

and liberty in the past, and as my own presence in this Council indicates, there is already between them in the United States such a recognition of each other, that there is a constant interchange of ministers between them. Would not the Presbyterians be the better for such independent congregational action as there is among the Congregationalists? Would not the Congregational Churches be the better for some such organization as the Presbyterians possess? Is there no possibility of discovering an orbit in which the law of independent congregational action, and that of united organized movement for certain objects shall balance each other? Would not the discovery of that be the shortest way to the attainment of such a close relation of the Churches to our great home and foreign missionary societies as is so much desired in America? Can we not have something in a united Church analogous to that which we possess in the nation, in which we have the independence of each individual State in certain things, and the union of the nation for certain other objects? Would it not be possible to define how far the autonomy of the social church should go, and where united action should begin, and to what objects it should extend? Is not the very existence of this council an indication that Congregationalists are feeling after, if haply they may find such a definition? And is not the action of some Presbyterian Churches in recent years, in reference to such things as instrumental music and the like, the sign of a craving among them for something like independence in the local congregations? My ministry has been equally divided between these two communities—nineteen years in the one and nineteen in the other. I think that now I understand them both. I am sure that I love them both. I recognize also distinctive excellences in each, and I think an alliance between them might be so formed as to secure the good things in both without the disadvantages of either. I speak, of course, simply for myself in all this. But I speak also the message which has come to me out of my own history and experience, when I say that my deliberate conviction is that such a union is not only possible but practicable, and that if realized it would be a noble contribution to the cause of Christian union as a whole. The view which I have given may not please either my old Presbyterian friends or my Congregational ones, but, such as it is, I commend it to your candid and earnest consideration." H.

#### SYNOD OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH OF BELGIUM.

##### A MISSIONARY SYNOD IN BELGIUM.

The Missionary Church of Belgium had its Synod on the 20th and 22nd of July. It was its forty-third annual meeting and took place at Jumet, in the important colliery district of Charleroi. The gathering was not numerous, for Protestantism is but a very small minority in priest-ridden Belgium, and the Church is almost entirely composed of proselytes who have been conquered on Rome by the persevering and earnest labours of a little band of foreign pastors, most of them from Switzerland. However, if one considers what is the task entrusted by the Lord to our struggling little Church among the surrounding populations and what blessings have accompanied, from the first and up to this day, its mission, certainly he will not deny its importance.

Most encouraging were the reports concerning the work and the advance made. Already three years following had closed each with a gain of or about five hundred souls joined to our Churches, drawn from among Roman Catholics and that class of people now so numerous who are living without any belief whatever. This year again we had about the same number of accessions, but besides our field has been extending, the missionary activity of our people has been on the increase, the spiritual life awakened and we were able to enlist a few more ministers, all of them promising young men from the colleges in Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel chiefly, where Professeur Godet has such a powerful and benefiting influence on the rising generation.

The weak point, as always, was the financial situation, but it was easily stated that our deficit is due only to the fact that we did refrain from collecting money abroad as much as we had done the year before. Our Churches for their part have contributed 13,000 francs more than last year, though the circumstances of the time were very adverse to any raising of their subscriptions. How willing they are to do what they can in the way of liberality will be shown by this fact that during the meeting of the Synod a man, a shopkeeper in a village, rose and gave a nice sum towards the extinction of the deficit, offering to add about double if others would follow his example; when the Synod closed the amount had been subscribed. Another member of our Church, an employee without fortune, shortly after handed 2,000 francs. When a committee has behind it such a band of earnest Christians giving proofs of their devotion to the work by their activity and liberality, it feels bound to go ahead in the always-widening task as to the evangelization of the country. The above figures are more significant when one knows how our members are all, nearly every one, poor miners and working men.

The Synod among other decisions resolved to promote a new impulse towards the cause of foreign missions among our Churches and especially to call their attention to the Congo Missions as having special claims on their Christian interest, since our King Leopold II. is acknowledged sovereign of the Congo Free State.

Two delegates were elected to represent our Church at the

Presbyterian Council which will meet at Toronto in September, 1892.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States having requested us to unite in an effort to prepare a short creed containing the essential articles of the Westminster Confession, a committee was appointed to enter into correspondence with our brethren on that account.

Resolutions were also taken concerning the Religious Instruction of the Young, Sunday Schools, Public Morals, Observance of the Sabbath, etc.

