

ministers ought to petition for the observance of the Sabbath, as citizens, and that even as ministers it is their duty "to enlighten the people themselves, and to stimulate them to use all constitutional means to obtain their civil rights which have a religious aspect." Now this really does appear to be giving up the whole question. If it be consistent for members of Synod "as ministers of religion and members of civil society" to urge their people to petition the Legislature against the deprecation of the Sabbath; how can it be wrong to extend the very same principle to the Synod itself? Surely, what a man may do, not only as a citizen, but as a Christian and a minister, it is perfectly right for the Synod to attempt. But what is meant in the reasons of dissent, by the phrase, "constitutional means"? It cannot mean the right to petition, as that is the very course dissented from, and it is certainly as inconsistent with voluntarism for a Christian and a minister to ask the Legislature to go beyond its province, as it would be for the Synod. Neither can it mean to enlighten the people themselves; for this is carefully distinguished from stimulating them to use all constitutional means "to obtain their civil rights which have a religious aspect." Surely, such an important subject ought not to have been wrapped in doubtful phraseology.

There appears to us to be a good deal of confusion of thought in the reasons of dissent; and, therefore, they do not seem very consistent with themselves. The first reason of dissent is not so much framed against the fact of petitioning the Legislature, as against the kind of petition that ought to be presented; for it admits that "the object desired in the petition is a thing, which, in our civil capacity, we are entitled to demand from the Government of our country." If the particular kind of petition, then, presented for consideration, be objectionable, why not propose another, based on different principles? The dissentients do not surely intend to affirm that a minister may petition as a minister, and that his people may petition as Christians; but that a Presbytery, or a Synod cannot petition as such; there being no more inconsistency in the one case than in the other. Were the privilege of "assembling ourselves together on the first day of the week" interfered with, would it be incompetent for the Synod to petition for its restoration, on the ground that it is a "civil right which has a religious aspect"? We hardly think that the dissentients would maintain such a principle; and yet the reason that appears to them so conclusive in the one case, ought to be equally so in the other. The truth is, that in Scotland, a few years ago, a similar objection was urged against petitioning Parliament in favor of shutting the Post Office on the Lord's Day. To evade the objection, many petitions were framed on purely civil considerations, as many Scotch voluntaries objected not against the fact of petitioning, but against the kind of petitions that were presented. It was ultimately felt, however, that it was taking far too low ground to advocate the observance of the Sabbath as a mere civil and social institution—to demand it as a political privilege—and now almost all petitions are founded on the fact that the Sabbath was made for man as a race—and that its due observance is closely bound up with the temporal and spiritual prosperity of a nation. Perhaps, the United Presbyterian Synod of Canada might have petitioned for the due observance of the Sabbath, viewed solely as a civil institution, but from the unanimity of sentiment that pervaded the Synod, it would soon have been felt that the only true ground on which its observance could be urged is the express command of God, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

BETA.

RELIGIOUS ANNIVERSARIES.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

From the Christian Times.

The annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society was held in the large room, Exeter Hall, on 5th May.

The Secretaries read the Report, which commenced by deploring the losses which have been experienced in the official department of the Society, and which succeeded each other in rapid succession. Mr. Cockle, the Depositary, died towards the end of October last; before the close of December, the Clerical Secretary, the Rev. A. Brandram, was also numbered with the dead, and within a few weeks, he was followed by the lamented President, Lord Exley.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS.

In reference to foreign operations, the report stated that M. de Pressensé issued during the last year 109,210 copies; the French and Foreign Bible Society, after deducting 15,000 copies sold to the British Society, 52,849; the Protestant Bible Society of Paris, 6,535, and a grant has

