

SUMMARY.

RELIGION IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

—The following statements were made before the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh, by the Rev. Mr. McLauchlin. They will be read with special interest in some portions of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces:

There is throughout a very large portion of the Highlands a marked increase in the religious earnestness of the people. For the most part this earnestness is not exhibited in connection with any external manifestations, beyond an increased and more regular attendance on the various means of grace. But the fact will, I know, be testified to all by our ministers in the Highlands. In other cases there are those external manifestations which have been so prominent in the religious movement in Ireland. I was myself witness recently to a very remarkable scene at the communion in Bracadale, in the Island of Sykk. That island has been visited with what one cannot but trust as an outpouring of the Spirit of God. At any rate, the state of matters is such as to carry with it many of the outward marks of His work. I do not refer in this to the bodily convulsions and prostrations now seen frequently there; but, as an eye-witness, I must acknowledge that these were to me deeply solemnising. It was an unusual and impressive scene to see a church at the close of the services more like a field of battle than anything else, the apparently dead and wounded lying in every corner of the church, until carried away by friends and relatives. I do not make more of this than it deserves. I do not call it conversion, but it encourages the hope that men are really in earnest, and that good will come of it. Better this, if not made too much of, than to find men perfectly stupid and unmoved under the preaching of the truth. I was lately in another island, when on entering one of the lochs that intersect it, and which is lined with hamlets on both sides, for the purpose of examining a school, the Free Church minister who was with me said I would only have to tell one of those men to give a whistle, pointing to the rowers, when we would have that schoolhouse full to hear sermon in half an hour. There never was a time when the demand throughout the Highlands was louder and larger than now. The Highlanders have strong claims on this Church. As any one acquainted with the country must have observed, nowhere has the population more generally or ardently adhered to her testimony. Nowhere was the Established Church of Scotland stronger previous to 1843. Nowhere is it weaker to-day. The change is remarkable, and is evidence of the strength of the popular feeling in that portion of the country on the subject of intrusion and spiritual independence. In the parish of Tain, with a population of about 4000, largely Gaelic speaking, it has been proposed to give up Gaelic preaching. The Free Church Gaelic congregation cannot be under from 1200 to 1500. In the parish of Golspie, in which lies the ducal residence of Suther-

land, while there is a Gaelic congregation of about 400 in the Free Church, there has not been any regular Gaelic service in the Establishment for years. I was lately in a neighbourhood in the county of Ross where the Established Presbytery went through the whole ceremony of settling a minister to the church, manse, and stipend, amidst a population little short of 2000, while there is not a single hearer. On that I can speak with the most unquestionable authority. Now, it is not out of hostility to the Established Church I say this; I feel no such hostility, but I put it to any reasonable member of that Church whether these things should be so—whether it is a right thing that that institution should be maintained at the expense of the nation in its present state? Nor do I blame the present ministers of the Established Church in the Highlands for it. I cannot conceive but that they regret the existence of such a state of matters.

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SOUTH AFRICA.—At a single station in Umvoti, more than forty Zulus have professed and desired to become disciples of Christ, in regard to most of whom the missionaries think they have good ground to hope. The mission has better prospered than at any previous era of its history. A native preacher has been set to work, and it is expected he will be supported without foreign aid.

The missionaries on the Sandwich Islands are much encouraged in their work. In reporting the year's labours, they say:

“Never, within the last twenty years, has there been so much evidence of the Spirit's presence in our churches, as during the year just closed. From nearly all our stations, the voice of rejoicing has come up for spiritual mercies. Most of the reports of pastors have been cheering. The churches have been revived, backsliders reclaimed, the fallen raised, the weak strengthened, the timid made brave for truth, and hardened sinners converted to God.

“About 1500 converts have been gathered into the churches during the year, and there are still many candidates who may be received hereafter.

“In supporting the preaching of the gospel; in erecting and repairing churches; in sending the word of life to the heathen; and in many other acts of Christian enterprise, our churches have done well. All the reported contributions amount to more than twenty thousand dollars, besides much that has been done in a more private and quiet way.”

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SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN MISSIONS.—Ten years ago, the first missionaries were sent to Crisco. Now there is a Presbytery, a church of sixty-three members, including fifty-two converts from heathenism, and forty more are seeking a spiritual knowledge of Christianity. There is an eldership, including three native converts, all candidates for the ministry. There are Sabbath Schools, numbering one hundred and sixty pupils.