

with the blessing of God, chase away the dark mass of superstition and falsehood which rest on India, as easy as the morning cloud is dispelled by the rising sun.—*H. & F. Record.*

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CONDEMS GRANTS FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES.

An important step has been taken by the Legislative Council in South Australia, with regard to grants of money for religious purposes. The principle of religious endowments has been formally abandoned as a curse to the colony. It is the beginning of the end. It is one of the first acts under the free constitution; and when our colonies have the liberty of managing their own affairs, as they must soon have, they will make very short work with the ecclesiastical systems which have been imposed upon them by our paternal government. The example of South Australia will not be lost upon the other colonies. They are becoming every year more and more alive to the fact, that there can be no solid unity, so long as the principle is acted upon of a compulsory taxation for churches. In making these remarks, we are perfectly aware, that in the free constitutions recently given to our colonies, the maintenance of religious sects is expressly excluded from popular control. We know full well, that our home government are so much enamoured of the idea of making people pay for something which is called religion, that they have tied up the hands of the Colonial Legislature on this vital question; and that though every man in the colony should be convinced of the demoralizing influence of these money grants for religious purposes, they have no power to withhold them. But we are equally satisfied, that if the Colonial Parliaments act as firmly and decidedly as the Legislative Council in South Australia, no home government, no matter who is at its head, dare refuse its consent.

The debate is as remarkable as the conclusion; and as this subject has, some how or other, escaped the attention of our liberal and Voluntary contemporaries of the newspaper press, we furnish our readers with a few specimens.

Mr. Gwynne rose, pursuant to notice, to move the first reading of a bill to continue 'An Ordinance to promote the Building of Churches and Chapels for Christian Worship, and to Provide for the maintenance of Ministers of the Christian Religion.' The object of the bill was to provide for the building of churches and the maintenance of ministers of the christian religion. One of the features of the bill was, that it reduced into one class all professors of the christian religion; it made no distinction between the Roman Catholic and the Episcopalian, between the Churchman and the Dissenter. It left the question of orthodoxy untouched, and simply proposed to aid that common Christianity they all agreed in professing. (Hear, hear.) It was consequently a measure of unmixed liberality. In addition to recognising all classes of Christians as equal in the eye of the law, it fostered the Voluntary system. (Hear, and a laugh.) It was not proposed to give unconditionally, but to grant an amount in aid of religion equal to the sum subscribed by the voluntary efforts of any congregation; the State thus assuming the position of an indulgent parent, who, desirous of encouraging habits of economy in a child, says, 'Save one shilling, and I will give you another.' (A laugh.)

Captain HARR was anxious, in proposing that the bill be read a first time that day six months, that it should be understood on what grounds he did so. As he never did object to the principle of the bill, but he objected to it as it hitherto stood. He was willing to aid religion in special cases which might be brought before the Council; and he proposed the amendment, because he was convinced the battle had been fought out of doors, and because he thought the measure was thrown before them as an apple of discord. (Hear, hear.) He believed the proposed measure would have no chance of success in the House; for, although the introducer of it had spoken as if he was certain it would be carried, his Excellency had, in a recent appointment, given the casting vote against it. (Hear, hear, and a laugh.) He would therefore move, that the bill be read a first time that day six months.

The most valuable speech was made by Mr. Elder, and as it furnishes us with some useful and interesting facts on the working of the compulsory system in our colonies, it is given entire.

Mr. Elder said, during the whole period that I have resided in this colony, there has been a constant spirit of antagonism between the government and the people. Let the government of the colony do its duty to the people, and I am convinced that the colonists of South Australia will do their duty to the government. The government, by bringing this bill in, and in placing the amount on the estimates, show an *animus*, and a determination to carry their measures with a high hand. It was within these walls, five years ago, that the unjust and unprincipled measure of supporting all religious denominations alike, was proposed; and I well remember the indignation that was felt out of doors on the occasion. I remember well joining a large and influential body of gentlemen (deputed from one of the largest and most respectable public meetings ever held in Adelaide), who waited on Governor Robe with an humble memorial, praying that he would delay the passing of so obnoxious a measure. I cannot forget the insulting reply of Governor Robe; and I remember well the deep prophetic feeling experienced by many on that occasion, that a time would come when the colonists of South Australia would rise and free themselves from their religious oppressors. With many, I looked and longed for that time, and now I believe, in the good

