

before us. But believing as I do, that it is a great duty always to aim at healing the breaches of Zion, and that it is a duty to which God is, at present, very specially calling us, I would fain see this House and our people generally making it a subject of special study and prayer."

MR. MARSHALL, the Moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod, speaking before a vast assemblage in the Free Church Hall, said:—

"If I am to unbosom my own feelings, they are and have for some time been feelings of very grateful and very joyous surprise for these days which God has spared us to see, and that grateful and joyful surprise more than ever possesses and absorbs me this evening. Let us bless God for the past, and let us take courage when we anticipate the future. None of us know the future; but if God is as gracious to us in times to come as he has of late been, as shown by the intercourse and these conferrings we have had together, I have no doubt that by and by great issues will come out of this—issues transcendently important in their bearing on the future history of the Church of Christ, not only in this land, but in all lands. We know not the future, but let me say—and I shall say no more—that the future shall not more surprise me than the past has done, although I, with the snows of nearly sixty years upon my head, shall yet live to see this Assembly Hall the meeting place of a Free United Presbyterian Church."

Other utterances were equally cordial. A mere fraction in the Free Church and but a small number in the United Presbyterian Church resist the great union tide, and judging from precedents we have no doubt these minorities will be unable to offer any injurious resistance. They will probably be carried along with the current.

It is matter for profound gratitude to see this spirit of true religious union prevailing so extensively among the Presbyterian churches throughout the world. May God guide us all to rightful conclusions and overrule all to the glory of His own name!

STATE OF RELIGION IN GREAT BRITAIN.

We give such extracts as space permits from Principal FAIRBAIRN'S eloquent address on this subject:

PROGRESS OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE.—Undoubtedly, there are not a few things

which indicate advance—marks of progress—at least if we compare our generation as a whole with the generation that preceded it. Think, for example, of one of the most general, yet one of the surest indications, so far as it goes, of the religious spirit, the diffused acquaintance with God's Word, and the public recognition of its divine authority. Is not the state of matters in this respect very different from what it was half a century ago? We have had during that period the zealous and fruitful labours of Bible societies, which have multiplied copies of scripture beyond all former precedent, and pushed its circulation into quarters where previously it was comparatively scarce. Other agencies also have co-operated in the same direction—in particular, Sabbath School instruction, the throwing open of Bible printing, a more expository style of preaching, and the public discussions of questions which have turned more or less on Scriptural subjects. The Bible has thus been brought more, as it were, into the light of day, and had its proper place and character asserted as a controlling or guiding influence among men. There are exceptions enough, no doubt, still—more, perhaps, in other parts of the kingdom than our own. But no one, I presume, would now think of saying what Robert Hall said in his famous sermon on the crisis of 1803—when descending on the sins and short-comings of the time—"That nothing is thought so vulgar in this Christian country, as a serious appeal to the Scriptures, and the candidates for fashionable distinction would rather betray a familiar acquaintance with the most impure writer than with the words of Christ and His apostles." If he should do so now, we venture to say he would lose a great deal more than he could gain; for how often, of late years, have we not seen, in the higher places of the field—in town councils, in chambers of commerce, nay, on the floor of Parliament itself—when such subjects as the Lord's day or marriage have come up, that the Bible was almost as fully recognized, and quoted, and argued from, as in the courts of a Presbyterian Church! Such things mark the general rise of the tide; they are a public homage to the Word of God, which at an earlier period would have been sought in vain.

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.

Another cheering symptom is the vast amount and general excellence of the religious literature of the day, periodical and book literature. Periodical religious literature is of such recent origin that there are few here who cannot remember its commencement; but in half a generation it has swollen into a mighty stream; and by means of Church organizations, the enterprise of Christian