

at that time the population amounted to only 6000 or 7000 persons; and in the beginning of the present century, when Dr. Chalmers laboured in Glasgow, I think the population was represented at the same number of persons as it is now alleged are not connected with any church whatever in the whole city. The changes in our whole social system are enormous, and implies that you must make our ecclesiastical system more flexible. The wisdom of our forefathers, which led them to adapt the Church system in its minutest details to meet the wants of the country, is repeated, not by following them, so to speak, by getting into the exact suit of clothes that were meant for the child, and saying, "I am after my forefathers when I endeavour to put the man into the same suit," but in the adaptation of our means to present circumstances as their wisdom was seen in the adaptation of their means to their circumstances. You must keep this great principle before you when dealing with such questions as the ordination of missionaries and so on; you must make your system as flexible as possible within certain limits. I will not confine myself to the details that have been given in the report, but will deal with the subject in a broader form. First, let me ask you—you men especially from the country from whom we expect assistance in the towns—to realise the difference of the people amongst whom we have to labour. Now, on this point I am never very sure of statistics. They are very flexible things statistics. We often find them turn up just as the person using them desires them to do. In reference to the number of people in Glasgow who do not attend any place of worship, I cannot speak precisely, unless I know, besides non-attendance in the place of worship, the non-attendance of members of the family at prayer-meetings, and other means of religious instruction. It will not do to put down as non-attenders those who are worshipping with the missionary, or with any other Christian agency. Then, in regard to "heathenism," I beg very decidedly to say that I do not at all recognize the propriety or the justice of applying so very strong a term as that of "heathen population" to the many who cannot attend our churches. (Applause.) Not only does the fact of their not attending church not prove this, but it is a positive proof of the reverse, and amongst them you may find many very Christian and very admirable people.

The first thing that characterises the people amongst whom chiefly we have our home missions is ignorance, and that ignorance is sometimes extremely great. You will find it wonderfully great even in your country parishes. I have found amongst colliers and people in country districts, and amongst farmers, as great an ignorance about facts—I do not say about points of doctrine, but simply about facts—as ever I found in towns. I asked a collier in Dalkeith once, "Who was the first man?" and his reply was, "Hoots, man, wha in the worl' kens that?" (Laughter.) I do not take him as an example; but if you will only take the trouble kindly and frankly to speak to such people, you will do more good than by preaching to them. Do not show the slightest amazement. I have written down the answers given me by such persons, and I simply say, that in many cases it is incredible in a Christian land. Some of them have not the slightest idea who Jesus Christ was, or as to God's existence, or of an eternal future, or any of the facts of Scripture from first to last. Now, I have asked myself how this comes, and I have invariably traced it to one cause—that however decent and respectable these persons might be—and many of them are in their conduct most earnest in seeking to do good—they have not been taught in their youth. They never went to school. And then you must put another question—namely, why did they not go to school? You will invariably find that it arose from circumstances that draw forth your sympathy and pity more than your condemnation. How many of these have been orphans! And it is one of the saddest facts I know how much the ranks of crime in great cities are filled up by poor orphans, perhaps illegitimate, who never knew the loving name of father, and perhaps although they know the name of mother, it is a name they would be better