

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, AT EDINBURGH.

Thursday, May 21, 1840.

The Supreme Court of our National Church met on Thursday. On Monday, Lord Belhaven, Her Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to the Assembly, with his suite, arrived in Edinburgh, and took possession of the royal apartments in Holyrood House; and on Wednesday afternoon, according to annual custom, the Lord Provost and Magistrates, the Dean of Guild, and Conventer, waited upon his Grace in the Throne Room, and presented the keys of the city in the usual form. The municipal deputation had afterwards the honor of dining with his Grace the Commissioner, along with a select party of from thirty to forty, amongst whom were the Earl of Stair, the Earl of Morton, Lord Viscount Melville, Lord Greenock, almost all the Judges of the Court of Session, including Lord Ivory, Mr. Solicitor General Maitland, the Procurator, &c. &c.

His Grace the Lord High Commissioner held his first levee on Thursday forenoon, which was attended by about 320 noblemen and gentlemen.

A detachment of the 2nd Dragoon Guards, and of the 78th Highlanders, formed the guard in the Palace yard. About twelve o'clock, his Grace proceeded in his carriage to the High Church, preceded by the military guard, a carriage in which were the pages, ushers, &c. and by parties of the day police. The streets were lined by the 2nd Dragoon Guards and the 78th Highlanders.

The Rev. Dr. Duncan, of Ruthwell, Moderator of the last General Assembly, preached from Psalm lxxxv. 6, "Wilt thou not receive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" Public worship having been concluded, his Grace the Commissioner walked in procession to the Tron Church, where the Assembly was constituted with prayer.

ELECTION OF MODERATOR.

The Moderator (of last Assembly) rose and said, the last Moderator nominated his successor; but there were circumstances which made it his duty to decline exercising the privilege of his predecessors. He would abstain therefore from nominating a successor, leaving the matter entirely to the wisdom of this House.

Dr. P. Macfarlan, of Greenock, moved that the Rev. Dr. Alex. Hill be elected Moderator: which motion was seconded by Sir C. D. Ferguson.

Principal Dewar proposed [the Rev. Dr. Makellar, and was seconded by Mr. Buchan, of Kelloe. Dr. Makellar was brought forward as being a non-intrusionist. Dr. Chalmers, and others, spoke warmly in his support, Dr. Brown, of Largo, remarking that every consistent non-intrusionist should, in vindication of his sentiments, vote for Dr. Makellar. Mr. Gibbon, of Lonmay, gave his cordial support to Dr. Hill, and several others spoke in his behalf; Dr. Simpson, of Kirknewton, remarking that he was himself a decided, staunch, and non-intrusionist, but he believed that he could, as he intended to do, vote for Dr. Hill. After discussion, and Dr. P. Macfarlan having replied, the vote was taken, when there appeared:

For Dr. Makellar,	195
For Dr. Hill,	147

Majority for Dr. Makellar, 48

Dr. Makellar having been installed, the commission of his Grace the Lord High Commissioner, and also the Queen's letter, were read and ordered to be engrossed.

Her Majesty's Letter to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

VICTORIA R.

Right Reverend and well-beloved, we greet you well! Impressed with the same lively interest which we have ever taken in the prosperity of the Church of Scotland, from which so many blessings flow to a large portion of our people, and relying on the advantages which they derive from the deliberations of the General Assembly of that Church, we contemplate with satisfaction the approach of the period fixed for its meeting.

We place confidence in your anxiety, that all your acts should be directed to the true interests of the church of Christ founded among you, and in your discretion, that in all you do, nothing shall occur to diminish our esteem and confidence, or derogatory to that dignity which is the attribute of so venerable a body.

In all matters of solemn deliberation, we rely on your judgment and temperance, and as there will be matters of grave and serious import, that they will be considered with calmness and moderation.

We earnestly and affectionately commend you in all things to Almighty God, and pray that he may guide your counsels, and lead them to an issue which shall tend to secure permanent security to the church, and fix it more deeply in the affections of the people of Scotland.

Having been satisfied with the fidelity and zeal of our right trusty and well-beloved Robert Montgomery, Lord Belhaven, we have again made choice of him to represent our person in this General Assembly; and we feel fully persuaded that, from his known attachment to the Church of Scotland, his prudence and courtesy, he will prove acceptable to you in the execution of the important trust committed to his care, and so we bid you heartily farewell.

Given at our Court of St. James's, the seventh day of May, 1840, in the third year of our reign.

By her Majesty's command,

NORMANBY.

