how many of these enjoy the privilege of a preached gospel but very rarely: the result is, that many of them sink down into apathy and irreligion.

In the poorer settlements the people are still more destitute of the means of grace, both on account of their poverty and their being for the most part settled in remote districts; but as it is declared by the Saviour as a privilege of the poor to have the gospel preached to them, places where the people can contribute but little, if they do it willingly and according to their ability, should be favored with as full a supply as in the districts which are wealthier and contribute more liberally to the Mission cause.

This excess of destitution above the means of supply, is to be estimated, as is justly observed in the *Record*, not only by the number of professed Presbyterians, but also by the number of that class of the population to whatever connection they belong, or even if belonging to no connection, who are willing to receive our ministrations. We find some zealous denominations not only supplying their own adherents with the word of life, but extending their principles and obtaining a footing in localities where perhaps previously not an individual professing their creed has been found, and converting into zealous adherents many who formerly were distinguished by no religious creed; and why should we not aim at similar conquests of the truth, and make efforts, not only to preserve Christianity among those instructed in its principles, but to impregnate with those principles and doctrines masses sunk in practical heathenism. For such an interesting experiment, perhaps no part of Canada presents so suitable a field as the Niagara District, to which the attention of the Church is earnestly called, in the December *Record*, by a brother labourer in that quarter, the Rev. Mr. Porterfield. He represents the field of labour formerly occupied by the ministers belonging to what was called the Niagara Presbytery, as a promising one for the cultivation of the church, and the people belonging to them, as looking to our body for supply, and as ready to receive, in a kindly spirit, any visits that, by our ministers, may be made to

them. We are considerably acquainted with this District and with several of the congregations, we have laboured a little for the extension of our Church in that quarter, and we were always of opinion that we ought to aim at obtaining as much footing in it as possible. We cordially agree, therefore, with what our respected brother says upon the subject, and sincerely hope that the suggestion which he makes us to visit and collect information regarding such destitute congregations as he adverts to, will not be disregarded. Now it would seem there is a very favourable crisis for extending our Church in that quarter, but if exertion, through that remissness to which, as a Church, we are too prone, be delayed, the favourable opportunity now presented, will, in all probability, be lost. The people losing hope of aid from our body, will direct their view to other Churches, and the present opening will be closed upon us.

With the view of meeting, in some measure, this destitution—the demand for missionary labour—Students, prosecuting their studies with a view to the ministry, have been employed in the work. The demands made on this class, however, must now, as the *Record* says, be greatly reduced. We hope, at least, that that partial relief from this burden, which the Students have petitioned for, will be granted, and that the time may soon come when they may be permitted to devote themselves exclusively to their studies.

We feel confident that the employment of Students might, without much loss to the destitute settlements, be abandoned, were other sources of supply within reach, more fully called into operation,—were the law of our church requiring preachers to act as missionaries for a year, which, you justly say, has been a mere "nullity" vigorously acted upon; it would call into the Mission Field a very considerable and effective agency. The last Synod recommended to Presbyteries to adhere faithfully to this law with those licensed here or coming from other quarters; we hope they have done so (for from our distance from the scene of action we know not,) but if not, we hope the Synod will see the necessity of converting the recommendation into an express injunction. Indeed, the law still existing, no Presbytery can act contrary to it in any case, without the express permission of the Synod. So long as the plan of Catechists is persevered in, we would humbly suggest, that, at least, this modification of it might be permitted; that those employed should be made to substitute for the last year of their studies, the first after their completion, or license; there would thus be secured, though a year later, all the benefits of their labour, without the evil of its being yielded prematurely.

Something also might be done, as the *Record* justly remarks, by settled ministers for the relief of existing destitution. Were the brethren in pastoral charge devoting to missionary labour but one Sabbath, and one or two week days every three months, a great deal of good, in this way, might be effected. Might not some regular plan for affording such supply be, at least, recommended by the Synod.

Another source of labour is that which might be afforded by Missionaries sent from the Free and Irish Churches. We cannot but concur in the opinion expressed by the *Record*, that "exertions to obtain such labourers have been prematurely relaxed." We have, indeed, sometimes regretted to hear this mode of supply spoken of, as if no effort should be made to obtain it. We sincerely hope that such an unhappy state of feeling is any thing but prevalent, and that means will be used by the Church to obtain, at least for some years yet, all the effective aid we can from both the Churches mentioned. By that time, possibly, the Church in Canada may be able, in a great measure, to do for itself; but unless, for a few years yet, a considerable supply of labourers be received from the parent land, many of the important openings for the establishment of our Church, which now exists, will be closed upon us,

and our cause receive a check which may be felt for generations. And here I would advert to a suggestion which, some time ago, was made in our hearing, that it would be well for the Synod to request the Presbyterian Church of Ireland to send over one or two ministers as delegates from their Church, for the purpose of opening the eyes of their adherents in Canada, to the intimate connection subsisting between the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Many belonging to the latter, who emigrate, do not seem to be aware of this connection, and the ignorance which prevails on their part, leads not a few, we are persuaded, to unite with the establishment and other churches, which did they know better how matters stood, would regard themselves as called, by regard for their parent Church, to connect themselves with us—may, as already connected with us.

It is long, we think, since the Synod made application to the Churches at home for a supply of Missionaries. We would humbly submit, whether it would not be better to do so at the approaching meeting—not only on account of increasing destitution, but on account also of the probable diminution, to a considerable (we hope to a great) extent of the labour of Students.

But not only are men required, but funds to support them; and we doubt not but the "suggestions" which appear in the January number, if followed up faithfully by Presbyteries, would be effectual in securing a large amount of funds—It would, we think, be a great matter to get the funds to be collected in the Mission Stations, and sent quarterly; while to secure regular collections in the pastoral charges, it might be well for the Presbytery, at the meeting which immediately follows the Sabbath appointed for making such a collection, to enquire who of the brethren have made, and who have not made such collection, and to appoint that such as may have neglected it, should attend to it before next meeting of Presbytery; there would then be a security that each congregation would collect during the course of the year.

Were the Synod, moreover, passing a regulation that the *Record* every year, perhaps in the May number, should contain a tabular view, like what we find in the *Record* of the Free Church of Scotland, of all the collections made by settled Congregations and Mission Stations during the course of the year, for the Mission and other Funds—showing what Congregations and Stations have, and what have not contributed; such a statement, we doubt not, would have a great effect in promoting regularity in the making of such collections. We know it, indeed, to be true, as the *Record* correctly states, that there are wealthy Congregations which make no contribution to the Mission Fund, and Presbyteries sometimes make no effort to lead them to contribute.

The queries put to Presbyteries in the last number of the *Record*, and the remarks suggested by each, are very judicious and reasonable, and we hope they will have a happy effect in regard to the future action of the Church. In every sentiment expressed under these queries, we heartily concur; and if such excellent views were faithfully carried out, the Church of Canada, we doubt not, through the blessing of God, would abundantly prosper, and extend with a rapidity as yet unexampled. We hope that some overture embodying the substance of these views and suggestions, thrown out in the last, and two of the preceding numbers, will be prepared for the Synod, with the view of getting Presbyteries put upon a uniform and systematic course of action, for the promotion of the Mission cause. These remarks, especially, cannot be too highly commended, which are made in the same number, regarding the necessity of an ecclesiastical survey of the Mission field within the bounds of the Presbytery, the collecting of accurate statistics respecting it, and making so thorough an investigation, that no destitute corner may be overlooked.

But thought, we are persuaded, would tend so