The meeting of the Synod took place in the house where for long years the Church at Jumet has met for Sabbath worship. The building is no church, no hall, but a large room which was formerly a dwelling house and used as a school-room. The place is entirely out of repairs and such a ruin that the floor and roof had to be examined and propped all around for the time of the Assembly. The congregation is spiritually among the most prosperous and active connected with our Church and has nearly fifty years of existence. They will soon build a church for which the ground is already secured, but the poor conditions in which it is carrying on its public worship give a fair idea of the general condition in which the whole work must be pursued. Not only is our Church mostly composed of poor people but it stands alone in a Roman Catholic country, surrounded by enemies and having scarcely a few friends outside its fold to help providing for all its needs and carrying on evangelistic work.

As the Lord is blessing us more and more in our endeavours to proclaim the Gospel in all parts of this country, we look to our brethren in Protestant countries to support us and give us a helping hand.—A. BROCHER, *Pastor, Secretary of the Synod.*

Brussels, July 30, 1891.

#### FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

##### EDINBURGH—SOME OF ITS EMINENT PREACHERS.

With such a galaxy of preachers one hardly knows with whom to begin, when all are so good and so great; the puzzle is whom to hear. The fact that I had a ministerial friend from Nova Scotia, Rev. A. Robertson, who seemed well posted, I would have been at a loss where to go on the Sunday. Some people might call it a day of religious dissipation, but it was to me a day of much interest. At nine o'clock we went to St. Giles Cathedral, who has not heard of St. Giles? Where can you find a Scotchman whose heart does not throb, and whose pulse does not beat stronger when you whisper in his ear the words "John Knox"? It is said that the original church was founded here in the ninth century, but the present building is supposed to date from the fourteenth. The well-known publisher, Dr. Chambers, who was Lord Provost of the city renovated the interior at an expense of \$200,000. St. Giles is one of the sights of Edinburgh and near to the main entrance is to be seen on the street what is known as the "Heart of Midlothian." At nine o'clock in company with friends from Montreal, and the rev. brother from New Glasgow, N. S., (who seemed to know Edinburgh better than he does New Glasgow) we went to St. Giles. The sound of the drum and the tramp of the Highland soldiers were sufficient to awake enthusiasm even among those who object to instrumental music. Soon the large building was crowded, and "still they come," even after the service has commenced. I was anxious to hear Dr. Lees but he did not preach, which I took to be a kind of rebuke to those who are to be found everywhere, and who go to hear Rev. Mr. Jones or Rev. Mr. Brown. The services were conducted by one of the chaplains, who preached a thoughtful and well constructed discourse. The Rev. Dr. MacGregor was not announced to preach, but as the Rev. Mr. Dawson, a prominent Methodist pulpit orator of Glasgow, was advertised for special services, we went to hear him. Mr. Dawson who has more than a local reputation is an eloquent preacher, and is attracting much attention. He is florid and forcible, and although I could not agree with all his statements, still I enjoyed his services very much. He is a man of rather plain, although striking appearance, and there is evidently more in his head than the few black tangled hairs which cover his forehead, and in many respects he is far above the average pulpit speaker. Mr. Dawson had a packed house, and was listened to attentively. His words, no doubt, were helpful to many present. At the conclusion of the service I had a conversation with Mr. Dawson, who said he was coming out to the Pan-Methodist Council which is to meet in New York this year; and that he would likely visit Toronto. I found a general custom on the other side when speaking of Canada to call it "America," and I took the opportunity of informing Mr. Dawson that there was a difference between Canada and the simple word "Amerikay" as it is called. He good naturedly smiled and said he knew that. I gave Mr. Dawson the names of the leading Methodist divines in Toronto. He will probably deliver one or more lectures there and I hope he will have an audience worthy of his rising fame.

In the afternoon I heard the Rev. Mr. Bickerton, assistant in the Tron Church. Mr. Bickerton is a ripe scholar, and preached a discourse replete with rich thought, and it abounded with passages of much beauty and eloquence. He took a high position at college and is likely to be heard from again in some of the seats of learning.