His Grace the Commissioner then addressed the Assembly. He said it had pleased her Majesty again to appoint him to represent her Royal person and authority in this Assembly; and her Majesty had commanded him to express to them the high respect which her Majesty entertained for everything that related to the Church of Scotland. Her Majesty relied with undoubting confidence on their zealous exertions in promoting the best interests of the country. Her Majesty was too well aware of the vast benefits which the people of Scotland had for a long time derived from the established church of the land, and which had proved, under Providence, the source of all its prosperity and happiness, not to feel more than ordinarily anxious respecting the peculiar circumstances in

which they were recently placed; and while Her Majesty recognized in the fullest manner their undoubted right to discuss with entire freedom every subject which might come before them—and he was commanded by her Majesty to afford them every facility to do so—her Majesty trusted that their deliberations would be conducted with that calmness and moderation which was also a peculiar distinction of their venerable body. Her Majesty sincerely prayed that all their discussions might tend to the glory of God, to the peace and tranquillity of the church, and to the happiness and prosperity of the country. It should be his study to do every thing in his power that would conduce to their comfort and convenience during their sittings. His Grace concluded by presenting the usual Royal donation of £2000 for the propagation of the gospel in the Highlands.

The Moderator, in reply to his Grace, said,—While the General Assembly deeply feel the solemnity, and would suitably appreciate the high and holy privilege of meeting in the name and by the authority and favour of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine and sole head of his church—they desire at the same time to receive with all due respect and gratitude the sanction of Royal authority. By the gracious providence of God, the established Church of Scotland has long enjoyed this advantage, under the constitutional and benign sway of princes of the house of Brunswick; and the General Assembly rejoice to find that our present gracious Sovereign the Queen, agreeably to the principles that seated her family on the throne, and the solemn oath required by the treaty of union, and taken by her Majesty at her accession, has renewed to us, through your Grace, the assurance of her unalterable attachment to the constitution of these realms, and firm determination to maintain and uphold all the rights and privileges of the church of Scotland. Such an assurance is most valuable at all times, but especially on occasions like the present, when it has pleased God to appoint unto us a visitation of trouble and distress. We desire to humble ourselves under the mighty and merciful hand of God, trusting that he will exalt us in due season, and that the things that have happened unto us will be for the furtherance of the Gospel. The sympathy of our gracious Sovereign, and her testimony to the admirable constitution and efficiency of our church, and its fitness to promote the temporal and spiritual welfare of her people, are circumstances of a very encouraging and consolatory nature to us. Our earnest desire and prayer to God is, that we may receive grace to fulfil her Majesty's pious expectations, and at the same time accomplish the great objects and ends for which Christ has a Church upon earth; and we trust that this seasonable expression of them will confirm our hearts more and more in love and loyalty to her Majesty's person and government. The Royal donation of two thousand pounds, for the support and spread of religion in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, we receive with great thankfulness, as a sure indication of her Majesty's interest in the real welfare of that portion of her dominions, and as the means of imparting very precious benefits to its inhabitants. We regard the appointment of your Grace to represent her Majesty's person in this Assembly with high and heartfelt satisfaction. Besides the advantages of an ancient house and noble family, of a name distinguished in the annals of Scotland, and dear to its inhabitants—we recognize in your Grace the additional and endearing bond of being a member of our own communion, and one whose excellent character and exemplary conduct are calculated to reflect lustre on his own exalted station, and to adorn the institutions and ordinances of the church of our fathers. We accept, therefore, of your Grace's appointment as a special token of her Majesty's favour to us, and as a sure pledge that every proper respect shall be paid to our character and proceedings, and all manner of courtesy and kindness towards us as individuals. We cordially respond to the wish expressed by your Grace respecting the character of our proceedings. Surely it will becometh us, as loyal subjects of an earthly Sovereign, and devoted servants of the King of kings, to see to it that our speech and behaviour be right in the sight of God and of men. May he with whom is counsel and wisdom, enable us to act so as that your Grace may give a favourable account of us to our earthly sovereign, and that we shall be saved and accepted of him who is our great Lord and Master. The usual committees were then appointed; and at six o'clock, the Assembly adjourned.

COLONIAL CHURCHES.

