

count of their missionary operations in the west of France, at Saintonge, where they had been able to maintain five or six laborers throughout the year, and which field this Synod might, if it pleased, call its own, as their money had been devoted to it.

Rev. Louis DE VRIES (from the Belgian Missionary Society) gave some interesting particulars in connection with their labours in Belgium. None of the ground which they occupied last year had been lost; on the other hand, there had gained ground in different parts, and numerous appeals had been made to them to send missionaries to places where the people were becoming sensible of the deceptions of the priests. Four or five districts of Belgium were open to the reception of the gospel, and it was only the scarcity of means that confined their operations.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

The overture on this subject by Mr. James Mitchell, member of Cathedral Street congregation, Glasgow, was considered. It craved an alteration in the article in the Confession of Faith relating to prohibited marriages, to the effect that none who contract marriage with a deceased wife's sister should be excluded from church membership.

Mr. MITCHELL was heard in support of this overture. After stating that he had been induced to bring forward this overture in consequence of a friend of his, a member of the Church with which he was connected, having some time ago married the brother of a deceased husband, whose child, the issue of that alliance, had been refused baptism, he proceeded to state that after studying the marriage question he could come to no other conclusion than this, that marriage with a deceased wife's sister, or with a deceased husband's brother, was not forbidden by the word of God, but that the prohibition of such marriages was wholly of Popish origin.

Dr. BEATTIE of Glasgow said,—"The law of God does not command us to contract such marriages; the law of the land forbids it; the mind of the Church was not yet made up on the subject; it would not be for edification in present circumstances to the discussion of it, and for these reasons the Synod dismisses the overture."

Rev. Mr. FRAW, of St. Ninians, did not think they were prepared to make an alteration on part of the Confession of Faith, referring to prohibited degrees in marriage; and, therefore, it was needless discussing the matter.

Dr. JOSEPH BROWN, of Dalkeith, concurred in the opinion that they should not enter now on the discussion of this point. He apprehended it was high time that they should turn their attention towards simplifying the Confession of Faith, and purging it of matters of doubtful truth—as well in regard to other subjects as to this. It was assumed by Dr. Beattie that such marriages were against the law of the land, although the high authority which had been quoted (that of Lord Rutherford) scarcely warranted that assertion; but it was one thing to be contrary to the law of the land, and another thing to be contrary to the Word of God. Enough, he thought, had been said to warrant the Synod laying this overture on the table till next meeting, or appointing a committee to take the matter into consideration.

Rev. Mr. MARSHALL, of Cupar Angus, said the great mistake committed was bringing this question prematurely forward. He begged leave to move the following as the best deliverance which he thought the Synod would come to on the subject:—"The Synod do not judge it necessary or expedient to travel at present in the question raised by this overture."

Dr. EMMET agreed very much with what fell from Mr. Marshall.

Dr. JOSEPH BROWN restricted his motion to simply laying the overture on the table till next meeting.

A show of hands was taken on the motion of Mr. Marshall, declining to take up the question and the amendment of Dr. Brown, that the overture lie on the table till the next meeting, when the former was carried by a majority of 62 to 55.

PLACE OF SYNOD'S NEXT MEETING.

The Rev. Mr. BURGESS, of Glasgow, moved that the next meeting of Synod be held in Glasgow, which motion was seconded by Rev. Mr. Goodman, Stirling.

Another motion was made that it be held in Edinburgh, but on a division it was carried by a majority of 48 to 35, that it be held in Glasgow, Dr. Beattie's church being the place fixed upon.

The Synod then adjourned till six o'clock evening.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The Synod having met, the minutes of the forenoon sederunt were read and approved of.

MISSION TO AUSTRALIA.

The Clerk read an overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh as to the desirableness of a mission to Australia.

The following is the deliverance:—

"The Synod acknowledge the great importance of the objects contemplated by the overture; remit the matter to the Foreign Mission Board to endeavour to obtain at least two or three suitable agents to proceed to that important colony as soon as possible; recommend to ministers and preachers to take the strong claims of Australia into consideration, and invite the enlarged contributions of congregations and individuals to our Foreign Mission Fund, that the Board may have it in their power still farther to extend our missionary labours in that interesting quarter of the world."

FOREIGN.

