

and that, at the request of the trustees, they had ascertained the total amount of the debts on the chapels of ease connected with the churches. They found that there were debts on twenty-eight chapels, and that the debt on them amounted to £13,150; while there were at least as many more cases in which there were debts which, if not actually secured over the chapels, were contracted on account of them, and these formed morally, if not legally, obligations for which their Church was responsible. This state of matters having been communicated to the Ferguson trustees, these gentlemen were liberally disposed to offer a sum of between £1500 and £2000.

The Assembly, after some remarks from Dr. Robertson and others, approved of the report, re-appointed the committee, and recorded their acknowledgments to the Ferguson trustees for their liberal offer; and, in order to place the committee as speedily as possible in a condition to obtain the benefit of this offer, the Assembly appointed a general collection in aid of the fund to be made in all places of worship connected with the Church on the third Sabbath of November next.

ENDOWMENT SCHEME.

Dr. Robertson, Convener of this Scheme, gave in his report, which stated that the subscriptions this year amounted to £25,710 6s. 11½d., being, he regretted, a much smaller sum than in former years. This sum included a donation of £500 from her Majesty, and £200 from Prince Albert.

It was agreed, on the motion of Major Bailie of Eldon Hall, seconded by Mr. Brewster of Paisley, and after remarks from several members, to approve of the report, to re-appoint the committee, and to authorise the committee to collect the subscription in terms of the recommendation, and also to return thanks to the committee and convener.

PROPOSED MONUMENT TO THE LATE MR. HUNTER.

Mr. Macrae, W. S., in accordance with the previous resolution of the Assembly, gave in a minute expressing the Assembly's approval of the proposal to erect a monument in India to the memory of the late Mr. Hunter, one of the missionaries of the Church. Mr. Macrae explained that the monument was to be erected by private parties. The minute was approved of.

INNOVATIONS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

The only matter requiring detailed notice in the proceeding on Monday night of the Established Assembly, whose close we announced in our last, is the discussion which took place on this subject, which was brought before them by overtures from two Presbyteries.

Dr. Pirie supported the overture from the Synod of Aberdeen. He said that, from the excitement which prevailed on the subject of the overtures, some legislation was called for by the Assembly; and that the overture from Aberdeen had originated

in an attempt to introduce some innovations within the bounds of the Presbytery to which he belonged, and which the Presbytery had delayed deciding upon until the opinions of the Assembly on the subject were made known. It appeared to him that for any kirk session to introduce such innovations without consulting the higher judicatories of the Church was to depart from the principles of the Established Church, and to adopt those of the Independents. If such practices were permitted, they would be most dangerous to the welfare of the Church.

Mr. Murray, Morton, in supporting the overture from the Synod of Dumfries, said that all the changes and innovations which had yet been introduced were of a nature, he feared, more or less tending to foster and encourage superstition. He hoped the Assembly would stop this ere it was too late.

Mr. Macduff, elder, entirely concurred with Dr. Pirie in thinking that, as an Established Church, it was their duty to maintain uniformity of worship throughout all their congregations, because when they departed from that principle, they necessarily went into mere Independency.

After some further discussion, Dr. Cook proposed a motion, which was amalgamated with another, and agreed to as follows:—

“1. The General Assembly earnestly and solemnly warn all members of the Church against the rash adoption of changes in the order and form of public worship as recommended in the Directory of Public Worship, confirmed by acts of Parliament, and presently practised in this Church; 2. That the Assembly, in conformity with the terms of the laws of the Church and the enactments of Parliament, do hereby expressly enjoin on all the Presbyteries of the Church, when such innovations are represented to them as having taken place, to inquire into the extent of and reasons assigned for such innovations, and to take, with due prudence and discretion, such course as seems to them most advisable for restoring uniformity within their bounds, and preventing discord within the Church.”

MEETING OF NEXT ASSEMBLY.

The whole of the business having been disposed of, with the exception of one or two matters remitted to the Commission, the Moderator addressed the Assembly, and then thanked the Lord High Commissioner. The Commissioner acknowledged the compliment; and the next meeting of the Assembly was appointed to be held at Edinburgh on Thursday the 19th of May, 1859. The Assembly was then dissolved, and the members separated at two o'clock on Tuesday morning.

A special meeting of the Commission of the Assembly has been held since the annual meeting on the 14th July, when it was resolved to forward a petition to the House of Lords against several clauses of the Scottish Universities Bill.

CHURCH IN THE COLONIES.

Report of Committee on the Formation of a General Assembly.

Unto the Rev. the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland.

The Committee of Synod appointed to take into consideration the subject of the formation of a General Assembly of our Church in British North America beg leave to report.

Your Committee having met, agreed to enter into correspondence with the Synods of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick on the matter submitted for consideration, and craved their views on the following topics:—

1. Is it desirable that the several Synods of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland in British North America, be formed into a General Assembly?

2. If desirable is it practicable?

3. If desirable and practicable should all Ministers and representative Elders be Members of the Assembly, or should that Court be composed of Representatives only of the several Presbyteries within the bounds of the respective Synods, that are now or may hereafter be formed?

Answers being received, your Committee reviewing their own deliberations on the subject, and comparing the conclusions at which they had arrived with the information they had received, found that a remarkable uniformity of opinion prevailed on all the points of inquiry. Yet they have to regret that they are unable to present any definite scheme for the consideration or adoption of the Synod. The views which they venture to submit are rather suggestive of subjects that deserve further discussion and mature deliberations than principles to be acted on; but which it is hoped will direct further investigation and tend to promote the accomplishment of a scheme so important.

There is but one opinion as to the desirableness of the object. The advantages that would result from its accomplishment are so numerous and of such importance that your Committee would feel constrained earnestly to advise the immediate formation of a General Assembly, were it not that some difficulties stand in the way—difficulties that are not insurmountable, and which the daily increasing facilities of intercourse will soon diminish and ultimately remove.

Gathering into one body the scattered members of our Church and binding them not only by a common faith, discipline and government, but also by common sympathies and united exertions for the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom, is essential to the great object for which a church was instituted; and there cannot be a doubt that the formation of a General Assembly would greatly promote these objects. Matters for adjudication or advice passing through the inferior courts would come up before such a body in a form riper for judgment and more likely to obtain a clear, consistent, and equitable decision. Much time now lost in settling minor matters of form and order would be saved. The acts and deliberations of such a body would carry much greater weight than those of small and detached Synods. The benefits arising from increased and a wider extended intercourse would be very great. Uniformity of procedure and enlarged means of usefulness would be promoted. While fresh vigour would be infused into the Churches generally, and all bound more closely and firmly together—the great end for