

of his health. A splendid new church, to cost some eighteen or twenty thousand pounds is to be erected in the parish of Govan, of which Dr. John Macleod is the minister. This is said to be one of the most populous parishes in Scotland, containing upwards of two hundred thousand inhabitants. Within the writer's memory it was a quiet rural parish containing at the most four thousand souls. The church edifice was accounted at that time the most beautiful on the banks of the Clyde. Dr. Matthew Leishman, the parish minister, was then in his palmy days—one of the finest looking ministers in the Church of Scotland, and one of her best, although from the position he took at the time of the Disruption he was called one of the "forty thieves." The present incumbent is a son of Dr. John Macleod, "the high priest of Morven," as he was called. The fourth series of the "St. Giles' Lectures" have been arranged for. The subjects are to include the "Churches of Christendom." Prof. Mitchell of St. Andrews lectures on The Primitive Church; Prof. Milligan of Aberdeen on The Church of the second and third centuries, and Prof. Stewart of Glasgow on The Church of the fourth century; Mr. Stewart of Jedburgh on the Greek, and Mr. Watt of Glasgow on The Latin Church; Dr. A. K. H. Boyd on The Church of the Waldenses, and Mr. Graham of Nenthorn on The Lutheran Church; Mr. Colin Campbell of Dundee on The Presbyterian Churches; Dr. Marshall Lang on The Anglican; Mr. W. W. Tulloch of Maxwell Church, Glasgow, on The Society of Friends and The Congregationalist Church; Dr. Cameron Lees on The Methodist Church; and Principal Tulloch on "Unity and Variety of the Churches of Christendom." At a recent meeting of the Synod of Aberdeen a proposal was made to dispense with the opening sermon as a remedy for the small attendance and little interest which is taken in the proceedings of that venerable court. The treatment has at least the merit of being very simple. The assertion, however, that "people are gorged with sermons," was not endorsed; but it is said that a resolution was passed to the effect that an attempt should be made "to make the sermon more attractive in future by procuring the use of an organ." Some of the not "unco guid," taking courage from this remarkable admission, are beginning to clamour for the abolition of the sermon altogether. The *Outlook*, commenting on these oddities, says that "what England needs is not less preaching, but more and better." One does not know what to think of so many "Conferences" as are now being held on the "State of Religion." In addition to those mentioned by our Edinburgh correspondent last month, two meetings of this kind have since been held under Free Church auspices, one at Dundee and the other at

Dumfries. At both places there was some very plain speaking, and a great variety of suggestions were made as to the best means of coping with infidelity and of reaching the careless and indifferent masses. Another was held at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by the Northern Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in England, the chief subject of discussion being:—"How we can best, with our present system, increase congregational welfare and efficiency." Among other recommendations submitted, we notice,—The employment of evangelists, who should co-operate with the stated ministry; more active and efficient aid by the eldership; more attention to family worship; greater efficiency in the service of song; cottage meetings; drawing-room and parlour meetings; more attention to Bible-classes and Sunday-schools, &c. Mr. Limont of Alnwick asked "why the Presbytery should not have the right of stepping in to sever the pastoral tie when usefulness is practically at an end," without the formality of a trial? Perhaps it is not generally known that the Presbyterian Churches in the United States and in Canada exercise the right, through Presbytery, of dissolving the pastoral tie without process of libel when it is deemed expedient in the interest of the congregation and the Church at large to do so. Amidst much diversity of opinion as to details, the consensus of religious thought appears to point to a wider diffusion of the missionary spirit as the most effectual restorative for decaying congregations. A large meeting of the friends of China missions took place recently in Camden Road Church: London, Rev. R. M. Thornton presided, and gave a spirited and hopeful address on the missions of the world. There are now connected with the Presbyterian Church in England 89 mission congregations, 5 ordained native pastors supported entirely by their people; 73 native preachers, and 37 students in training for the ministry. Including the five additional missionaries sent out at this time, there are 16 ordained missionaries, 8 medical missionaries, 2 missionary teachers, and 6 female missionaries in the service of this Church. Special interest attached to the return of Dr. J. L. Maxwell, medical missionary, and his wife, to Formosa, after an interval of eleven and a half years, during which time he has rendered invaluable services to the cause of missions as editor of the *Missionary Magazine*.

THE PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.—Many changes have taken place in the *personnel* of the Council since the preliminary meeting held in London in 1875, of which the late Rev. Dr. Duff was chairman. Rev. Dr. G. W. Blaikie, who was appointed chairman of the general committee at Edinburgh in 1877, has been in reality the director in chief of the