

and conversed or prayed with 66,917. They found 19,216 families who habitually neglected evangelical preaching; 7,454 families, exclusive of Roman Catholics, were destitute of the word of God; 10,707 Roman Catholic families were visited.

In glancing over the List of Books published by the above Society, we observe the works of some of our most pious and gifted Divines among the number. The greatest care, we are assured, has been exercised in making the selection. They teach the great doctrines and duties of the Bible, without reference to denominational distinctions; and we have much pleasure and equal confidence in recommending to our readers the many excellent publications of the Committee, which may now be had at a very cheap rate.

CHURCH AT HOME

The Church of Scotland Endowment Scheme—Great Public Meeting in Elgin.

(Concluded.)

To find for the application of this power an appropriate organism, Christians have been left in part at least, to the exercise of their own discretion. A Church has, indeed, been instituted by Divine authority, and the Lord Jesus has promised to be with his Church "always, even to the end of the world," to maintain the communion and fellowship of its genuine members both with himself and with each other. But the outward forms of the Christian Church have not been so ordered as to exclude all difference of opinion respecting them. As to matters of form, in fact much difference of opinion prevails, and difference in this respect, as far at least as we can yet see, would appear to be almost inevitable. Still where a catholic spirit is cherished there may be much room notwithstanding outward differences, for co-operation. Where this spirit prevails, the question will be—What instrumentality, in the particular circumstances of the case, promises, under God, to be attended with the happiest results? In every case, the organism that gives the largest promise of promoting the establishment of the kingdom of God with power, will command the support of a man of truly catholic spirit. And though the differences among Christians should not allow them to concur in the same course of outward action, they ought still to regard each other with brotherly affection and charity. If they but hold in common the great fundamental truths of the Christian faith, they should ever be ready to bid each other God-speed in prosecuting the extension of the Divine Kingdom. Most certainly their difference ought not to degenerate into sectarian strife. The disciple or Church, howsoever outwardly distinguished, that labours, for instance, in a neglected clse in one of our large towns, preaching the Gospel to the poor, healing the broken-hearted, upholding them that fall, and raising up them that be bowed down—that disciple or Church is doing our work, and we ought to rejoice in the success of the efforts put forth. While we have so many dark places to be enlightened, so many noisome wastes to be reclaimed, differences, if they cannot be obtained, should but incite us all the more to "provoke one another to love and good works." The earnest prosecution of a common end—each guiding his course by the measure of light which he has received—is the likeliest means

of bringing us eventually to see eye to eye. I trust that it is in this spirit of charity that all of us are disposed to look on the efforts which our brethren of all Christian denominations are now making to diffuse among our neglected fellow-citizens the light of the everlasting Gospel. Still, the Church of Scotland has its own course of action, and that course of action, as fully approving itself to our matured judgment we are bound to prosecute with our might. Our object is to provide for the spiritual desolation that prevails among us by the due extension of our long tried parochial or territorial ministry. By a parochial or a territorial ministry, we mean a ministry set apart for a definite and manageable field of labour, and made responsible for the cultivation of that field. But it may be asked why a territorial ministry cannot be as successfully prosecuted by the minister of a chapel of ease as by the minister of a parish church? The question is one of facilities for the proper prosecution of the work of the ministry. It is certainly quite possible that the minister of a chapel of ease may be more efficient than the minister of a parish church, if the latter give himself over to indolence or indifference. But assuming both the one and the other to be really zealous for the advancement of Divine truth, the question, as we have said, is, which has the greater facilities for prosecuting the work? Evidently the minister of a chapel of ease labours under peculiar disabilities that do not affect the minister of a parish church.

