

sitting, and which might nevertheless be distinguished by a certain ecclesiastical character. These buildings might eventually be superseded by larger edifices designed for permanence. But before the means can be provided for the greater undertaking it is of the utmost importance to have ready for a population, however accumulated, whether rapidly or otherwise, a building into which it might at once be gathered; and where, under the direction of the incumbent, and through agencies selected by him, there might be offered to it the ministry of Christ's Word and Sacraments.*

We feel that fresh exertions are needed in order to bring the youthful part of our population more generally under pastoral influence. We would recommend the employment of special services with sermons adapted to children, and of public catechising, wherever practicable. More frequent Confirmations, especially in the large towns and populous districts, would, we believe, be thankfully accepted by the clergy, as furnishing them with the opportunity of presenting a larger number to the bishop, and that number more carefully selected and prepared, so as to ensure their immediate and habitual attendance at Holy Communion.

While we thankfully acknowledge the liberal aid afforded in the cause of national education, we feel that it is of the utmost importance to remember that the increase of schoolmasters, however important, will by no means compensate for the want of increased spiritual agency. The early age at which the children are removed from school creates the necessity for the employment of other means, in order to retain a pastoral influence over them. Among these we would specify the retention of the young in Sunday classes; the general establishment of evening schools, where practicable; classes for mutual improvement; with lectures, under the personal direction of the clergy.

But we have reason to lament that large numbers of our population are even unbaptized; and we believe that still larger numbers are unconfirmed. For the remedy of these evils we can only trust, under the Divine blessing, to the results of an increased spiritual agency, acting directly upon the parents, and awakening them to a sense of their responsibilities.

We cannot conclude this portion of our report without alluding to the very painful subject of the poverty of a large number of the benefices of the Church of England.† And it is worthy of remark, that this evil is often most apparent in the districts from whence the wealth of this

country in great measure is derived; and that clergymen who have to bear the burden and the heat of the day, amidst the thickly congregated masses of the people, in addition to the overwhelming demands and anxieties of their spiritual charge, are often scarcely provided with the means of subsistence. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that the men are to be found who, notwithstanding such discouragements, will labour in these districts for the love of God and of the souls of men; but, if a supply is to be maintained of clergymen fitted by spiritual and intellectual endowments for these trying posts of labour, there must be such a provision made as shall at least relieve them from undue anxiety about the things of this life.

We thankfully acknowledge the improvement which has taken place in the exercise of patronage. But the distribution of the clergy, with reference to their several qualifications, has so direct a bearing upon the highest interests of religion, that we feel that our report would be imperfect, if we were to fail to call the attention of patrons to this important subject; and we would add that more care is needed with reference to the signing of testimonials.

II. Foreign Missions.—Upon the subject of Foreign Missions we feel that the prominent position which England holds among the nations—her vast resources and widely extended commerce—her long enjoyment of temporal blessings—and, above all, her possession, through the Divine mercy, of the Gospel in its purity, are privileges which carry with them the gravest responsibility. Possessing, as we humbly trust we do, the blessing of evangelical truth and apostolical order, and ample means for the fulfilment of the command, "Go ye into all the world," &c., we are solemnly accountable for the recommending of that blessing throughout Christendom, and for the extending of it throughout the world.

The emigration from this country at one time during the last few years was averaging nearly 1000 persons a day. It must be remembered, too, that our emigrants are, for the most part, in humble circumstance, and that they are, therefore, least able or willing to make an effort to supply themselves with spiritual ordinances. Our colonial possessions cover about one-seventh part of the earth's surface; and they comprehend a population of more than 3,000,000 of colonists, and nearly 200,000,000 of heathens and Mahometans. All these have a national claim upon us for a participation in our spiritual privileges; and to them must be added the untold millions, beyond our own limits, still lying in darkness. While we desire to express our thankfulness to Almighty God for what has already been done through the agency of various societies, in the sending forth of devoted men into these wide fields of labour, and of late years in the rapid development of the Colonial Episcopate, and the consequent rapid increase, both in number and efficiency, of our missionary clergy—we feel how very far our efforts fall short of our opportunities, and how very small a number, comparatively, of the professing Christians of this land are taking any part in the fulfilment of their Lord's command.

