

consequence of the Conference that was to be held at Liverpool on the 1st of October, it may possibly be expected from me and from my brethren, Dr. Cunningham and Mr. Begg, that we should state to the Presbytery our impression in respect to that meeting. Now, I just wish to throw out for the consideration of the Presbytery, whether they would wish us to enter on that subject at present, or whether it would not be worth while to have a more special meeting of our brethren in the ministry and eldership, not only in this Presbytery, but, if they see fit, of the neighbouring Presbyteries also, on some convenient day, for the purpose of enabling us to convey more fully than we well could do to-day, the very deep impression under which we left the Conference at Liverpool. I may just state generally, that the brethren there convened, belonging to no fewer than seventeen different denominations of Christians, met, as you may suppose, under very deep feelings of anxiety and concern, and with a lively interest in the great object contemplated,—the promotion of a more visible and effective union among the different members of the Church of Christ, but at the same time all of them deeply sensible of the difficulties and embarrassments attending any such attempt, and many of them full of apprehension. I may state, however, that at the very first sitting of the Conference, we spent the first two hours in devotional services, of a kind and character so very peculiar, as altogether, or at least in a large measure, to dissipate the apprehensions which our brethren entertained, and to give all of us the feeling that this movement was about to be owned and countenanced by the Head of the Church; and further, that the Conference went on at subsequent sittings, without the least concealment on the part of any individual present of his difficulties, his feelings, his views of all sorts,—may, with the most frank, full, and friendly consultation,—the issue of which was a harmony, an entire unanimity of sentiment and feeling, which not the most sanguine amongst us dared to anticipate. I may state in a single sentence, without entering into details, some of the leading principles which seemed to conduce to this harmony. One was, the laying down of a sort of fundamental principle, that in this attempt we must aim at a union of Christian men, and not at a union the basis of which was the recognition of Christian Churches as such. We found that a great difficulty was got over when we agreed that this union should be a union of men recognizing one another's Christianity, but without pledging one another to any opinion of one another's Churches. And further, in the second place, a very great point was gained when a universal understanding was come to, that this union, or alliance, should be based neither upon any compromise, nor upon any concealment, of our points of difference, whatever these may be. I believe that many of the two hundred who came to the Conference did so under a sort of apprehension that what would be asked of them was, that one should concede that point, and another this; and that by giving and taking, we would ultimately come to some kind of meagre creed or covenant in which we might concur,—that by each giving up his own peculiar opinions on his own particular points,—that in this way, by concession on all sides, harmony at least would be arrived at, but arrived at in a sort of skeleton way, without pith, without body, without spirit or substance at all. On the contrary, the universal understanding came to was, that the brethren present, and all who might join in the movement towards union, should compromise none of their peculiar and distinctive principles,—should compromise none of their liberty to maintain and contend for their peculiar opinions, in whatever manner God may seem to call upon them to do so. This was felt, I believe, by all the brethren present to be a great relief. Those of us who went from Scotland did not feel so much relieved by this, as from the very first, we understood that this must form the basis of any frank and cordial union that might be come to. Many of our brethren who united with us in England, however, felt that this would be a great relief and a great forwarding of the movement. There was undoubtedly a very solemn impression at this meeting, and on which a resolution was formally based, with reference to the spirit in which theological and ecclesiastical discussions had been previously conducted. Some of the most touching and affecting scenes in the Conference, indeed, turned

on this particular subject, and which was deeply honourable to the parties engaged in it. The resolution to which the Conference came was a solemn resolution, not at all forbearing from the advocacy of points on which we differed, but as to the spirit in which this advocacy should be carried on. The remaining particular which might have thrown difficulty in the way was, agreement on a doctrinal basis of union. We had a long conference on this subject, both in the Committee appointed for the purpose, and in the body itself.—We had long conversations on the subject, and the fullest possible discussion, in which the brethren from the Established Church of England, and all denominations, frankly stated their views. Without going into detail, which would be improper at this stage, I may simply say that, when at last we saw our way to a clear and unequivocal declaration of what was expected to be the basis of doctrine on which any subsequent attempt at union should rest,—when the Conference came unanimously and cordially to adopt the basis of union suggested,—the feeling was such, that my excellent friend Dr. Raffles, in the vehemence of his emotion, gave utterance to the words, "The Lord be praised," and, just as if with one consent, the whole meeting rose and united in singing the doxology. I mention this, just to show, on the one hand, how fully each of us stated our views on the subjects which came before us; and, on the other hand, as a specimen of what we were privileged to witness of the presence which was manifested of the Spirit of grace and love. We had among us, I dare say, men of extreme views on all points, yet, there was but one feeling in the Conference on the plan proposed. Many of you are probably aware that the Conference ultimately resolved on issuing three successive publications. The first to be a simple abstract of the minutes of the Conference, without note or comment, preface or conclusion. We thought that this would be the simplest and the most emphatic way of introducing the subject to the notice of the Christian public. The second publication may be expected to contain a full narrative of the proceedings of the Conference; and the third publication will take the form of a solemn practical address on the great object which the Conference had in view, and especially with reference to the ulterior meeting,—to which the Liverpool one was merely preliminary and preparatory,—to be held in London, and which will embrace not only British, but Continental and American Christians. We felt deeply that the meeting at Liverpool was evidently experiencing the presence of God in answer to prayer. We had assurance, at the time of the meeting, that we had with us the Prayers of many congregations in Britain, and of some of the best of our friends in Switzerland and elsewhere; and it was remarked by all present, that it was manifest that we were leaning on something higher, and far more able to support us, than the wisdom, or even the Christian temper, of any of our brethren present. Dr. Candlish concluded by stating that probably Mr. Begg would also state his impressions of the Conference, and that he had adverted to these points merely to satisfy the members of Presbytery as to the nature of the Conference, and to whet their appetite for farther information, suggesting, at the same time, that a meeting should be held for the purpose of entering fully into the subject, some time about the dispensation of the communion, and before their country friends who would be assisting them in the celebration of that ordinance had left town.

THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT IN GERMANY.

This movement was occasioned by the revival of the superstitious pilgrimage to the holy coat of Treves, by which John Ronge was moved to address a letter to the Bishop of Treves, followed up by three addresses from the same man, addressed to the inferior Romish clergy and teachers, and to his fellow-believers and fellow-citizens—all breathing a spirit of resistance to the usurped authority of the Hierarchy and the Church of Rome, and exhorting the people to throw off at once the power of the Pope, or, as Ronge calls him, the Italian Bishop. Ronge's letter was dated 1st Oct. 1844, and it was not published in Leipsic till the 16th of that month. In three days it could not have travelled to Schmidmühl situated on the remote frontiers of Posen, in the midst of a purely

Roman Catholic district; yet on the 19th of the same month, Schmidmühl with her priest Czazaki raised the banner of Independence, and armed herself for spiritual warfare. On the 13th Feb. last, Ronge organized his first congregation, at Breslau, and in the course of a few days Dresden, Berlin, Ellersfeld, and Leipsic, followed the example. The progress of the movement since that period has been rapid, and the names of 162 towns are given where congregations are formed, consisting of, probably, not fewer than 100,000 members and adherents. The leaders consist of above twenty preachers, lately priests of the Church of Rome; several professors in the universities, particularly Dr. Theiner, eminent as an author as well as a teacher. The leading preachers, Ronge, Czazaki, Kerbler, &c., make missionary tours through different parts of the country, establishing new congregations and dispensing the Lord's Supper wherever they go. They are generally attended by large, often immense, audiences. Two thousand to three thousand is by no means an uncommon attendance—some times the numbers are rated as high as eight thousand. It is stated, that their progress is more like a triumphal procession than a preaching excursion. One curious evidence of its popularity is, that where there are railroads, the proprietors give them free tickets. In the absence of buildings available or sufficiently large, they are often compelled to betake themselves to the open air. This is a new thing in Germany, and always adds to the solemnity and impulse. In some cases, where the town councils possess the command of large churches, they have placed them at the disposal of the new body, though thereby incurring the displeasure of hostile parties. In other cases, where the populace have had an opportunity of showing sympathy, they have not been slow in a loud and earnest manner of testifying their general approbation, though remaining themselves the subjects of Rome. Most of the towns of Germany have sent addresses of congratulation; and the great mass of Protestants, with an exception to be afterwards noticed, have indicated the warmest interest—sometimes almost to excess. It is understood that the declared adherents consist of the middle and humbler classes in the cities and towns, who are not directly dependent upon government, civil or ecclesiastical; in short, the more intelligent, whose outward condition in life allows them to follow out their religious convictions without fear. In regard to the *impression* produced on the hearers, it is stated, that the addresses are characterized by simplicity, and affection, and adaptation to the German mind; that they are listened to with deep and general interest; and that even spectators as well as adherents are not infrequently affected to tears by the hearty singing, and the scriptural simplicity of the dispensation of the supper—so unlike what the poor Roman Catholics have been accustomed to. And with regard to the *means of perpetuating* what has been begun, it is satisfactory to find that money is in the course of being collected, by voluntary liberality, for the support of the German church—a new and trying thing in Germany; that already respectable subscriptions have been contributed by individuals, mercantile companies, and even town councils; that in one case, at least, females have been associated for collecting money—an entire novelty in the land; and that churches have been built, and other means of permanent usefulness provided. One remarkable proof of the depth and universality of the movement, and of its seizing upon the mind of the country, remains to be mentioned; and that is the fact, that in the course of a few months it has given birth to three hundred pamphlets and publications. Meanwhile, the writings of Rationalism and Infidelity have been arrested. The new in its absorbing interest, has well-nigh suppressed all other religious discussion. To such an extent has it filled the literary market, that at the recent book-fair of Leipsic, one entire division of works was set by themselves, bearing the name of the Rongean Literature. That such a state of things as this should have appeared anywhere in the course of a few months, and especially among a people of such phlegmatic spirit and staid habits as the Germans, is wonderful indeed. We may be sure it is no every-day occurrence. Whatever may be the result, it warrants serious thoughts for the future. In the Nov. No. of the Missionary Record of the Free Church, there is published an address from