Apart from this ministry, it is not too much to say, that in no case can the functions of the pastoral office be regularly performed. The most largely furnished and laborious minister cannot by possibility so multiply his efforts as to supply, from his own unaided resources, the wants say of 1000 or 1500 souls. Nor is it in the spirit of our most holy religion that so overpowering a task should be devolved upon him. Those of his congregation who have been made partakers of divine grace have been called of God, as well as himself, to be "fishers of men;" and it is only by the united efforts of both in the parish that the gospel of Christ can have "free course and be glorified" in it. What, then, the pastor has to do, besides the public preaching of the word, is to be the living and organizing centre of a Christian agency of adequate extent, to witness for the gospel, both by word and deed, to every inhabitant of the parish. Never, I am satisfied, till this congregational ministry shall be universally restored among us, till all whom Christ has called, both male and female, shall dedicate themselves unreservedly to the advancement of his cause, will our Zion's provision be so multiplied as to satisfy the poor of the land with the bread of life. Indeed, this congregational ministry is essentially involved in the very idea of the Gospel; and hence, where it has not yet been called into action, that idea necessarily remains in a state of imperfect development. The vastly superior facilities enjoyed by a parish minister for surrounding himself with a Christian agency adequate to the wants of his parish are too obvious to be insisted upon. Take, as a brief illustration of them, what recently occurred in one of our newly erected parishes in Glasgow. The parish to which I allude comprises one of the poorest districts of that large city occupied chiefly, if not exclusively, by the labouring classes. The present incumbent was appointed to his church, then a Chapel of Ease, in 1849.

At the time of his appointment the congregation was very small, numbering, I believe, not more than 50 souls. By the time (1853) when the Chapel was erected into a Parish

Church, and a parish attached to it a considerable congregation had been collected. The congregation was gathered, however, from different quarters of the city, and the parish was only so far cultivated as members of the congregation belonged to it. But now the minister felt that he was made responsible for the inhabitants of the district assigned to him as a territorial charge. He immediately set about a work of visitation, and persevered in it, till he had made himself acquainted with every inhabited hole and corner within his boundaries. The result was that he found very many families living in total disregard of the ordinances of religion and the prey of every vicious indulgence. The survey filled him with a deep sense of his own utter inadequacy to reclaim, by means of any personal exertions that he could possibly make, so noisome a waste. He felt that in dealing with such a population as had been committed to his charge, any good effect that might be produced by one visit must, humanly speaking, be obliterated before another could be made. The prospect before him therefore seemed to be quite hopeless, unless he should be able to prevail on his congregation to co-operate with him in the work. He accordingly laid what he considered their duty in the case clearly and fully before them, and had the satisfaction to find that he did not appeal to them in vain. After discoursing on the subject from the pulpit, he appointed a day requesting that on or before that day, such of the members of his congregation as were disposed to take part in the work would send him in their names. By the day appointed, 70 names were handed into him and more followed. The parish was immediately sub-divided into 50 districts and visitors appointed to take charge of each. There is a regular monthly visitation, a report of which is made and recorded. But besides this, the visitors generally call on the families in their respective districts once, twice, or even three a week. What then has been the result? My informant speaks of it in modest terms, candidly acknowledging that much of the work yet remains to be done. But he adds, at the same time, that he has been greatly encouraged in it—that many drunkards and profane swearers had been reclaimed—and that many of the families which were found at first living in the neglect of ordinances, have now joined themselves to his congregation, and appear to walk in all respects as become their Christian profession. I could adduce, from among the number of our new parishes equally gratifying instances of success but I must not trespass on your time. All I wish to say is that I can see no reason why if a congregational ministry be employed, that which has been done in a neglected district of Glasgow, should not be done in every neglected district, whether of town or country. And if it were done, I will venture to say that it would prove a national blessing of almost unparalleled importance. But the complaint is often made that we are in want, for the office of the ministry, of the right men for such a work. I do not hesitate to say that I am of opinion that this complaint is made in many cases, merely as an excuse for selfish apathy. The place which I hold gives me an opportunity of knowing from personal observation something of the character and dispositions of the young men who have been recently introduced into the church, or who are now studying for it. And I do them but justice when I say that I believe in my conscience that many of them have the cause of the Gospel deeply at heart and are even thirsting and panting to spend and be spent for its advancement. Nor have I any reason to