We have had occasion already to allude to the value of the parochial system; and it is to this organization that we must look, under God's blessing, as the only effectual means of bringing this acknowledged duty home to the hearts and consciences of the people. No parish in the land ought to be without its missionary association.† It is possible that under present circumstances, our missionary efforts are best promoted through the agency of different societies. But we are of opinion that while the choice of the instrumentality is left with each several parish, efforts ought to be used systematically and vigorously to bring

home to each individual member of Christ's Church the sense of his own responsibility in this matter.

The experience of the last few years has abundantly shown the importance of combined effort and harmonious action, under a superintending head. We therefore earnestly recommend the further extension of the Episcopate abroad, with a view to strengthen and increase the foreign missions of the English Church, and to afford increased facilities for admitting native converts to the pastoral office. Bearing in mind that a supply of missionaries is at present painfully inadequate to the daily increasing demands in foreign lands, we would suggest that this matter be commended to the serious consideration of our Universities; in order to the affording of increased facilities and encouragements to those who may be willing to give themselves to this laborious and self-denying service.

We would also suggest whether some assistance might not be given to our missionary efforts, by employing some of the funds of the various diocesan and archidiaconal and other charities for the sons and orphans of the clergy, in providing exhibitions for our missionary colleges, both at home and abroad. The families of the English clergy might thus not only derive benefit from these charities, but they might also, in their turn, require the benefit by sending out some missionaries to our colonies, and amongst the heathen.

III. Finance.—In touching the financial part of this inquiry, we consider that our principal dependence, under God's blessing, must be upon the free-will offerings of the faithful throughout the land. There can be no question as to the duty which is laid upon each individual Christian to devote systematically a portion of his goods to the service of God, according as the Lord has prospered him.

We are of opinion that for the calling forth of these a better organization is needed, by means of Diocesan and Parochial Associations throughout the country*. This is a work in which lay co-operation would be of the greatest value.

We have had under our consideration the subject of the revival of the Weekly Offertory. While we would deprecate any hasty or inconsiderate return to this practice, we would suggest the desirableness, wherever practicable, of using the Offertory Sentences whenever collections are made in our churches.

We are further of opinion, that it would be desirable that there should be at least two collections in each year, under episcopal authority, in every church or chapel—one for Home Missions and the other for Foreign Missions; and that, in making these collections, the principle already laid down be observed, of keeping the object in view rather than the society through which the object is carried out.

We think that, in order to the greater efficiency of the Church, a larger and more detailed body of statistics is greatly needed. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the importance of this, as bearing upon the present and future well-being of the Church of England. Such information, if fully and systematically supplied, would be of the greatest service, as pointing out both our strength and our weakness; and would enable us to employ our resources to greater advantage. We would therefore suggest, whether there might not be added to the bishop's annual questions, inquiries as to the general state of each parish; the num-

* At the present time there are about 3000 Parochial Associations in connexion with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The Church Missionary Society has about 1000 Branch Associations, each branch comprehending generally several parishes. But it would be too much to assume that more than half of the parishes in England have as yet in a district organization for promoting Church Missions.

* It has been suggested that Church Building Societies might promote the objects here recommended, by loans as well as by liberal gifts. The former might bear interest, and be secured by a mortgage on the property. The latter also might be made conditionally, so that if from any cause within twenty years the buildings should no longer be wanted for their original purpose, a certain fixed proportion of the grants should be recoverable by the Society. It is obvious that the desirableness of a relaxation of that rule of most of our Church Building Societies, by which they are precluded from giving aid to unconsecrated buildings.

† It appears from a return presented to the House of Commons in June, 1855, of the number of baptisms solemnized in the Church of England in the year 1851, that the total number of baptisms returned was 328,182. Four dioceses sent no returns. If for these are added 50,000 we should have 378,182 as the total number of baptisms in the Church of England in that year. Reckoning the births at 3.2 per cent, the births in that year would be 645,392.

‡ The following facts will prove the very inadequate endowments of many of our livings, and the slender provision made for many of the clergy. There are in England and Wales 377 livings under £50 per annum; 1463 under £100; and 1789 under £150, making a total of 3629 livings under £150. Two thousand benefices have been created within the last twenty years, with incomes varying in value, with very few exceptions, from the interest of £100 to £150 per annum. Besides this there are more than 4000 curates, with stipends of from £50 to £150 per annum.—See *preface to Sermon by Rev. R. Seymour, on the Divine Mode and Measure of Good Works.* Livingston, 1854.