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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning." — PSALM CXXXVII. 5.

OUR MOTHER CHURCH IN 1886.

(From the Mission Record.)

THE year 1886 has, in the life and work of the Church of Scotland, been a year of growth and quiet progress. In several directions there has been advance, and throughout the Church there have been indications of increasing activity in the work of CHRIST. The only change in the constitution of the Church is that contained in the last General Assembly, whereby congregations are permitted to call to vacant charges ministers of any Presbyterian church within the United Kingdom. It is now perfectly open, for example, to any of our congregations to give a call to such men as Drs. Walter C. Smith, or Donald Fraser of London, or James Brown of Paisley, but there is no sign of any such movement yet. The ecclesiastical turmoil in which the year 1885 closed has subsided, and though the Disestablishment agitation has been by no means given up, the activity of political associations has for the time turned into other channels. The result has been that ministers and people have been allowed to carry on their proper work in peace.

Much has been done to improve the comfort of our parish churches and to render the services of the House of God more attractive and impressive. Side by side with these efforts which have been made chiefly for the benefit of those already within the communion of the Church, we have the erection of Parish Mission-Halls and the establishment of other agencies to enable the minister and his Christian people more effectively to cope with the

spiritual necessities of parishes, and to gather in those who have lapsed or are in danger of lapsing from all church connection. Towards this work the Home Mission gives valuable assistance, and who can estimate the Christian agencies and influences which proceed from 351 parishes added to the Church by the Endowment Scheme within the last forty years? It is not to be wondered that the deepening sense of responsibility within the Church has directed attention to the Church's work and worship in outlying parts of the Highlands and Islands. It cannot be doubted that the result of the labours of the special Commission of Assembly will be to arouse not only local parties and those specially interested in the Highlands, but the Church at large, to find a remedy for evils which are clamant. In the remote Shetlands and at the fishing-stations along the East Coast, the Christian Life and Work Committee have had great encouragement through the blessing granted to the Deputies, and especially their Lady Deputies, to the fisherfolk in the summer and autumn. We have had to notice Mission Weeks which have been recently held; and the desire for such direct speaking and earnest dealing with congregations, as well as a growing readiness to take advantage of opportunities for quickening and deepening spiritual life, shows that our ministers are realising more the need of the HOLY GHOST, without whose power and blessing all ordinances are unavailing.

Prominent among the signs of activity throughout the Church in the past year have been the Mission Sundays, and the efforts to develop and enlarge the congregational organization necessary for the adequate support of