

the benefits of a sound religious education, which fact ought to awaken deep gratitude to God that the Church of Scotland had been instrumental in effecting so much good.

Professor CAMPBELL SWINTON, seconded the motion.

The MODERATOR then briefly conveyed the thanks of the House to Dr. Cook (Haddington), remarking that his services in this cause were worthy of the honoured name he bore.

PARISH SCHOOLMASTERS AND SCHOOLS.—

Dr. COOK, St. Andrews, read the report of the committee on parish schoolmasters and schools. It stated that since last Assembly four bills affecting education in Scotland had occupied the attention of the committee. 1st, The bill brought in by the Lord Advocate after the rejection of his large bill of last year—a short bill of two clauses providing that the salaries of the parish schoolmasters shall continue to be paid for two years longer according to the fixed prices of 1852, instead of those of 1853, and to which bill it did not seem necessary to the committee to offer any objection; 2d, the bill laid by Lord Kinnaird on the table of the House of Lords last session, but not proceeded in before the prorogation; 3d, the bill introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Stirling, the provisions of which were the same as those of Lord Kinnaird's bill, and of which the committee, at a meeting held on the 3d March last, expressed their general approval; and 4th, the Lord Advocate's new bill, which was, in all essential points, the same as the bill petitioned against by the judicatories of this Church, and thrown out last session upon the second reading. The committee opposed this bill on the following grounds:—

"1. Because it would effect a radical change to the present system of parochial schools in Scotland, as existing in connection with, and under the superintendence of, the Church of Scotland, and that in violation of solemn statute and ancient treaty, in hostility to the principles by which the Established Church is maintained, and to the destruction of the security which exists for the continuance of sound religious instruction in the schools.

"2. Because the bill appears, by clause 27, to authorise or require the separation of religion from the ordinary instruction of the schools, which would in that case become purely secular.

"3. Because, while it appears that religious instruction is to be communicated at certain fixed separate hours, there is no security for religious instruction being Christian, or for the Christian knowledge, belief, or character, of the teachers by whom that instruction is to be given, or of the inspectors or others by whom the teachers are to be superintended.

"There are various other provisions of the bill to which strong objections might be urged, and the committee deem it enough to state the general and leading grounds on which they regard the bill as fraught with peril to the interests of sound education and religion in Scotland, as well as most injurious to the Church of Scotland."

The report concluded by stating that the committee had sent a deputation to London to oppose to the second reading of the bill; that its second reading, however, had been carried by 210 to 171; and that the amendment

of Mr. Cumming Bruce, to divide the bill, had been lost by 149 to 142. Various other amendments on the bill had been given notice of, but these did not seem to the committee to be likely to take away its dangers and hostile character. It did not appear to the committee, however, that there was any reason to regard as unavailing the continued endeavour to resist the passing of the bill in the House of Commons and they deem it most necessary that urgent means should be adopted by the General Assembly to bring the character of the bill before the members of the Upper House, that no opportunity might be lost of endeavouring to prevent the passing of a measure which was likely to change, fundamentally, the religious and educational institutions of Scotland, and to endanger the future character of the people and the prospects of the country.

Dr. GRANT moved the adoption of the Report, and that the thanks of the Assembly should be given to the Convener and the Committee.

Dr. Grant concluded by moving resolutions to the following effect on the subject of the Lord Advocate's Bill, in addition to those expressing approval of the report, and giving thanks to the Committee:—

"The General Assembly find that, while the Bill violates the securities provided by statutes and by solemn national compacts for maintaining the connection of the Church of Scotland with, and her superintendence over, the national schools, and which has resulted in the education of youth in the principles of religion as contained in the recognised standards of the Church, it substitutes no definite or efficient security for the preservation of the religious character of the schools, and is otherwise wholly objectionable; and they, therefore, resolve to petition in the strongest terms against the same."

The Rev. Doctor also proposed that the Assembly should petition in favour of Mr. Stirling's Bill.

After a few observations from Dr. Craik, Dr. Grant briefly replied, and his resolutions were agreed to.

The Assembly then adjourned at half-past eleven o'clock till next day.

THURSDAY, May 31.

The Assembly meet to-day at half-past eleven.

CASE OF CREICH—OBJECTED SETTLEMENT.

—The Assembly took up appeals of the Rev. James Gunn, minister of the Parliamentary parish church of Cross, Island of Lewis, and since presented to the parish of Creich, by the joint patrons, the Crown and the Duke Sutherland, against the finding of the Presbytery of Dornoch, sustaining objections to his settlement at Creich, brought forward by certain parishioners and communicants there.

Dr. Robertson moved that the Assembly sustain the appeal, recall the judgment of the Presbytery, but find that the trial discourses preached by the presentee were ill deduced and unedifying, and that the third objection was to that extent proven: find that the presentee is unsuitable for the parish, reject

him accordingly, and appoint the deliverance to be intimated to the patrons.

On the vote being taken, the motion of Dr. Robertson was carried by 83 to 18.

FRIDAY, June 1

The Assembly met at eleven o'clock, and was constituted with prayer.

SERMONS BEFORE THE LORD HIGH COMMISSIONER TO-MORROW.—The MODERATOR said that, seeing both the reverend gentlemen in their places, he was directed to intimate to the Rev. Dr. Park of St. Andrews, and the Rev. Mr. Yotug of Finty, that the Assembly had appointed them to preach before his Grace the Lord High Commissioner in St. Giles's Church to-morrow, the 3d inst., respectively on the forenoon and afternoon of that day.

MINISTERS' WIDOWS' FUND.—Dr. GRANT laid on the table the report of the trustees managing this fund. The report comprised the annual period from the 23d November, 1853, to 23d November 1854. Dr. Grant said that the fund was in a most satisfactory state.

Principal LEE testified to the great attention and affectionate care bestowed by Dr. Grant on the management of the Fund, and

The MODERATOR briefly conveyed the thanks of the Assembly to the reverend collector and manager, believing that in Dr. Grant they found the various and diversified qualifications not often met with in the same individual necessary for the discharge of the important duties attaching to the management of this important fund.

HOME MISSION SCHEME.—The Assembly then called for the report of the Committee on the Home Missions of the Church, which was brought up and read by Dr. Simpson of Kirknewton, the convener.

Dr. GRANT rose for the purpose of moving the approval by the Assembly of the report now read. He thought that it was, upon the whole, most encouraging in its character and highly interesting. He would not waste the valuable time of the House by speaking of the nature and objects of this admirable mission scheme. He need not tell the Assembly that this was one of the oldest schemes of the Church, and that no one had been more cherished, and none produced a greater amount of visible fruit.

Mr. WALTER COOK, W.S. briefly seconded the motion.

The MODERATOR returned the thanks of the Assembly to the Convener for his interesting and valuable report.

COLONIAL COMMITTEE.—The Very Rev. Principal MACFARLAN, the convener, brought up the report of the Committee on the Colonial Mission Scheme, which was read by the Rev. Dr. Arnot, the vice-convener.

Dr. BISSET of Bourtie moved the adoption of the report, and the thanks of the Assembly to the convener and the committee.

Dr. ANDERSON, Newburgh, seconded the motion in a speech of some length.

Principal MACFARLAN briefly addressed the Assembly.