

THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

On Thursday, the 24th May last, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met, according to appointment, in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh. The Right Honourable Lord Belhaven and Stenton, Her Majesty's Lord High Commissioner, held a Levee in the Throne-Room of Holyrood Palace, on the forenoon of that day, which was very numerously attended. His Grace thereafter went in procession to the High Church, where the Rev. Dr. Buist, of St. Andrews, Moderator of the previous General Assembly, delivered the usual discourse. After service, the procession was again formed, and the Lord High Commissioner proceeded to the Assembly Hall, amid a numerous crowd of spectators, much augmented by the circumstance of the day being the anniversary of Her Majesty's birth, and observed as a holiday.

Within the Hall there was a very large attendance of Members of Assembly, more so, it is said, than on any previous occasion since the Disruption. The Lord High Commissioner and the Moderator having assumed their respective chairs, the Assembly was constituted by devotional exercises, and the Moderator (Dr. Buist), in the customary manner, proposed as his successor the Rev. Alexander Simpson, D. D., of Kirknewton. The Rev. Mr. Henderson, of Kinclaven, proposed, in amendment, the Rev. Dr. Bell, of Linlithgow, as Moderator. After a lengthened discussion, the Assembly proceeded to a vote, when the numbers were:—For Dr. Simpson, 191; for Dr. Bell, 75; majority for Dr. Simpson, 116.

The Moderator's chair was accordingly vacated by Dr. Buist, and assumed by Dr. Simpson.

Principal Lee, as senior Clerk, then read the Royal commission appointing Lord Belhaven Her Majesty's Representative to the Assembly, and afterwards the Queen's letter, which was of the usual tenor, and enclosing the customary donation of £2000 for education in the Highlands and Islands.

The Moderator then addressed his Lordship and the house, after which the Assembly adjourned.

On the following day, Fri'ay the 25th, the Rev. Mr. Robertson, of Edinburgh, presented the Report of the Committee on Correspondence with Foreign Churches. The Report was chiefly taken up with details connected with the Protestant Central Society of France—a society which was formed in Paris in April, 1847, by the union of four societies, consisting of lay and clerical members of the Protestant Church of France, with the view of promoting the Protestant faith in France.

In doctrine, the members of this society were sound in the faith, and held the principles of religious establishments. Mr. Boucher, a member of the society, had visited Scotland since last Assembly; and the committee had given him a letter of recommendation to the ministers of the church; but the object which he had in view of obtaining assistance for the society, had not been attended with much success, although he returned to his own country with a grateful recollection of the kindness with which he had been received. The society, with a view of extending the kindly co-operation thus commenced, had deputed M. Philippe Boucher and M. Henri Grandpierre as a deputation to visit the Assembly at their present meeting. Mr. Robertson concluded by stating that he had now to place in the hands of the Moderator a letter from the society, which was then read. It expressed an earnest wish on the part of the Protestant Church of France to co-operate with the Church of Scotland, as the two bodies held a common faith, and were similar in organization.

The Report was unanimously adopted and the thanks of the Assembly voted to Mr. Robertson, the Convener of the Committee.

On Saturday the 26th, Dr. Robertson, as Convener of the Committee on Endowments of Chapels, presented the Report of the Committee, the following synopsis of which adds some interesting facts to those already given in the *Presbyterian*, relative to the Glasgow *Quoad Sacra* Churches.

The report set out by stating that the first object which engaged the attention of the Committee, after the meeting of last Assembly, was the preparation of such forms of procedure as were required by recently passed statute, in order that the sanction of the Court of Teinds might be obtained to the constitution of these chapels. This was a work of great difficulty to the law portion of the Committee, and at length drafts of forms or styles were prepared by Mr. James Hope, for which the church was under great obligation. These had subsequently been revised by the Dean of Faculty; and the Committee were of opinion that the styles were now in such perfect conformity with the Act of Parliament, as to ensure the sanction of the constitutions of the chapels by the Court of Teinds. Notwithstanding various causes of delay, the Committee were happy in being able to say, that the cases of all the chapels reported on at last Assembly, with a single exception, were ready to be taken into the Court of Teinds. The attention of the Committee, in the prosecution of their labours, had been chiefly directed to the cases of chapels in large towns: the endowment of which they conceived to be a matter of the greatest consequence. In large towns it was found that a much greater effort was required to promote this object than in small places, and hence the Committee would anxiously press on wealthy congregations in large towns the propriety of making congregational efforts to uphold such chapels. A proposal was submitted, with this view, to the Kirk Sessions of Edinburgh, and it had been very favourably received; but just at that very time, the decision was given by the House of Lords in the case of the Glasgow Churches, and this induced the Committee to commence the movement in that city in preference to Edinburgh. A large, influential, and most

enthusiastic meeting had accordingly been held there; at which it was agreed to appoint a Committee to obtain subscriptions for the endowment of the chapels which had, by this decision, been placed in their possession. The labours of that Committee had been attended with the most marked success; and already subscriptions payable in five years had been given to the amount of £10,000. The Committee calculated on being able to raise at least double that sum for the object they had in view; so that it would be seen that it was perfectly practicable to make the Church of Scotland again commensurate with the wants of the country. Let other towns but do their duty in the same way as Glasgow had done, and what was regarded as a vain dream of the Committee would be clothed in substance and converted into reality. That valuable friend of the Church, Sir James Campbell, in addition to the munificent subscription of £500 to the local endowment fund, was prepared to subscribe £1000 to the general fund, or £20 to each of the proposed chapels. [Dr. Robertson here stated that he believed another valuable member of the church had followed the example of Sir James Campbell, and had subscribed £1000 to the general fund.] The Committee heartily approved of the plan proposed by Sir James Campbell to supplement local exertion, and they recommended it to the cordial adoption of the church. The Committee concluded their report by making two suggestions. Firstly, that the Endowment scheme should be put upon the same footing as the other five schemes of the church, and be supported by an annual collection. Secondly, that on some evening during the sitting of the Assembly a public meeting of the friends of the church should be held, under the auspices of that venerable house, to advise and determine on the most expedient measures for promoting subscriptions, in supplement of the fund suggested by Sir James Campbell.

The Report and its suggestions were highly approved of by the Assembly, the thanks of which were presented to Dr. Robertson.

Some steps were taken towards the consolidation of the various Acts of Assembly relative to the course of study of candidates for license, and committees appointed on several matters of local interest.

On Monday the 28th May, the Report of the Colonial Committee was presented by Dr. Clark, its Vice-Convener.

This Report gave the gratifying intelligence, that during no year since the commencement of their operations had they been enabled to appoint so great a number of ministers and missionaries as during the one which had passed. Since their last report the Committee had been enabled to send out to different parts of the colonies six ministers and two missionaries, who were all actively engaged in their different localities, and also two schoolmasters, of whom the Committee had received the most favourable accounts. Former applications were urged with increasing anxiety, and new ones made from time to time; but the Committee could not find ministers nor missionaries to answer them. With regard to the N. American provinces, the Committee had continued to receive most pleasing accounts of the benefit which had resulted from the labours of deputations sent to these provinces; and during the past year they had endeavoured to carry into effect the recommendations contained in the deliverance of the last Assembly, and the authority then given them to engage the services of preachers of the gospel for a limited term of years, and also to send out schoolmasters and catechists to Canada, but hitherto, they were sorry to say, with little effect. There were vacancies to be supplied at Halifax, Newfoundland,