been made to it of 500 Bibles for the use of schools. In Belgium, Holland and the northern parts of Germany, Mr. Tidy issued 85,534, irrespective of 15,536 forwarded to different societies or agencies; and there have been sent from this country, for the depôts at Brussels and Cologne, 2,233 Bibles, and 2,320 Testaments, in English, French, German, &c. A gratifying report has been received from the Society's agent in Germany, Dr. Pankert, that the issues amounted to 100,000. The issue from the eleven depôts in Switzerland, by Lucet, Grigelin, have been nearly 1,000 copies more than last year, amounting to 61,016, in return for which he received and remitted 7,954 francs. The Geneva committee have disposed of 3,334 copies, from November, 1848, to the end of December, 1851. In Italy this work of the Society has been chiefly confined to the northern parts, more especially to Piedmont and Lombardy. At Milan, the authorities, more especially the military authorities, have allowed the introduction of the Scriptures, and 8,914 copies have been disposed of, principally through the book-sellers. This elicited an address of "The Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Lombardy, assembled in Special Conference at Milan," which deplored the success of the Society, and "warned the faithful against the wily machinations of the enemies of the faith." Notwithstanding this, 11,251 copies of the Scriptures have been disposed of in Lombardy and the Sardinian territories, 68,000 of the Italian version have been put to press, and 20,147 sent to Italy. The report further stated, that 3,642 copies of the Italian New Testament, printed in behalf of the Society at Rome, have passed into the hands of the Papal Government, who have paid back the full amount of 100,000. Mr. Elener, of Berlin, whose distribution amongst the troops of Prussia has now amounted to above 335,000 copies, received supplies last year of 2,600 copies. The agency at Stockholm have issued 50,567, and at Christiania, 6,576 copies. The Schleswig-Holstein Bible Society reports an issue of 6,576 Bibles and Testaments in two years, in the two Duchies, The St. Petersburg agency's issue last year was 37,032; and Mr. Melville, of Odessa, issued 5,552 copies. From the depôt at Malaga, 12,555 copies have been issued, and from the depôt at Athens, 1,338. The Scriptures are now printed in one volume in modern Greek, and the New Testament is given freely to the schools. The issues from Smyrna and Constantinople have been 10,325 copies. A firm has just been issued by the Sultan, granting enlarged protection to Protestants in Turkey. The circulation of the Auxiliary at Calcutta was 29,892. The revised translation of the New Testament into Chinese was brought to a close on the 21st of July last; and the committee regret to say, that the controversy as to the terms "God" and "Spirit" still continues. To the London Missionary Society, a grant has been made of £250 towards printing the new version of the Holy Scriptures in Chinese, and the translators for "God" and "Spirit" were filled up by the native terms "Shangh" and "Shin." To the Church Missionary Society, a tender of £250 was made for the same purpose, on the application of some of the missionaries, who proposed to employ the terms "Shin" and "Ling;" but it has not yet been accepted.

DOMESTIC.

After mentioning the acceptance of the Presidency by Lord Ashley, the appointment of the Rev. John Cullison, Vicar of Swinburn, as Clerical Secretary, and of Mr. Franklin as Deputy, the report stated the amount of the funds of the Society. The entire receipts of the year ending March 31st, 1851, amounted to £103,330 2s. 8d., being an increase of £11,325 10s. 1d. on those of last year. The receipts applicable to the general purposes of the society, amounting to 51,795 7s. 10d., including £33,895 10s. 10d. free contributions from auxiliary societies. The amount received for Bibles and Testaments was £49,534 14s. 10d. The issues of the society for the year are as follows.—From the depôt at home, 788,073; from depôts abroad, 319,544; total, 1,107,617. The total issues of the society now amount to 24,217,667 copies. The expenditure during the past year has amounted to £103,543 10s. 10d., being £1,197 8s. 10d. over the previous year. The report is under engagement to the extent of £20,000. The system of colportage had net with great success in Manchester and Liverpool, where a single Colporteur disposed of 7,029 copies in the course of last year. The fund of £5,000 which had been set apart for the supply of recently-formed Sunday and day-schools, having become exhausted, a further sum of £1,000 has been applied to the same purpose. During the year, 19,955 Bibles and Testaments have been granted to the schools from this fund. The following grants have also been made:—To the Merchant Seaman's Bible Society, 10,947 copies of Bibles and Testaments; to emigrants and convicts; to the London City Mission, 7,525 copies, the greater part of which are intended to be placed in the hands of missionaries for loan stock; to the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, for distribution on the continent, 75,534 Bibles and Testaments, 500 Hebrew and German Pentateuchs, 400 German Bibles and Testaments, and 100 Dutch Bibles; to the Manchester Town Mission, 100 English Testaments and Psalms, as loan stock; 400 Bibles to the Sunday-school Union; to the Glasgow Auxiliary, 226 Bibles and Testaments in various languages; to correspondents in Scotland, 200 Gaelic Bibles and Testaments, and 84 English. The Liberator, during the Society during the past year, has been granted 109,138 copies. To the Sunday-school Society have been granted 34,000 copies, of which 15,010 were Bibles, and 19,000 Testaments; to the Ladies' Hibernian School Society, 506 Bibles; to the Edinburgh Irish Mission, 100 Irish Testaments; and to the Irish Trinitarian Bible Society, chiefly for distribution among emigrants, 500 Bibles and 300 Testaments. The report proceeded to state, that in the Great Exhibition, the Committee