

possesses, and many appear from official despatches, and from private accounts, to have already attained a condition of comfort and honest independence.

The size of these islands, and their position in the southern hemisphere (they being the land that is most nearly the antipodes of our own country), have often suggested the idea of a resemblance between them and the British Isles. Other considerations have been thought to open up the prospect of a closer and more important resemblance than what is founded on mere geographical similarity. Their genial climate, their fertile soil, their various mines, their capacious and sheltered harbours, their suitability for vessels engaged in the whale-fishery, and their position relative to other lands, together with the character of the native population, have been regarded as the certain elements of future commercial greatness—the presage of such wealth and naval power as will secure for them an influential place among the nations. Nor is it the representation of interested speculators, but the calculation of cool and sagacious statesmen, “that this colony, if its interests be duly regarded, and its welfare fostered, is destined to occupy a most important station in the world,” “and likely to be in the Southern Ocean what the British Isles are in the Northern.” Its prospective importance not only invests it with peculiar interest in the eyes of the politician, but urgently invites us, as a Church of Christ, to watch over its present infancy, and now to provide for it such spiritual nourishment as shall, by God’s blessing, ensure a vigorous and well-conditioned manhood. If its rapidly increasing population are left without ordinances, or supplied only with the instruction that causeth to err, what can we expect but that its temporal prosperity will be retarded; or, that, if prosperous as a commercial nation, its population will be irreligious, and its influence on the spiritual interests of other lands will be of the most baleful kind? For averting such a calamity, and forming aright the character of the country, we ought now, when colonists are flocking to its shores, without delay to accompany them in their course, or even, if possible, to anticipate their arrival, with an ample provision of pure gospel ordinances, and sound scriptural instruction. And if the Pilgrim Fathers have left the enduring impress of their character on the nation of which they were the founders, and thus originated or stimulated the evangelical and missionary enterprises of the American Churches, may we not hope that the fruit of our present efforts to evangelise the colonies that are likely to be the germs of mighty kingdoms, will, after many days, be seen in their own greatness, and in the spiritual blessings which they will be found, in their turn, dispensing to other lands?

We are anxious to state to what extent

the spiritual wants of our Presbyterian brethren have been already provided for in New Zealand, and, so far as possible, to point out what remains for us to do.

OTAGO.

In our Number for October, we furnished an account of the origin and present state of the Scottish settlers, and of the Free Church congregation, at Otago. The first party of settlers, accompanied by the minister and schoolmaster, arrived in April, 1848. Their number has now been increased to about 1400. Dunedin is now a town consisting of 120 houses, and a population of 600. We are not sure that the Church has yet adequately appreciated the importance, or forwarded the interests, of this settlement.—While its natural advantages seem to promise as great and speedy a temporal reward to industry and integrity as any colony presents, ample provision has been made for perpetuating in it the religious ordinances and educational institutions of the Free Church of Scotland. The sum of £36,150, or rather £24,100 and 6050 acres of land, proposed to be set apart for these objects, would go far not only to maintain a staff of ministers and teachers, but also to secure another valuable part of the original plan—the equipment of a college for instructing the youth, and training the future ministers of that country. But as this provision is to arise out of the sales of the land, its being available is contingent on these sales being effected. And, moreover, it is contingent on these sales being effected within a period of five years, of which not more than two have now to run. Only about one-sixth part of the land has been disposed of; so that, if these invaluable advantages are to be secured, the remaining five-sixths must be sold within the next two years. The sales might be restricted to Free Churchmen; but already about 300 Episcopalians, and 150 of other denominations, are numbered among the population; and although some of the former declare and manifest greater affinity with the Free Church than with the Tractarians of the English Establishment, yet it is evident that if this experiment is to have the surest prospect of success, both in the internal peace and welfare of the community, and in its influence on the whole of that important region, it is requisite that the original settlers be not merely in nominal connexion with the Free Church, but of steady character and religious principle. The enterprise seems worthy of attracting such.

AUCKLAND.

Another Free Church congregation is in Auckland, the seat of the government of New Zealand. The Rev. Mr. Panton, the minister, arrived in February 1849, and immediately found himself surrounded by a large and liberal congregation. We are without any recent intelligence from him, but we understand that the church, the largest and finest building in New Zealand, was