Dr. DUN, then addressed the Synod at great length on the rapid growth and dangerous designs of Popery. He commenced by showing its rapid growth, as far as numbers were concerned. 70 years ago there were only two Popish Chapels in Scotland, now there were no less than 150 chapels and stations. In England the increase had been still more extraordinary. 50 years ago there were only 4 vicars apostolic, with one or two hundred priests;—now there was a cardinal primate, 12 bishops, and 1200 clergy. As to political power, fifty years ago it was nothing;—now, by means of the Irish brigade, a band of men leagued to do the bidding of the Pope, it virtually swayed the vote of Parliament on many questions. In all directions it was to be seen grasping power, and claiming privileges which it denied to the heretics in those countries where it was dominant.

The Clerk read an overture by Mr. Chalmers, of Glasgow, craving that spirit-dealers be excluded from the office of ruling elder.

Mr. CHALMERS supported the motion.

Dr. SMART moved that the overture be dismissed, as pleading for a principle which the head of the Church had not declared to be a term of either Christian or ministerial fellowship.

Dr. JAMES BROWN could have liked to have stated his views on total abstinence, as he thought his brethren in the Church stood in a wrong position in that respect, but drew a distinction between spirit consumers and spirit dealers. He cordially seconded the motion, which was unanimously agreed to.

The business having been concluded,

The Moderator said—Fathers and Brethren, I cannot suffer the Synod, however, to close its meetings without expressing my deep sense of gratitude for the support that you have given me in presiding over it. There has not been one jarring word from the beginning of this Synod to this its close, which shows that brethren felt towards one another as they ought to feel. While every one has expressed his judgment independently and freely, that judgment had uniformly been expressed with a sense of what was due to a Christian brother. We have entered into many important deliberations, and come to some very important decisions—decisions that affect the interests of the Church from one end of it to the other. One of these respects the better support of the Gospel ministry. I am delighted that that decision has been come to, but I will say this to the brethren now present, that that resolution to raise the stipends of the ministers of the Church to a minimum of £130 a-year, can only be attained by the ministers of the Church generally entering heartily into the scheme, and trying also to interest their congregations in it. Then we have decided upon endeavouring to bring our missionary efforts to bear upon Australia. People are leaving congregations in all portions of our Church, bound for that distant land. It is at once, then, the duty and privilege of this Church to do what they can to send after them those men who will proclaim that blessed Gospel which they imbibed in their native land.

After engaging in devotional exercises, the Synod closed.

SYNODICAL MISSIONARY MEETING.

The Annual Meeting was held in the Music Hall, George Street, on Wednesday evening. The magnificent building was filled to overflowing; the platform and terraced screen to the back being chiefly occupied by members of Synod. Long before the hour of assembling, groups had taken their places, and the vast multitude seemed instinct with the feeling that they had gone up, like the tribes of old, to hold a solemn feast. In the circumstances and under such feelings, it was not found difficult to awaken the devotional and missionary sentiment, and, during the four hours that the meeting lasted, the entire assembly seemed moved as by one impulse. The Moderator took the chair and constituted the meeting.

The Rev. Mr. SOMERVILLE, Secretary to the Mission Board, then read the following outline of the report on the Home and Foreign Missions of the Church:—

"1. HOME MISSIONS. Eighty-five congregations have during the year received aid in the way of supplement of stipend, and eight congregations have obtained grants. The sum expended in supplement of stipends has been £2500, which gives an average of £29 8s. Nearly £520, have been advanced in grants and in support of the Highland and Shetland Missions, making the expenditure for Home operations upwards of £3000. Seventy-five of the supplemented congregations have sent in full returns, from which it appears that the accessions have been 758, and the removal by death and otherwise 709, leaving a gain of 49. This is a result which, considering the extent to which emigration has been going on in nearly all parts of the country, we scarce expected, and it is on this account all the more gratifying. It appears also from these returns that the number of members in these seventy-five congregations is 7592; that they have raised for ordinary purposes £5435, Os. 11½d.; for Missions including the Synod Fund £575 8s. 11½d.; and for benevolent purposes £225 6s. 8d. or altogether the sum of £6660 7s. 7½d., which is an average to each member of 14s. 11½d. This is a rate of contribution which demonstrates the value which these congregations that are composed chiefly of the poorer classes of society attach to the gospel, and their anxiety to maintain those ordinances of which their spiritual welfare, comfort, and hopes depend. The congregations have fulfilled their engagements; and the experience which we have had of the working of the