

Report of the Union.—The Secretary's report, as usual, touched on the leading points of interest in the history of the Congressional body during the year. It referred to intercourse maintained with other churches, particularly the Congressional Union of America; to correspondence had with the struggling churches of the Continent; to deputations sent to the German Kirchentag, the French Evangelical Union, and the Congregational Union of Scotland; to opportunities taken to uphold the principles of the denomination, in reference to the terms of the royal proclamation on the fast, church rates, &c.; to the necessity of making greater exertions for the evangelization of Wales; to the progress of the denominational literature; and concluded by earnestly pressing the solemn responsibility of the brethren in connection with the aspect of the times.

Hymn-Books.—Considerable discussion took place on the report of a committee on a hymn-book, who stated that in reply to a circular whether the congregations would prefer one comprehensive book in preference to Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns, with an appendix such as the Congregational Hymn-Book, 500 answers had been received, much the greater part cordially approving of the proposal. The Union approved of the report, and took steps accordingly; Mr. Conder expressing at some length his fear that Dr. Watts might be thrown overboard, and the very great evils that might result therefrom.

The Periodicals.—The periodicals maintained by the Union (*Christian Witness* and *Christian's Penny Magazine*) had not enjoyed so great prosperity this year as on some former years,—a circumstance easily accounted for in the present state of the country. Nevertheless, the profits amounted to £513, 17s. 2d., which sum had been made available for their Aged Ministers' and Widows' Fund. For this they were mainly indebted to the zealous exertions of Dr. Campbell, the editor of the magazines.

Missionary Schemes and Proceedings.—The various missionary schemes in which the Congregationalists are engaged occupied the main share of the time of the meeting. These will be found to have been noticed under their proper heads, either in this or in the last number of the *News of the Churches*. The Congregational Board of Education, Continental Society, Home, Irish, and Colonial Missions, are affiliated with the Union, and brief reports from them are submitted to the meeting; but the chief proceedings of these societies take place at public meetings. We have accordingly noticed them under the head of Anniversary Meetings.

SYNOD OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

This court held its sittings in Edinburgh, and was opened on the 7th May, by a sermon from the late moderator, the Rev. Thomas Neilson of Rothesay, which he was afterwards requested to publish.

Among several matters of routine, we observe that the Hall Committee, in reporting on the new arrangements for the theological seminary, brings out an encouraging increase of students for the past year. The Committee on Ministerial Support, which is charged with the duty of raising small stipends to the minimum of £100 with manse, indicate their expectations, from the increasing support given to the fund, that it may rise soon to a minimum of £150. In an interesting report on the Mission to the Jews in London, it was stated in the language of the missionary, Dr. Cunningham:—

"And now is proposed the question,—How has the Word been received? Answer.—The reception given to it has been varied; but I believe, upon the

whole, with somewhat decreasing hostility. By some it is always steadfastly resisted. By numbers, its precious truths have been individually admitted; and perhaps by others who are either living or dead, it has been received in faith and love. During the last year, the doctrine of the fact and sovereignty of divine grace, has been admitted by at least two of the people; the necessity of God's righteousness in order to salvation, has been acknowledged by a female; the high claims of the New Testament on our belief, by another; the fact that Messiah is predicted in various passages of the prophets, not so interpreted by the Jewish writers, has been acknowledged by numbers; the divinity of the Messiah is acknowledged by a youth; and the leading doctrines of the gospel are quietly admitted as true by numbers of the young and tender; and fresh views of divine truth are in some way or other contemplated by all."

The report on Foreign Missions so far as the station in New Zealand is concerned, was somewhat discouraging. The natives had removed in considerable numbers from the district, and the missionary complains of the spiritual indifference of those who remain. On the other hand, the New Hebrides Mission appears so flourishing, that the court have resolved to send out an additional missionary:—

"Your committee regard it as very wonderful, while to all the members of the church it is a matter for devout thankfulness, that out of a population of about 1800 persons, who have been so recently—all of them—in the depths of darkest heathenism, fully one half, or about 900 persons, have renounced their idols, and have placed themselves at the feet of the missionary, to be taught the knowledge and the service of the one true God, and how to be saved from the wrath to come. This is the present state of matters, on Mr. Inglis' end of the island; and the work is still more advanced on the southern end, where Mr. Geddie labors. The attendance at school is not, as in favored portions of the old country, from twelve to fifteen per cent., but from sixty to seventy per cent.,—three generations being not unfrequently found in the same class, the grandfathers, with their newly-acquired spectacles, running a dubious race for literary distinction with their sharp-eyed grandchildren. The people have surrendered their idols, a collection of which, we are informed, is on its way to this country, that we may see what sort of gods they were taught to worship. They have testified their regard to the gospel by their ready obedience to the missionary, and by enduring continuous and arduous labor to which it is well known savages have the strongest repugnance. They are rendering, perhaps, still more costly sacrifices to the power of truth, in relinquishing their long cherished but abominable and wicked heathen customs,—their polygamy, and other unchaste practices, their infanticide, the strangulation of widows, and their hereditary feuds, and bloody wars. Each of the missionaries has had the privilege of organising a congregation some time ago, with good prospects of increase, there being, at the date of the latest report, eleven native converts at Mr. Inglis's station, and twenty-three at Mr. Geddie's. At the latter station there were, besides, eighteen candidates for admission under a course of preparatory instruction. Meanwhile, the gospel leaven appears to be spreading and pervading the mass of heathenism which remains in the island, encouraging the hope that, at no distant period, the whole community will be prepared to yield subjection to the sceptre of Christ. Surely we may take up the language of the ancient church, and exclaim: 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvel-