

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONVOCATION OF MINISTERS.

First series of Resolutions, passed by the Convocation of Ministers, on Saturday, the 19th of Nov., 1842, and concurred in by four Hundred and Twenty-seven Ministers.

1. That according to the recent, and, as it appears to this Convocation, unconstitutional decisions of the Supreme Civil Courts, and the interpretation which these decisions, if allowed or sanctioned by the supreme power in the State, would put upon the civil law,—the obligation to receive and admit a qualified presentee, imposed by the law of patronage on the Probyteries of the Church, is a civil obligation, such as may be enforced by the ordinary compulsors of civil law; and, in particular, that the rejection of a presentee in respect of the dissent of the congregation, according to the fundamental principle and law of the Church, is not merely an act to which the Civil Courts may refuse to give civil effect, but is in itself a civil wrong or offence, which may be dealt with accordingly by the Civil Courts.

2. That other decisions of the Civil Courts, and, in particular, the decision of the Lord Ordinary in the case of the deposition of the Strathbogie ministers, imply an assumption of a jurisdiction in the most sacred functions of the worship and government of the Church, especially in the matter of the deposition of ministers—to the effect of reducing the sentences of Spiritual Courts in the exercise of discipline over ministers and members of the Church.

3. That these claims to jurisdiction in spiritual matters, on the part of the Civil Courts, are based chiefly, if not altogether, upon the act of Queen Anne restoring patronage—an act from the first unjustifiable, and recently interpreted in a sense to which the Church cannot conscientiously submit, and to which she cannot consent to accommodate her ecclesiastical procedure.

4. That as the principle involved in these decisions, and particularly in the recent Auchterarder judgment, is that of the supremacy of the Civil Courts over those of the Established church, in the exercise of their spiritual functions; so the members of the convocation declare that no measure can in conscience be submitted to by them, which does not effectually protect the church against the exercise of such jurisdiction by the civil courts in time to come, and, in particular, fully prevent all future encroachments of the nature specified in the preceding resolutions.

5. That, in all their past contentings, the members of this convocation have been actuated, and they trust that, in all their future proceedings, they will continue to be actuated, by a deep conviction of the value and excellence of the civil and ecclesiastical constitution under which they live; and that one of the chief causes of their present anxiety arises out of their impression that the tendency and inevitable result of the decisions of the civil courts, especially if these shall be finally sanctioned as the law of the land, must be as entirely subversive of the constitution, as it is repugnant to the principles of this church and the consciences of her office-bearers.

Second series of Resolutions passed by the convocation of Ministers, on Tuesday, the 22d of Nov. 1842, and concurred in by three Hundred and fifty-four Ministers.

1. That, while the church most solemnly protests against the invasion of her jurisdiction by the civil courts, as contrary to the word of God, the confession of Faith, and the constitution of this kingdom; and while, in particular, she is entitled, in the judgment of the brethren now assembled, to declare, as the General Assembly, in the claim of Rights, has declared, that the assumption by the civil courts of authority in matters spiritual, and especially in the ordination, admission, or deposition of ministers, and the other proceedings there set forth, is in violation of the law establishing the church, which was made unalterable by the Act of Security and the Treaty of Union, and that whatever is done in the exercise of that assumed authority, ought therefore to be held as in right or de jure it is, null and void and of no effect—still, whatever the nation in these circumstances

might do, it is not the duty of the church, as a kingdom not of this world, which has not and cannot have any power of the sword, or any secular dominion whatever, to plead her title, thus acquired and secured, to the temporal benefits of her Establishment, in opposition or resistance to the supreme power of the state, except in the way of remonstrance, protest, and serious warning.

2. That as, on the one hand, it is the bounden duty of the church and of her faithful ministers, to represent to the supreme power of the state the nature of the invasions of the civil courts upon the spiritual province, so, on the other hand, the refusal on the part of the state of such a remedy as has been declared indispensable to meet the emergency, cannot be otherwise construed than as being a recognition and sanction by the state of the principle which the decisions of the civil courts involve.

3. That the brethren now assembled fully recognize the intrinsic autonomy and final jurisdiction of the civil Magistrate, or the supreme power of the state, in the exercise of all civil functions, and in the discharge of all the duty which he owes toward the church of Christ. And in particular they acknowledge the right of the civil Magistrate to fix the terms on which he will establish the church, as a right which he is to use on his own responsibility, and in the use of which the church is not entitled to resist him. And hence, accordingly, as the church, being essentially independent of the civil Magistrate in her spiritual province, is not bound, and is not at liberty, to conform her procedure in the government of Christ's house to the orders of the state, or of any courts of the state, against her convictions of duty founded on the word of God; so neither is she warranted in prescribing to the civil Magistrate, or requiring him to act according to her views, whether in the administration of civil affairs generally, or in what he does towards religion, or about things sacred—as in his giving to the church, or withholding from her, the civil countenance and support—nor may the church resist his determination in these matters, since in both departments of his duty, the civil Magistrate is always bound to act according to his own conscience, under the rule of the word of God, and on his responsibility to God.

4. That it is the duty of the faithful ministers of this church not to continue to receive the endowments or emoluments secured to them by the civil law, nor to involve themselves in the manifold inconveniences and serious evils of a protracted struggle with the civil power, after it shall appear that the supreme power of the state, by refusing to relieve them from the interference of the civil courts in things spiritual, does thereby substantially and effectually sanction the condition which the civil courts would attach to their holding of these endowments or emoluments, and to which they never can submit or yield obedience; viz. the condition of subjection to civil control in matters spiritual, and of being bound, against their consciences, to intrude ministers upon reclaiming congregations.

5. That it is the duty of the ministers now assembled, and of all who adhere to their views, to make a solemn representation to her Majesty's Government, and to both Houses of Parliament, setting forth the imminent and extreme peril of the Establishment, the inestimable value of the benefits which it confers on the country, and the pain and reluctance with which they are forced to contemplate the possibility of the church's separation, for conscience's sake, from the state—respectfully calling upon the rulers of this nation to maintain the Constitution of the kingdom inviolate, and to uphold a pure establishment of religion in the land—and, finally, intimating that as the endowments of the church are undoubtedly at the disposal of the supreme power of the state, with whom it rests either to continue to the church her possession of them, free from any limitation of her spiritual jurisdiction and freedom, or to withdraw them altogether—so it must be the duty* of the church, and, consequently,

* Twenty-one out of the above three hundred and fifty-four adherents added the following explanation to their concurrence, viz.:

"While disagreeing with the doctrine which seems implied in resolutions, that the silence of the Legislature constitutes an obligation in our consciences to regard the terms of compact between Church and State as altered, we adhere, in so far that the silence of the Legislature, after a remonstrance thereto, on the ground of Christian expediency, obliges us to leave the Establishment."

in dependence on the grace of God, it is the determination of the brethren now assembled—if no measure such as they have declared to be indispensable, be granted—to tender the resignation of those civil advantages which they can no longer hold in consistency with the free and full exercise of their spiritual functions, and to cast themselves on such provision as God in his providence may afford; maintaining still uncompromised the principle of a right scriptural connection between the church and the state, and solemnly entering their protest against the judgments of which they complain, as, in their decided opinion, altogether contrary to what has ever hitherto been understood to be the law and constitution of this country.

Missionary Intelligence.

FROM THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY NOTICES, &c. FOR DECEMBER, 1842.

WEST INDIA MISSIONS.—It is a most gratifying fact, that in many parts of the West India Colonies we find an ample compensation for the years of toil-some exertion, and the large amount of property expended, in procuring the liberty of the labouring population. In certain localities where the Missionaries had been allowed to instruct the people, the subsequent improvement in their moral and religious condition, and the increased number of the regular congregations and communicants, are striking and satisfactory; and, at the same time, the inhabitants of the more remote and rural districts, which formerly could not be brought under Christian instruction, are now anxiously desirous of the means of grace. Mr. Waymouth's letter from Dominica is a full confirmation of these remarks, as are also Mr. Harding's and Mr. Secombe's from Jamaica. The statements contained in these letters must tend to raise the inquiry, whether, with the opportunities now known to exist for the diffusion of the saving knowledge of Christ among this once-degraded people, we have exhibited an adequate concern for their improvement, and have made the sacrifices and exertions for their welfare, which may be reasonably demanded from us.

We have much pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to the readiness with which our West-India societies contribute to the support of the ministry of God's word among them, and to the erection of their chapels; and particularly to the grateful memory they entertain of their happy emancipation from slavery, and the pious liberality by which they celebrate its Anniversary on each returning 1st of August. As a specimen of these celebrations, we give insertion to the letters of Mr. Hodgson, of Jamaica, and Mr. Ranyell, of St. Vincent.

A painful contrast to the encouraging scenes depicted in the fore-mentioned letters will be found in the letter from the Island of St. Lucia, where no Mission has yet been commenced, but where a member of the society, having gone to reside, has given vent to the feelings and desires of his heart, in a letter addressed to Dr. Bunting. Some of the details of the letter have been omitted; but enough is retained to afflict every Christian and benevolent mind. The people perish for lack of knowledge; and it is painful to reflect, that the society has at present no prospect of being able to send a missionary to St. Lucia. It is earnestly and humbly hoped, that the commencement which has been made in that island will have the divine blessing, and that means may be ultimately found for meeting the appeal thus made to the Society.

NEW OPENINGS FOR USEFULNESS: ADDITIONAL MISSIONARIES WANTED.

DOMINICA.—Extract of a Letter from the Rev. W. T. Waumouth, dated Roseau, Dominica, August 19, 1842.

I am just recovering from sickness, and am yet unable to return fully to my work. Under these circumstances I plead for help. My friends around, and my family at home, are importunate with me to relax my efforts; and the indefinable sensations now remaining (although, thanks be to God, the fever is gone), which cannot but remind me of the powerless dust of Nunn, Rigglesworth, and Cameron, close by, seem to say, "be prudent." And yet what is to be done? I that I could be heard in the Institution, or in Bishopsgate-street-Within! Here are multitudes ready to hear us; members who are joined to us already, and the children of

the whole of them, for whom nothing can be done if your Missionaries are prudent, and but little even if they sacrifice their health and life to one or two years' labour among them. In taking this station at the last District-Meeting, I received many solemn warnings and injunctions from my brethren respecting over-exertion, and I could not in such warnings were I at a distance; but when on the spot, a man who desires to do a little good in his time, is drawn, before he is aware, into more than his constitution will support.

Having given a little attention, a few months since, to a society ten miles distant, at Layou, the work assumed such an aspect, that it required imperatively an enlargement of the chapel. Thus, by the blessing of God, is nearly accomplished; and it will be seen that the chapel accounts are not to be burdened by any expense connected with it. But here, as elsewhere, success creates its subsequent difficulties. That chapel stands in a valley, which in itself would employ one Missionary. Hillsborough, Clarkehall, and York-Valley, are populous English estates; and the people are ours if we can seek them. We have already a society there of one hundred and thirty-four persons, but no school; and it is only once in six or eight weeks that your Missionary can visit them; and there is no one to perform any pastoral work in that valley besides the Roseau Missionary. And then, nearer the town, there is another fruitful valley, Cane-field, River-estate, Mount-pleasant, and several smaller settlements, nearly all English. Those that are members belong to the Roseau society, and attend the chapel sometimes; but they want means of grace and schools amongst themselves; they have none, and there is no one to attend the sick, aged, and dying, except the Roseau Missionary.

A new call has reached us from a district called Soufriere. Several who were members of the society in other places have settled there. Many others, doubtless, would hear, and fear, and turn to God, if there were any to speak the word with power. The distance is three hours' ride from Roseau, and would be visited by the Roseau Missionary if he had time. I will not now speak again of Castle-Bruce; ten hours' perilous ride across the mountains; Grand-Bay, four hours' in another direction, already under the care of the Roseau Missionary; nor of the pastoral work connected with a large society at Roseau, added to the cares of the whole station devolving on the Roseau Missionary as Superintendent. I am not asking that another Preacher should be stationed at Roseau; but my petition is, that we should have a third Missionary, that one may be stationed at Prince-Rupert's. It is utterly impossible for one man to supply Lasoye, the whole windward coast, and Prince-Rupert's, quite the other side of the island. There were a thousand members at Prince-Rupert's when a Missionary resided there; and, I doubt not, that a numerous church would be found there again by the faithful exertions of a devoted Missionary. Two or three hours every second Sunday is all that the Lasoye Preacher can afford, after riding that terrible journey, which can only be known by trial. The town itself is populous, and the estates in its neighbourhood are not only open to us, but our evangelizing labours are earnestly sought both by people and employers.

Whilst I am writing, the Catholics are at work, and a Priest is getting a residence there to reap what we have sown; and if we do not gather our own harvest, the Catholics will. I see no hope of getting a third man from the District-meeting, unless he be sent out from home. Suffer me to entreat you, not by our failing health, but by the cries of thousands, not of those who merely want the Gospel, Christians being judges, but of those whom Christians have taught to feel their wants. Send us help before it is too late. The people are really worthy of help. Look at their subscriptions, the highest, without exception in the whole District. They would soon meet the additional expense of a third Missionary.

SPIRITUAL DESTITUTION.—At a late meeting of the Bristol City Mission Society, it was stated, that out of a population of 127,000, there was not religious accommodation, taking into account the religious edifices of every denomination of Christians, for more than 36,000, and, consequently, there were 90,000 without any means of religious instruction; and, deducting, for the sick and