Principal Macfarlan said it would be necessary, in order to do justice to this subject, to go at considerable length into it; and he trusted that the results conveyed in the report would be found to produce proper effects on the minds of all. By means of the *Missionary Record*, much information had been already given under the heads of the different colonies; but there was still farther and very interesting information to be given. In Canada there were two subjects which required the close attention of the Committee, as being of the very highest importance to the extension and well-being of the Protestant Presbyterian Church: one was the clergy reserves in Canada; and the other, the right of the ministers of the church of Scotland in Canada to a participation in them. The governor of Canada had directed the sale of these reserves, and divided them into four portions. This result having arrived at home, had given rise to very great and keen debate. The Episcopalian church was not contented with the share which they proposed to give her; and after much discussion, the matter was submitted for the consideration of her Majesty's Judges, who had distinctly decided in favor of the right of the clergy of the church of Scotland, and it was to be hoped that that matter would be forthwith carried

into full operation, but the committee of Assembly would require to watch narrowly over the proceedings. Another point of very great importance is the proposed establishment of a College in Kingston, for the building of which a large sum had been already obtained; it had also received the Royal sanction to its being called Queen's College, and would receive a Royal charter whenever required. The committee regard this as a most important point in the affairs of the Church in Canada, as it would keep up a sufficient supply of able ministers, which could not be expected if they had all to be brought from the mother country; and the committee most earnestly recommend this part of the subject to the support of the General Assembly, and to the liberality of all who take an interest in the spiritual welfare of our Canadian brethren. It was proposed to place 5000L at the disposal of the Committee for the endowment of a Theological Professor; and having already opened up a correspondence with the Synod, the committee are in hopes to find the Synod will be able to raise a considerable sum towards the support of another; and they propose, therefore, opening up a subscription to add to what the Synod may be able to do; and the committee look with confidence to the Assembly to use every exertion to promote such a splendid institution. In what are called the eastern districts, two ministers had been appointed, and were now labouring for three years, at the rate of 100L a year, with the prospect of 50L more from their congregations or the Synod.

The Presbytery of Bathurst, which was of greater extent than Scotland, south of the Forth and Clyde, had six ministers spread over the district, and the distance between some of the stations was upwards of a hundred miles. At some of the stations, churches had been erected, at others there were none; but the supply was totally inadequate to the wants of such an immense territory, and called loudly for additional aid. The committee would earnestly plead for the means of supplying two more ministers, one of whom should be able to preach in Gaelic. A Mr. Man, from the Presbytery of Aberdeen, had been appointed to a station at a salary of 70L a-year; and the committee had granted 500L towards the individual salaries of ministers who, from various circumstances, were not able to recover their stipend. But the committee must gain allude to the utter inadequacy of all that has been done to what is actually required. During the last fifteen years much has been done, but much yet remains to be carried into effect; and to enable the Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland to take their proper position, something must instantly be done; and it has been suggested that very great good would result from a deputation of the General Assembly being sent on to Canada.

In Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island, the claims were still greater and more urgent than from Canada. From Pictou they had a most urgent request, and the Committee have sent £100, and are on the outlook for an individual that knows the Gaelic, who may be sent to that quarter. £200 have been sent to some of the districts of Nova Scotia for itinerating missionaries. Mr. Stevenson, belonging to Edinburgh, has been appointed to St. John's, and will soon go out for three years. The Committee, in conclusion, as to Canada, propose that, while the Edinburgh committee go on as at present, there should be a division of the committee appointed to sit in Glasgow, and act in concert with the Glasgow Colonial Society. The committee would state, generally, that they were in communication with the whole British West India Islands, and were anxiously endeavouring to collect statistical information, so as to lead to the means of increasing the number of Presbyterian churches in the colonies, and providing schools for Scotsmen as well as negroes. For this purpose, the Rev. Mr. M'Vicar has been appointed by the committee, and the Government have agreed to give him £500 a-year.

The committee had also been much occupied on the subject of the Presbyterian churches in New South Wales. Dr. Lang had come over to this country on the subject of the differences, and the Committee appointed a small committee to meet with him. He required such an alteration of the Colonial Church Act, as would include all the seceding ministers. They agreed with him that, in case of a union, they should endeavour to procure a separate Church Act Amendment Bill, so as to remove the cause of difference. The committee distinctly declared that the Church of Scotland disclaimed jurisdiction over the churches of the Colonies; but that she had a right to declare what judicatories she shall recognise, and on what terms.—The committee have voted £100 to Hobart Town; and the Government of New South Wales report, that there is now no want of clergymen in that district. On the point of New Zealand, the committee agreed to provide £300 a-year for three years, for Mr. M'Farlane, and a purchase has been made of a town lot in favour of the Procurator of the church, for the use of Mr. M'Farlane and his successors. In conclusion, the committee referred to some differences introduced into the conducting of public worship, which were not sanctioned by the church at home; in particular the charging a fee on baptism. The report concluded by urging increased exertion and prayer, in order to increase the results which have already been achieved. Only four years ago it was just in its infancy, and it now extended over the whole of British America; and the amount of good done was incalculably great. The labors of the committee had been cheered by the consideration, that they had with them the sympathy and approbation of the church, and the liberality of the country.

