

What was the grand object of this Endowment Scheme? Simply this, that the Gospel might make itself a witness in the heart and conscience of every citizen in this country. Dr. Robertson then went on to show that, although the spiritual destitution in this country was not so extreme that any man who wished a knowledge of Divine Truth was utterly unable to get it, still in many localities the Truth was practically shut out from the people, and the command was to go out into the lanes and bye-ways and compel men to hear and accept the Gospel. In support of his estimate of the spiritual destitution of Scotland the learned Professor adduced convincing proofs from the Report of the Religious Instruction Commission, and later authorities equally good. From the Report referred to it appeared that there were 40,000 in Edinburgh and 50,000 in Glasgow, living in a state of practical heathenism; and in the other cities and large towns throughout Scotland there was an equal proportion of spiritual darkness. The multiplication of churches and clergy by the Secession of 1843 had done something to meet this want; but in general the Churches of the seceding party had been planted, not where they were most needed, but in populous localities where they could pay best. Later accounts showed that matters were still almost as before; and he (Dr. Robertson) specially quoted from Dr. Buchanan of Glasgow in support of this opinion. Proofs of this want of spiritual instruction, as affecting the social condition of the masses, were then brought; and the growth of crime, the great number of orphans and deserted children thrown upon the community, the many applications for parochial relief rejected as unreasonable, and the disastrous strikes in trade, all showed an uneasy and unsafe state of society, the want of full and efficient religious instruction being at the bottom of it. To bring the passions of men under due control by sound instruction was the only way to check that growth of crime; prevention was cheaper than penal prosecution, and by it we saved not money merely but the man. Dr. Robertson then referred to the interesting movement in behalf of the Reformatory Schools as a bold growth of unprincipled pauperism; the desertion of children, with all the shame and burden which it entailed on the community; and that ill-regulated and unsafe state of the popular masses from which the mischief of strikes generally took its rise— sorely the humanising influence of a better diffused religious instruction must be the great instrument. This brought them to the question, how to supply that religious instruction—how best to apply the Word of power to all the neglected districts of our beloved fatherland. The learned speaker then proceeded to show the superior influence and power of parish ministers and churches over mere Chapels of Ease and Preaching-stations in the security of the pastoral tie, and the independent position of the pastors. He detailed the working of a well-organized church and congregation in Glasgow, lately erected into a parish, and pointed to the immense national good if all their proposed churches were in the same effective operation. Dr. Robertson then proceeded to explain and enforce the Scheme more immediately before them, and the special plan of provincial subscriptions. According to this plan, Scotland, with the omission of Argyshire and the Western and Northern Isles, is divided into five large provinces each containing from twenty-six or twenty-eight to upwards of thirty Chapels of Ease. These provinces are 1st, Lanarkshire, inclusive of the city of

Glasgow 2d, Bute, Arran, Renfrew, Ayr, and Wigton Shires, with the Stewartry of Kirkcubright 3d, Fife, the Lothians, Peebles, Dumfries, with the Southeastern Counties, 4th, the Midland Synods of Perth and Stirling Angus and Mearns, with the Presbtery of Dumbarton 5th, Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, and the other Northern Counties, so far as on the Mainland. It was further proposed that, in each of these provinces subscriptions should be raised within the province for aiding the erection of twenty chapels into parish churches quoad sacra. The subscriptions were to be made in each province at such rates per chapel as subscribers might fix upon for each of the first twenty chapels in that province that should be so erected. The plan proceeded on the assumption that, if two-thirds of the requisite Endowment Capital could be thus raised—in other words, that if for each of twenty chapels in each of the five provinces a provincial subscription could be obtained amounting to £2000—the resources of the chapel congregations themselves, aided by such grants as might still be afforded from the central fund, would suffice to provide the supplementary balances. As the success of the plan evidently depended on raising, in the first instance, the required amount of provincial subscriptions, to this the efforts of the Committee had been chiefly directed. They rejoice to be able to report that they have not laboured in vain; and there is one feature of the subscription lists which they hold to be deserving of its special regard. The subscriptions formerly reported, on the provincial plan, were those almost exclusively of wealthy individuals. The subscriptions to be now reported, though far from indicating any falling-off in the interest taken in the cause by the wealthier members and friends of the Church, are yet, to a large extent, of a congregational character. And it is in its congregations, under God, that the Church has the great source of its vitality and strength. The learned Professor then detailed the leading particulars of what had already been done, and the amount of money still required in the various provinces, but, as we have repeatedly of late laid these points before our readers, we need not go over them again. Dr. Robertson emphatically called upon Dumfriesshire to do its liberal share in the great work, and be an example to the North, and strengthen his hands there, whither he was now going. After a very eloquent peroration Dr. Robertson thanked the meeting for the patience with which they had listened to him, and resumed his seat amidst applause, not noisy, but earnest and cordial.