##### IN FREE ST. GEORGES.

The treat of the Sabbath in Edinburgh, however, was reserved for the evening. Dr. Whyte was in his best form, and to a crowded audience delivered a powerful discourse. I reached the church a little before the hour for public worship, and found the Beadle, who would be readily mistaken for a minister, busy showing strangers to pews. He asked me to "stand aside for a few minutes," but on finding that I came from Canada he at once took me to a front pew, where I found a comfortable seat. As I seated myself in this historic church, I felt as if I stood on hallowed ground, and fancied that I saw the animated figure and the massive brow covered with unkempt hair of the great Dr. Candlish, and that the very wall resounded to the force of his eloquence.

I heard Dr. Candlish, when in the zenith of his power, preach special sermons in Fisherwick Place, Belfast, when the Rev. Dr. Morgan was pastor, and the appearance of the man and the sermon I am sure will be long remembered. His text was "I am the resurrection and the life," and if ever a text of scripture was expounded, and enforced with a lofty and nervous eloquence, this text was, on the occasion referred to. Although Dr. Candlish was a powerful preacher, still I think the general feeling was, that it was as a debater he was seen at his best. There was probably no man in the Free Church on the floor of the Assembly who could take up a difficult case and place it before the House in such a clear light that every one would understand it as Dr. Candlish could. "There were giants in those days," and the present generation may not see their like again.

Free St. Georges is a fine stately building which cost about \$175,000, and will seat about 1,500 persons. On the minute of seven, Dr. Whyte with the hymn book in his hand came into the pulpit. He is a man over the average height with a pleasing bright expression of countenance, and without the aid of glasses conducted the services. He only gave out the first line of the hymn. The custom of reading the hymns before singing seems to be fast falling into disuse. Dr. Whyte has been giving a series of discourses on the "Rutherford Letters" which have been generally appreciated; and I was fortunate enough to hear one of these. The preacher was thoroughly at home with his subject, and as he proceeded to unfold and illustrate the character of the letter under consideration you could have heard a pin drop. He said that there were manuscripts still wanting which he hoped to lay his hands on, and which should he receive he would bring them before the congregation. From the time Dr. Whyte entered the pulpit, until he pronounced the Benediction, he never sat down; his devotional services were very instructive, his prayers were simple, pointed and appropriate.

At the conclusion I had a card from Dr. Whyte to go into the vestry, where I was cordially received, and a warm invitation to go to his house. Professor Macadam of Morrin College, Quebec, is a brother-in-law of Dr. Whyte's, who since his arrival in Quebec has done good service to the college, and made many friends in the ancient capital.

There are many things I would like to say of Edinburgh, but time and space forbid. The impressions of the place, however, and the supreme pleasure we enjoyed in our hurried visit will long remain with us. I was sorry we had not the pleasure of hearing Rev. Mr. Smith who received a call to St. James Square Church, Toronto, and others also of high reputation. K.

July, 1891.

#### THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

The profit of Bible study depends very largely upon the spirit with which we peruse it. If we indulge the delusion that we are wiser than the Omniscient, and go to the Bible simply for the purpose of obtaining support for our preconceived opinions, we shall find that of which we are in pursuit, and we shall be likely to find nothing more. If we would be benefited by our study of the Holy Scriptures, if we would obtain that knowledge of the truth through which we are made wise unto salvation, we must bring to this exercise a humble and docile spirit. We must come feeling our need of the wisdom that is from on high, and we must come believing that the Bible is the very word of God. If we approach the Bible as critics, assuming that it is a compound of truth and error, and deciding what we will believe and what we will reject, we shall derive from the exercise the benefit that comes of critical study. We shall become more critical. We shall be wiser in our own estimation, though we shall not become better judges of the truth. The benefit derived will be essentially, if not exclusively, intellectual. The intellect may be quickened as it would be by the critical study of Plato or Bacon, but the heart will not be made better. We shall not grow in grace nor in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God reveals himself in the Scriptures to such as seek him with a contrite, believing, and teachable frame of mind.

This revelation is the work of the Holy Spirit. In the person of the Spirit, God takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the humble student of His word. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and He will show them His covenant. If we come to the Bible in the exercise of filial fear, desiring to know the truth, and with a purpose to yield our hearts and lives to His guidance, we shall not be left to fall into serious error. God will reveal to us all essential truth, and the truth will make us free. We shall obtain favour with the Lord and rejoice in our experience of His mercy. But if we incline to our own understanding, we shall be left to the consequence of our folly.—*Presbyterian Teacher.*