

ECCLESIASTICAL NEWS—SCOTLAND.—In the year 1845 the Church of Scotland undertook to endow one hundred and fifty new parishes. At the death of Dr. Robertson, Convener of the endowment committee in 1860, sixty new parishes had been endowed. In the year 1870 the number had reached 150. In 1877 another hundred was added to the list. Since that time the increase has continued to be highly satisfactory.

These new parishes are distributed all over Scotland. Some of them are found in thinly populated districts like Caithness, but as is to be expected the greater number of them are situated in the great centres of population as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Hamilton, Dunbarton, Dundee, Aberdeen.

The most satisfactory feature of all is the number of communicants belonging to the new parishes. In four cases of the most recent erection no separate communion-roll exists (*i. e.*, in 1878), but the other 124 possess no fewer than

322 communicants among them, which gives an average membership of 412 to each congregation, all the figures being those of the last Parliamentary Return in 1878. Of course the Endowment Scheme alone cannot claim credit for this large body of communicants, and still less within ten years. It is joint work with the Home Mission, and goes back in some cases over twenty or even thirty years; but surely it is a great boon to have 138 new parishes, with an average of 412 communicants to each, all organized with full parochial agency and stability and place in Church courts, within the short space of ten years. Can we conceive any plainer token of Divine blessing to a church, any stronger ground for our thankfulness, or any better argument to encourage continued effort?

The method adopted by the Endowment Committee is as follows: They

step in only after a church has been built, is free of debt, and has a congregation already formed. In almost all country parishes a manse is also necessary previous to endowment, but counts as part of it. The minimum endowment fixed by statute is £120 *per annum* without a manse, or £100 with one. But the General Assembly has instructed the Committee to give every encouragement to efforts to increase from the first the permanent endowment beyond the statutory amount.

The whole sum necessary for endowment is, as a rule, regarded as in two equal parts—one half, at least, to be provided locally or otherwise, independently of the Endowment Committee; the other half, at most (*i. e.*, £60 *per annum*, or £1500), to be provided by the Committee. Then, again, the half that is provided by the Committee in name of the whole Church, as it were, is to be regarded as further subdivided, so that one-third should be drawn from the annual Church-door Collection, ordered by the General Assembly, and the remaining two-thirds be drawn from special subscriptions made all over the Church. Both of these sources of supply for that half of each endowment that may be called general and ecclesiastical (as distinguished from the other half, which is local and congregational), require at the present time very special attention.

In the same great cause it has already been admirably and officially said by the Convener: "The clear and present duty of the members of the Church is to enable her to supply religious ordinances to a population still rapidly increasing. There can be no argument on her behalf so powerful as is furnished by proofs of her vitality, nor any defence of her parochial system so impregnable, as the successful efforts of her members to extend it so as to meet the wants of our times. No enemy can damage her so much as we ourselves will do, if we neglect our opportunities and evade our duties. Each new parish added to the Church at once increases her strength and secures to her a permanent provision for religious ordinances with her retention of which no legislation will ever propose to interfere."