

of the gospel of Jesus Christ among the chosen people of God. In doing this to the utmost they would only be repaying a debt of gratitude to the Jews, to whom had been committed the oracles of God. It might be said with great truth that christianity had been nursed in the lap of Judaism. In some places already the exertions on behalf of the Jews had been successful to a very gratifying degree. He himself had seen a converted Jew, baptized at Plymouth, and he was now a zealous minister of the gospel of Christ. There was a large body of the Jewish people in India, and he could see no good reason why the support of the Church of Scotland should not be extended to aid in the good work now going on. The Divine favour had been often manifested towards the Jews, not only by rewarding nations which have befriended them, but by disapproval of those who have treated them with wanton severity. The Assembly could not adopt a better step than in forwarding the objects of the overtures.

Dr. Dewar did not consider himself called on to say whether the words of the prophecy, in relation to the Jews were properly interpreted; yet we were under great obligations to the ancient people of God. If it was their duty to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; if they are to convey the glad tidings of salvation to all who are within their reach, surely it is their duty to do all in their power for the conversion of the Jews. There were many encouraging signs of the times, and he trusted they would be encouraged of God to the prosecution of this great undertaking. He approved of the appointment of the committee.

After a few words from Mr. Bridges the committee was appointed.

#### OVERTURE ANENT THE SALE OF LIQUORS ON THE LORD'S DAY.

On the motion of Dr. Forbes, the Assembly next proceeded to the consideration of the overture on this subject from the Presbytery of Glasgow. The overture was read by the Clerk as follows:—

"That whereas the existing law in regard to public houses does not make adequate provision against the sale of malt or spirituous liquors on the Lord's-day: And whereas, in consequence of this laxity on the part of the law, a great traffic is carried on during that day in ale and spirits, especially in the large towns, whereby the public profanation of the Sabbath, and much drunkenness, with its attendant evils, disease, profligacy, pauperism, and crime, prevail in the land, the Presbytery do humbly overture the ensuing General Assembly to take this alarming evil into their most serious consideration, and devise what measures to them may seem best, whether by application to the Legislature or otherwise, for putting a speedy and effectual check on the great and flagrant evils of the present system."

Dr. Forbes said, that it appeared to him that very little would require to be advanced in support of this overture. Every member of the Court must have witnessed, and must have deeply lamented the extent to which the evil prevailed in almost every quarter of the country. The Presbytery of Glasgow had had the subject brought frequently before them, and so much did they feel on the subject, that they considered it their duty to go to Parliament by petitions, to bring under the notice of the Legislature the fearful extent of the evil. They conceived from the report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the causes of the spread of drunkenness, and increasing profanation of the Sabbath by the sale of liquors, that much of the evil arose from an unfortunate misconception as to the state of the law regulating public houses. Some years ago, an act had been introduced into Parliament for

the regulation of public houses, and there could be no doubt that it was the intention of the framer of that act to put down, as far as possible, the demoralizing practices of which they complained. But it had unfortunately happened that a restriction in that act against the sale of liquors during divine service on the Sabbath, had been construed into a permission to do so at all other hours of that day. The act to which he referred was generally known by the title of Home Drummond's Act. It had also happened that this view of the law had been given effect to by a decision in the Court of Judiciary, although the bill had passed by the House of Commons on the distinct understanding that the act, though passed in its present shape, would not affect the operation of the common and ancient laws of Scotland. It was a belief in some quarters that the ancient statutes of Scotland against the profanation of the Sabbath were still in force; but their operation, if in force, were paralysed by this act, and the magistrates were averse to put them in force against offenders in this doubtful state of the law. The publicans, of course, presume upon this state of uncertainty, and carry on the evil practice with impunity. Considering, as he did, that it was peculiarly the duty of the General Assembly to watch over the morals of the country, he hoped they would use every endeavor within their power to put a check to the evils of which he complained. It was really lamentable to contemplate the extent to which these demoralizing practices were carried, not only in the large towns, but even in the country parts of Scotland. There was scarcely a district in the kingdom where the evil was not felt and acknowledged.

Dr. Esdaille considered a great part of the evil to arise from the practice of paying wages on the Saturday nights. After receiving their wages, many of them sat drinking all the night, and next day were fit for nothing but to lie in bed to the total neglect of religious ordinances. The evil was the work of the night before; but they began to drink again on the Sabbath night. He would propose that the spirit shops be shut after six o'clock on Saturday nights, as well as kept shut all the Sabbath.

Mr. Kirkwood of Holywood said the evils complained of were not only Sabbath, but were every-day evils. The principal cause was that there were by far too many public houses licensed in Scotland. In the town of Dumfries, for instance, there was a population of 11,000, and for these there were no fewer than 240 licensed public houses. It was no uncommon thing to see on a Lord's-day morning, at the break of day, fifteen, twenty or thirty people, staggering along on their way home to desecrate the Sabbath. In the village of Annan, where the population was 4700, there were 65 public houses; and some of these houses reflected no great honor on those who had the management of the licenses. Some of the houses were only for the grossest system of tippling.

Mr. Bridges, W.S., said there would be the greatest difficulty in getting Parliament to do any thing for the promotion of the sanctification of the Sabbath, as was evident by the reception such proposals of late had received. He thought that the idea was too readily acquiesced in, that Home Drummond's Act had overthrown the Sabbath laws of Scotland. The sale of spirits on that day was as much prohibited as the sale of any other commodity, and there was also a greater disposition to punish and prevent the sale of spirits. The act did not directly affect the Sabbath law. There was not a word on that point in the body of that act and it was only in a clause in the form of a license appended to the act, that the license was declared forfeited if spirits were sold during the hours of divine service. If the question were properly tried, it would be seen that these few words would not affect the an-