The Rev Dr Menzies rose and said—after the eloquent and able address which they had just heard it would ill become him to detain the meeting long. Amidst all the wealth and prosperity of our country, what dark spots still remained upon her? How were these to be wiped away? Not by any invention of man, but by a right application of it than had yet been tried. The plan was no mere Utopian one—this could be safely said by what it had already accomplished. After showing the progress of the Scheme, and earnestly imploring them all to unite heart and hand in carrying out the good work, Dr. Menzies concluded by moving the following resolution—“That the meeting cordially approve of the Scheme so ably advocated by Dr. Robertson, and recommend to all the ministers, members and friends of the Church within the bounds of the Synod to take immediate steps for promoting the accomplishment of it; so

that a return may be made from each parish before Martinmas.”

Mr Maxwell, of Munches, begged to second the resolution. He did not remand the meeting of the powerful address to which they had listened, but of this he would remind them, that powerful though it was, it would do very little good if it was not practically responded to. The clergy must urge their people, and, if all connected with the Church gave their mite, the Scheme would be perfectly successful. There was one little omission in Dr. Robertson's address, he had omitted to say that the subscriptions would not be called for at once, but would be extended over a period of four or five years.

Dr Robertson begged to thank Mr. Maxwell for calling his attention to this point, and he proceeded to make an explanation accordingly; adding that the great object of the Committee of the Scheme was not so much large subscriptions as a diffusion of the work over the great body of the people by small subscriptions.

The resolution was then put to the meeting

Collection for the Colonial Scheme

STATEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The object contemplated by the Colonial Scheme cannot fail, if duly considered, to secure the sympathy and countenance of every Christian mind. Its object is to supply our expatriated countrymen, who are unable to provide them for themselves, with the ordinances of the Gospel, to send missionaries to preach to them the word of salvation, to visit them in affliction, and to comfort them when dying, in short, to discharge those sacred duties which many of them, in other days, highly valued, but of which, in the hands of their adoptive, they are unfortunately deprived. Appeals on their behalf have repeatedly been forwarded to the Committee, some of them representing the longing of the aged to enjoy divine ordinances in the evening of life, others representing the irreparable loss to the young of growing up without the salutary influence of a Gospel ministry, and others representing that surely their brethren at home will not leave them to perish without any to teach them the way of life. Favourably to answer such appeals is the object of the Colonial Scheme.

Beyond this simple statement of the case, arguments why it should be supported appear to be unnecessary. If it be not supported what will be the result? Religious indifference will gradually overtake the minds of our expatriated brethren, and their appeals to us will become feebler and, ere long, total apathy and irreligion will ensue, and every appeal to us be entirely suppressed. Shall we, members of a Church, by principle as well as by profession a missionary Church, allow so melancholy a result to take place? Shall we who repair to our sanctuaries and communion tables, and enjoy abundantly the ordinances of religion, refuse to aid those whose Sabbaths are silent, who have no messenger to soothe them in trouble, to point the dying to a Saviour, and, through that Saviour, to another and better world? This cannot be.

It affords the Committee sincere happiness to say that, since last General Assembly, not a few missionaries and ministers have been sent abroad to meet, in some small degree, the large destitution which exists. The following are the names and destinations of the labourers.

The Rev. Duncan Ross, Dingwall; Rev. Thomas Johnstone, Cromarty; and Rev. William Ross, Aberdeen; to vacant charges in Australia.