Dr. M'Leod was sure his motion would be res-

ponded to, that the report be approved of and adopted; and that the Moderator present the thanks of the Assembly to the very excellent Conventer and the committee, for the ability and diligence with which they have discharged their respective duties. The report has brought before them considerations of the most solemnising nature. It spreads its review over the whole of the British Colonies to which emigration had taken place, and was yet daily increasing. Fifty to eighty thousand had emigrated from our own country last year, and it might continue so for years. It was painful to see the removal of those we value, but we could not regret that better prospects were opening up for them, which might promote both their spiritual and temporal welfare. Emigration is the only safety-valve for a redundant population, but the thousands that are going away should be themselves instructed, and ministers sent with them to watch over that instruction. Let them sow the seed in the infant colony, and the benefits of that sowing will be reaped by the parent country, perhaps many ages after. Great excitement has prevailed on the subject of emigration of late years, and particularly during last year, and it is still increasing from the great want of employment at home. The tide of emigration is not confined to the poorer classes; even the very richest will tell you that they cannot find employment for their sons at home; and so general has emigration spread over the country, that very few were left without having some friend or other in the colonies. Such being the extent of emigration, the providing of proper religious instruction to the colonists should be one of the first objects of this country. Even the nobles of the land were turning their eyes to the colonies; and it was therefore important for the Church of Scotland to send out labourers to sow the seed of Christian light. We should be grateful to providence that such a field has been opened up for our population.

We cannot suppose that all the lovely Islands of the Pacific were created for nothing beyond being the playthings of the ocean. He believed they were created for the use of man, and that it is the command of God to go out and inhabit. Britain has planted colonies in all parts of the world, in the eastern and in the western hemisphere, and to what extent this might increase it was not easy to conceive; but as it was, millions upon millions, in every quarter of the globe, were now speaking our language, and reading our books, and crying to us to come over and help them. It was a great thing to be distinguished of God as a beloved nation, and Britain seemed the chosen instrument of God in spreading Christianity throughout the world. It is for this that providence has raised us high among the nations, and that our ships are found traversing every sea; and though we have cause to be humbled that we have done so little, yet there is hope in the rays of light, and of knowledge, which are daily spreading themselves over the earth, that so much has been done as will lead to increased hopes. The labour in which the committee was engaged was partly one of missionary enterprise. And we should feel grateful to God that we have had the honor of being the means of doing so much for New Zealand already; and he urged in the strongest manner, the claims which their expatriated countrymen had upon them, to enable them to enjoy the church and the teachers of their youth. In speaking of the proposed college at Kingston, Dr. M'Leod said, he hoped they would supply what was wanting in the present colleges, a Professor of Gaelic, that ministers might be trained up to teach the tens of thousands, who know no other language than the Gaelic.

On the 26th May, Dr. Cook brought forward a motion, to the effect that the assembly have acted *ultra vires*, in suspending the seven ministers of the Presbytery of Strathbogie; and an amendment moved by the Procurator, that the seven ministers had been duly suspended, was carried, the vote being—

For the Procurator's amendment,	227
For Dr. Cook's motion,	143

Majority for the Procurator's amendment, 84

On the following day Dr. Chalmers brought up the non-intrusion question, and moved a series of resolutions, vindicating the spiritual supremacy of the Church, and allowing to the civil courts the supreme power in all questions touching the temporalities of the establishment; also disapproving of the bill introduced into Parliament by Lord Aberdeen, for the adjustment of existing differences, on the grounds, amongst others, that it makes no adequate provision for securing the exclusive jurisdiction of the church, in spiritual matters, or for enabling the church to carry into effect the principle of non-intrusion, according to any specific law, nor does it leave the church power to exercise its judicial functions, nor does it protect them from civil coercion and control, &c.

An amendment was moved by Dr. Cook, to the effect, that the veto act, under existing circumstances, should be set aside; and approving of the general tenor of Lord Aberdeen's bill, &c.

The vote was taken—	
For Dr. Chalmers's resolutions,	221
For Dr. Cook's amendment,	134

Majority in favor of non-intrusion, &c. 87

On the 29th, Dr. Cook gave in reasons of dissent, from the decision of the Assembly in the Strathbogie case, signed by upwards of one hundred members, headed by the signature of Lord Selkirk.