

HOME MISSIONS.

BY A MISSIONARY.

NO. I.

Why more interest is felt in Foreign, than in Domestic Missions, and why money is more freely contributed, and prayer more frequently offered for the dissemination of the Gospel abroad, than at home, are questions both interesting and important. No genuine disciple of the great Teacher who said, "Freely ye have received, freely give," will regret the forwardness of the Church in supplying the treasury of our Foreign Mission Board, or will think we do too much for Him "who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," when we add both a Turkish and a Jewish Mission to our present enterprise, and increase it fourfold. Till we give to the extent of self-denial, and endure to the extent of cross-bearing we need not claim to be following the Saviour. Our foreign work certainly ought to be done. But is the other to be left undone? Is the salvation of a heathen of more importance than that of a dweller in favored Christendom, who lives without God and without Christ in the world? Is the loss of a soul among the Hindoos, the Caffres, or the Feejies, a catastrophe more fearful than that of one who has the form of godliness without the power, or one who supposes that no one cares for his soul and that if he perishes in his wickedness his blood will be required at other's hands? Are the claims of a foreigner sunk in stupidity and steeped in crime—a barbarian in language—an alien in disposition—and so far removed in kindred and in colour as hardly to be recognized as belonging to the same family, to take rank with those of our own flesh and blood, who, without fault of their own, dwell solitarily in our woods, or are scattered on our shores—and perishing for lack of knowledge? Are the accessible abodes of the civilized and the amiable of our own kindred and country, who pant for the sympathy and fellowship of those who can instruct them how to be happy, but who are exposed to the seducing influences of the vicious and the dissolute, to be overlooked and neglected, for the

chance of teaching the savage in his fastnesses, or the treacherous assassin in his concealed ambush?

The distant scenes of foreign missions "lend enchantment to the view." The acknowledged sacrifices and reported trials of missionaries among the heathen excite sympathy and lead to generous assistance. The contrast between heathenism and christianity is so striking as to command universal observation, and to encourage the benevolent and the generous to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty; while the constant supply of minute details of trials and triumphs keeps the subject fresh before the mind of the church, and appeals for new efforts in the furtherance of an ever-increasing labour of love—that has enjoyed much of the favor of God—and that God engages still to bless.

The home field does not furnish the same details. Minute descriptions of places and people would indeed be interesting and even exciting, but the propriety of publishing things as they are, or as they appear to an ardent and especially to a youthful herald of the cross, full of zeal for his Master's glory, is many times more than questioned.

How much utter ignorance of the first principles of the oracles of God we sometimes find, in the midst of opportunities to acquire a reasonable amount of religious knowledge, we may not tell without risk of giving offence and closing against us doors of promising usefulness.

We may not describe individuals and households, who from the infrequency of the public dispensation of the ordinances of religion within their reach, and their "manner of forsaking the assembling of themselves together" for divine service, become quite satisfied to live without God and without Christ in the world, and plead their disadvantages as an excuse for their apathy and unconcern.

We cannot expose the low estimate often formed of the character of true religion and the disposition to put ritualism in the place of piety, and the maxims of the world in the room of the directions and example of the blessed Jesus. In the absence of these and similar details,—materials for which are far