providence of God, it has come to pass. I was born a Churchman, brought up a Churchman, and in 1840 came to this colony a Churchman. I believed, before coming to this colony, that religion could not be maintained and propagated in any country without government aid. I saw the working of a different system in this colony, and I was led and constrained to say, long before the government interfered at all, that religion would propagate itself independent of aid from the government; and I saw, moreover, what I had never seen in my life before, unity and christian fellowship amongst all denominations. That unity and fellowship have for the last five years been destroyed; but I am not without hope, and casting away this bone of contention, the old feelings of christian harmony will revive, and brighter days return. I am sure that, during the first five years of my residence in this colony, there was no lack of christian churches and christian preachers. That was a time, too, when ruin and distress came upon many a one, and people could ill afford to give liberally. That dark time passed away, the mines were discovered, the colony began to prosper, and people were in a better position to support their ministers, but they were not permitted to have any farther trial; a despotic governor stepped in, and with all the haughtiness of a Russian autocrat, passed the unjust decree. I remember well the gentle and enticing manner in which the wedge was inserted. 'Only two shillings per head, and by taking it you were just getting your own money back again which you have put into the treasury.' The dissenters of this colony have made a noble stand, for they have refused thousands of their own money which they could have had without any spiritual interference by government at all. Their consciences were aggrieved by the very offer of the money, and it becomes no government to ride roughshod over the consciences of any of its subjects. I am not a Dissenter myself, but I am proud of the Dissenters of the colony. America looks back with veneration to its pilgrim fathers. It is no disparagement, sir, to the pilgrim fathers of America, to compare some of our Dissenters with them; and I feel convinced that future generations in this colony will bless the name of the present Dissenters, who have so nobly struggled to fix our religious liberties upon a broad and solid foundation. I call upon the hon. members of this house, if they value their own peace, and the peace of the community, to throw out this bill.

The amendment was carried. The votes were 13 to 10. It will give great satisfaction to the colony, as some of those who voted for the compulsory system were compelled to acknowledge that it was extremely unpopular. We coincide in the opinion expressed by the Advocate-General: "Whenever an irrevocable decision has been arrived at by that Council, people would throw aside the crutches which had only impeded their movements, and support religion by religious means."—*U. P. Magazine.*

ORIGINAL SECESSION CHURCH.

A disruption has taken place in the original Secession Synod, on a proposition for union with the Free Church. The annual meeting of the Synod was opened in East Campbell Street Church, Glasgow. Mr. Burn, of Thurso, was elected moderator. On Tuesday after discussing the case of Mr. Laine, of Colmonell, relative to certain doctrines which he had published, and which were considered to be opposed to the principles of the Church, and depriving him of his judicial functions, until his case was decided, the Synod proceeded to take up an overture on union with the Free Church, to which the names of nineteen Ministers were attached. Dr. McCrie supported the overture, which he said divided into the two following propositions:—1st, That the Secession Church held no distinctive principles, but that its principles were those of the Reformed Church of Scotland, as these existed in her purest times; and 2nd, That finding that the Free Church of Scotland was the true representative of the Reformed Church of Scotland, it was therefore the duty of Seceders to return to the church from which they had seceded, now that the errors and defections which originally caused the separation of their fathers were disclaimed by the Free Church. He concluded by proposing that the Synod now agree to present to the ensuing Assembly of the Free Church a representation and appeal, in pursuance of the overture, signed by the moderator and Clerk in the name of the Synod. Mr. Anderson, Carlisle, moved a series of resolutions in opposition to the motion of Dr. McCrie; and in the course of his observations remarked, that as the Free Church did not explicitly recognise the continued obligations of the Covenants, which he regarded as tantamount to the confession that she did not believe them, she was not a faithful church of God; and therefore holding the principles of Seceders, they could not consistently unite their communion with that of the Free Church. The discussion of the question was resumed on Wednesday, and continued till Thursday; Mr. Beattie, of Balmullo; Mr. G. McCrie, Clova; Dr. Shaw, Whitburn; Mr. Meek, Carnoustie; Mr. Headrick, Longridge; Mr. Thompson, Dundee; Mr. White, Haddington, and Mr. Paxton, supporting the overture, and Messrs. Aitken, Aberdeen; Graham, Kilmarnock, Manson, Perth; Roger, Auchinleck; Brown, Coupar-Angus; Blackley and Stevenson, supported the amendment. A division was then taken, when Dr. McCrie's proposition was carried by a majority of one, the numbers being 32 to 31. Mr. Aitken protested in his own name, as well as those adhering, that the minority were the rightful Synod of Original Seceders, and that they should meet as such in Main Street Church (Rev. Mr. Murray's), next day (Thursday), at 10 A.M. Next day the majority, on the motion of Dr. McCrie, adopted a series of resolutions, setting forth that the proceedings of the minority