

Miscellaneous.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

CONVENTION OF THE PRUSSIAN CLERGY.

On the first day of the Conference a discussion was opened on the 23rd verse of the xx chapter of St. John's Gospel.—"Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose sins ye retain, they are retained," and in explanation of this verse, a doctrine of a very Romish aspect was announced.

It was maintained by the majority of the speakers that the power to forgive sins conferred on the apostles had, inasmuch as it was not miraculous, descended to all ministers of the gospel. M. Gerlach, a counsellor of the Consistory of Berlin, who has resided in London, and often preached in the Lutheran Church in the Savoy, seemed to regret that individual confession of sins was not made to the minister previous to admission to the sacrament, when the sins of the confessor might be forgiven or retained, according to the state of heart he might manifest. Dr. Harison said, that "any congregation would confess themselves generally to be sinners, but not a single person would confess their single and separate sins; that this, however was necessary to reformation of conduct; that sins should be openly and specifically detailed; and that the discipline of the Church of Rome, which required the private confession of secret sins to the priest, was so far good and wholesome." Superior Buchsel asked, "what difference there would be between the clergy and the laity, if the text in question had not particular reference to the clergy?" And the Pastor Alehring maintained that an unworthy priest might pronounce the forgiveness of sins, because this forgiveness neither depended on his personal character, nor upon his discernment of the heart of his penitent, but upon "the virtue of his office"—"der kraft seines amtes."

On the second day, the Conference devoted their attention to the question: What are the best means of giving unity and strength to the Church by the promulgation of ecclesiastical principles (*gundfatzo*)? And the conclusion they arrived at was, that the exercise of the pastoral office sufficed not, as principles could not be thereby enforced; that, for the same reason, discourses from the pulpit could not attain the desired object; and that, therefore, first, a new catechism should be drawn up, in which these principles should be distinctly set forth; second, that the Confession of Augsburg should be industriously circulated, accompanied by explanatory remarks; and, third, that a holiday, or jubilee (*tier*), should be held as an anniversary commemoration of the Reformation, every 31st of October.

WESLEYAN METHODISTS.

Conference Incidents.—The ex-president, before quitting the chair, made an interesting statement to the Conference. He held in his hand a small pocket Bible, which, with its case, had belonged to Mr. Wesley, and which Mr. Wesley had been accustomed to use in his field and out-of-door preaching. It was printed by Deane, and was given by Mr. Wesley, in the year 1783, to the late Rev. Henry Moore, who, in his will, bequeathed it to the Methodist Conference, to be kept by the president for the time being. It is supposed to be the same Bible which the artist had before him when he painted the likeness of our venerable founder, kept in the chapel-house City Road. Some difference in the apparent size will be observable, but that is attributable to its having been re-bound; and this became necessary in Mr. Wesley's lifetime, from the frequent use which that devoted man made of it. It is almost needless to say, that the Conference most cordially accepted this interesting bequest.—Dr. Newton took occasion to correct a report which had been circulated, to the ef-

fect, that the Bishop of Chester had stated that, during the year, no less than nineteen Wesleyan ministers had applied to him to know how they might obtain Episcopal ordination, with a view to entering into the State Church. According to the secretary's statement, there were nineteen applications from Dissenters and Wesleyans; but how many of these were Wesleyans, was, of course, unknown. The session terminated at a quarter past eight o'clock. It is gratifying to know, that the increase to the Wesleyan Societies, at home and abroad, during the past year, will be about 10,000 individuals.

Emigration.—It is rumoured that a large section of Calvinistic Methodists, 1000 at least, from Cornwallshire and Anglesy, are preparing to emigrate to the United States, with a view to forming a community on the banks of the Mississippi.

The Primitive Methodists.—Our Position: How Ought We to Act?—is the title of a paper in the Primitive Methodist Magazine of the current month. The connection, as such, has hitherto restricted its labours to the spiritualities of the community, without meddling in political or ecclesiastical questions. Here it would have remained, but the spirit of the age runs against neutrality. The late educational measure gave the first shock to the repose of the body. This was followed by the late Anti-State Church Conference; and the conduct of the Pusevite clergy, in refusing to bury their dead, and uncharitably consigning their 100,000 members to the unenvailed mercies of God, has also given them a fillip. Their organ, therefore, has now, for the first time, proclaimed that they are, *de facto*, Dissenters from the Church of England, so called. "Our duty to society (says the Magazine) renders it necessary that we state our position. We believe the foundation of the Established Church is neither Scriptural nor morally expedient. We will oppose her, not merely for the sake of maintaining our sectional existence, but because we believe she is wrong, and the propagator of error." This is plain, but consistent; and we hope the editor will pursue his course with success.

ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

PRESENT STATE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.—The Church of Scotland continues to possess, as she has ever done, spiritual freedom, and those who say that she has surrendered her liberty, either ignorantly misunderstand, or willingly misrepresent her condition. She is jealously alive to all undue interference with her rights and privileges. As she never has compromised, so we trust she never will compromise her character, by giving up what necessarily belongs to her as a Church of Christ. And adhering to her in her day of trial you will be gratified to learn that almost all the vacancies created by the painful and extensive secession which took place in May 1843 have been filled up with able and acceptable ministers, and that she is now in a state of as great efficiency as in the brightest days of her past history.—Dr. Clark, as Vice-Chancellor of Colonial Committee to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. [In corroboration of Dr. Clark's statements, we subjoin the collections for the Colonial Schemes of the two Churches as reported to their respective Assemblies:—

Free Church	- - -	£3619 1 7½
Established Church	- - -	786 5 0]

—Free Church Magazine.

Rev. JACOB SAUL.—A summons against the Rev. John Hunter, Convener of the Assembly's Jews' Committee, and others, has been raised at the instance of this individual. The damages are laid at £6000, and £1000 additional is claimed as a solatium to his feelings.—*Id.*

COMMISSIONS.—This judicatory met on the 15th August. Sir David Brewster's case was remitted to the Assembly. Mr. Henderson, the presen-tee to Banff, was, without a vote, rejected, first on account of defect in utterance, and second, because of unedifying preaching. Lord Aberdeen's

bill must have its victim, and the axe of decimation has fallen on the minister of Cullen. The character of this statute is now fully developed,—it is really more nor less than the *liberum arbitrium*, subject to the revision of the civil courts. The will of the people goes for nothing. If they say they cannot bear, the ideas of the Church courts settle that, if they say they are not edified, the civil court reads the offending sermon, and the edification of the minister and elders in presbytery assembled becomes the standard. The people are actually no more parties in the matter than witnesses in a civil trial,—the Church courts are everything. Besides, in cases of translation, adverse decisions involve curious contradictions. If Mr. Henderson be the defective preacher that is alleged, why degrade the parsonages of Cullen by allowing him to minister among them in holy things? Cullen is a royal burgh as well as Banff; and though there are often petty questions raised about the case of small towns, it must be difficult to show, except on the single point of difference of population, why Banff should have a more gifted pastor than Cullen. After this, let no man seek translation in the Establishment,—it may degrade him in the estimation of his people. In the Free Church no such result can happen; if another congregation calls, it shows that they are satisfied with the gifts of the party called, thus establishing the main point at issue, and under the *Verbo*, if a congregation rejected a minister proposed to be translated from another parish, the effect was merely that that congregation, as such, held different opinions; but Lord Aberdeen's Bill affixes an official brand on the unsuccessful aspirant to a new benefice.—*Free Church Magazine.*

DISSENTING CHURCHES.—On the motion of Councillor Wright, it has been remitted to a committee of the Town Council, to consult parties with a view to the preparation of a draft-bill, for power to effect the following objects:—1. To sell the ecclesiastical patronage of the Council; 2. To place the eighteen ministers on a fixed stipend; 3. To abolish the annuity tax. The Lord Provost, in accordance with his late policy of being a nursing mother to the Church, voted for the previous question.

EFFECTS OF THE DISRUPTION.—A meeting of the heritors and kirk-session of the parish of Thurso was held in the parish church on the 6th ult., Sir George Sinclair in the chair, when it was resolved,—That "from the falling off in the customary church-door collections since the Disruption, and the refusal of the absentee heritors to contribute, unless under a legal assessment, immediate measures be taken for laying on a general assessment."

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Dr. PESEY.—The suspension of Dr. Pusey, by the Oxford University, has moved the compassion of the Bishop of Exeter, by whose special license the Dr. has been permitted to preach in Exeter diocese. So much for the unity of Episcopacy.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.—Let any one take up some half dozen out of the scores of contradictory pamphlets that have been published on the Baptismal question: he will find one writer maintaining, with considerable force and ingenuity of argument, that baptismal regeneration is not the doctrine of the Church of England. He will find a second maintaining with equal confidence, that it is the doctrine of the Church but not of Scripture, and therefore that the Baptismal Service ought to be altered. A third is of opinion, that it is the doctrine both of the Church and Scripture, that the benefit arising from baptism consists in a change both of nature and grace. A fourth considers, that that benefit is limited to a change of state only, the nature of the child remaining the same as before. A fifth persuades himself that he has at last found "the key to modern controversy," in making regeneration to be twofold,—ecclesiastical and spiritual. A sixth, who may justly claim