

byteries of the Church, subject always to the review of the superior Church Courts; and that while needless interference with the government of particular kirks is always to be avoided, it is nevertheless the duty of Presbyteries, when by any legal and constitutional means the alleged existence or proposed introduction of any innovation or novel practice in the performance of worship or administration of ordinances in any congregation comes to their knowledge, to take cognisance of the same, and after such inquiry as the circumstances of the case seem to call for, or without inquiry if none appear requisite, either to enjoin the discontinuance or prohibit the introduction of such innovation or novel practice, as being, in their opinion, inconsistent with the laws and settled usages of the Church, or a cause of division in the particular congregation; or as being unfit, from any cause, to be used in the worship of God, either in general or in the particular kirk, or to find that no case had been stated to them calling for their interference; or to pronounce such other deliverances in the said matter as in their judgment seems warranted by the circumstances of the case, and the laws and usages of the Church, it being always competent to submit such deliverances to the review of the superior Church Courts in common form. And the General Assembly do of new strictly enjoin all ministers and office-bearers in the Church, under pain of censure, to observe and obey the injunctions given by their Presbyteries in all such matters, so long and in so far as the same remain unreversed or unvaried by the superior Courts."

Dr. PEARSON, Strathblane, seconded the motion.

Dr. LEE moved the rescinding of the Act of 1865.

Mr. HUTCHISON, Banchory-Ternan, seconded Dr. Lee's motion.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

On a division, Dr. Pirie's motion was carried by 207 against 94 in favour of the motion of Dr. Lee—the former thus having a majority of 113.

SATURDAY.

The Assembly resumed to-day—Dr. Cook, Moderator.

THE LAW OF PATRONAGE.

The Assembly took up an overture passed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh by a majority of 20 to 2, requesting the Assembly to take into its serious consideration the present law of patronage, with a view to obtain some modification of the same.

Mr. SMITH, North Leith, in supporting the overture, said he was not come to rail against Lord Aberdeen's Act. He was not unaware of many defects that existed in that Act—he was not unaware that evils in times

past had resulted from the operations of that Act, modifying the exercise of the law of patronage. Disputed settlements, poor presentees mulcted in large expenses, congregations divided, and, worse than all, congregations forced, silently and sullenly, to submit to the introduction of unacceptable presentees from the fear of costly litigation—these things were sufficient to show that great defects lurked in the Act. At the same time, he was of opinion that they were under immense obligations at times to the noble and distinguished author of that Act for the patriotism that actuated him in coming forward at a great emergency in the Church's history and procuring for them what he believed was perhaps the best measure, which, considering the state of parties without the Church, and also the state of feeling in the Church, could at the time have been procured. As to patronage, he was not going to declaim against it; he did not go the length of holding that patronage was anti-scriptural. Looking at the subject in a practical point of view, he had seen it was not difficult to place patronage, rightly exercised by careful, conscientious men, attached to the Church, and having the welfare of the country sincerely at heart, in such a point of view that it could be compared greatly to it, with popular election, which they could easily conceive to develop itself into most hurtful shapes and forms. He should be doing great injustice if he said that the great majority of their patrons had been exercising extreme care in this matter. But he looked at the subject with reference to the times and circumstances in which they were placed. Was it not, he asked, the fact that lay patronage in Scotland had been at the root of, and formed the prolific source of all those lamentable secessions from the National Church of Scotland during the last century and a half that had vexed, and rent and harassed it. Another reason why he brought forward this subject was that he hoped and expected, through a United Church, to be reached as an ultimate consequence of this beginning of measures, they should bear with more force and success upon, what must grieve every truly Christian man, the great mass of practical heathenism and ungodliness that prevailed throughout the country. (Applause.) He thought they should, as far as lay in them, in consistency with their principles as the Church of Scotland, try to hold out the hand of welcome to those without the Church to come back and unite with them, and to clear the ground of all difficulties that lay in the way of their coming back. He believed it to be their duty to make the initial movement in the matter; he believed they could afford to do it, and that it was their duty in Christian kindness and charity to do it.

The Earl of SELKIRK expressed the extreme disappointment and excessive pain with which he had listened to every word Mr.