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Some Features of Present-Day Preaching.

(Continued from page 243.)

4. The divinity of Christ is imperfectly exhibited or wholly overlooked. This feature of present-day preaching proceeds from the prevailing tendency of the age to dwell upon the humanity of Christ. Now-a-days professors of religion have such slight impressions of the extent of man's fall that they see no necessity for a divine Saviour, and therefore a merely human one will meet their case. Being satisfied with morality as true religion, they consider all who have this as real Christians. We do not wonder then that they come to the conclusion that moral Unitarians, who deny the divinity of our Lord, may be true Christians. In this way the dictum has been pronounced that a man may be a true Christian and yet not believe in the divinity of Christ. However absurd and self-contradictory this statement may seem to us, yet it appears to be very widely accepted as truth. Many preachers lay little emphasis upon a belief in Christ's divinity. They take up their time in exhibiting the human excellencies of His character, and if their hearers are won to admire the man Christ Jesus, they seem to think they have made them very satisfactory Christians. In fact, it would appear that the Christ preached by many even who profess to believe in His eternal Godhead is just a perfect man, and no more. Of course, they speak of Him as filled with the love of God, and, to use the language of Ritschl, the German theologian, as having everything in Him which has value for us in the conception of God. Much depends, however, upon what value we attach to this conception, and so we find that the above writer denies the doctrine of a divine nature in Christ. It is our privilege to hold with the Confession of Faith, that it was "the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God," who "did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature," and we believe that when this great Scriptural truth is thrust into the background, and esteemed of little value, the glory of the Redeemer is surrendered. In vain do men, however exalted in

the professing Church, boast of His humanity apart from His divinity. It is not the Christ of God they worship. We recall the conversation that took place between Christ and His disciples as narrated in Matt. xvi. 13-17. He asked the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Peter bore testimony to the divine sonship of Christ. It was the Father who had revealed it to him. Flesh and blood is able to discern the humanity of Christ, and to preach about it, but a divine revelation is required in order to bear testimony to his divinity. Witness the clear testimony of the Apostle John, "The Word was with God and was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace of truth."—(John i.)

The tendency to ignore this fundamental truth in the preaching of to-day appears in many forms. Some use the name "Jesus" almost exclusively, and seldom speak of Him as "the Son of God." Others have an irreverent way of coupling the name of Christ with the apostles, as if there was little difference between the Master and the disciples. They speak of "Jesus and John," or "Jesus and Paul," as if they were speaking of Plato and Aristotle—both mere men. This tendency also appears in a disposition to underestimate the statements of the apostles with regard to the person of Christ, as if Paul and John were not inspired of the Holy Ghost, and did not speak according to infallible truth. The preaching of our day is largely under the influence of the so-called higher criticism. When preachers and others treat the Old Testament Scriptures as of purely human composition, and not of divine authorship, they go far to deny the divinity of Christ. He referred to the Old Testament as the infallible Word of God, and to insinuate that He erred in this, is practically to deny that He is God. Again, many preachers, as already stated, dwell greatly upon the humanity of Christ. They laud His love, kindness, sympathy, self-denial, and other virtues that are possible to men, and call upon their people to admire these virtues, and to copy them. They hold up as an example the perfect man, and preach salvation by the imitation of Christ. As has been before remarked in these pages, this is only a new version of the covenant of works, which has killed every sinner that has sought salvation by it. Salvation is not of works, but by faith in Jesus Christ. It is manifest also that it is not the belief that Jesus is the Son of man, but that Jesus is the Son of God, that brings salvation. It is he that believes in the only begotten

Son of God that has everlasting life.—(John iii. 16.) “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”—(1 John v. 5.) The gospel of salvation by the imitation of Christ, which is the popular gospel of our day, is therefore radically wrong. It is because the eyes of men are blind and do not see on the one hand the depravity and wickedness of their hearts, and on the other the unspeakable holiness and glory of Christ, that they imagine they can attain salvation by imitating Him. Before one step can be taken in the imitation of Christ the sinner must be born again, and made a new creature, and even after this, the renewed soul is deeply sensible that in this life it can never attain to perfect conformity to Christ’s image. Let it lastly be noticed that it is not imperfect or perfect conformity to Christ that is the procuring cause of the soul’s salvation, but Christ Himself in the infinite value of His sufferings and death. It was “God manifest in the flesh,” suffering and dying as a satisfaction to justice, and an atonement for the sins of His people, that procured eternal redemption. Therefore, to imperfectly exhibit or wholly overlook the divinity of Christ is not only to dishonour that name which is above every name, but to make void the way of salvation, and do fatal injury to the souls of men.

A Sermon.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

PREACHED AT A COMMUNION IN ANWOTH, IN 1634.*

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*“Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord,” &c.—ZECH. xi. 9-13.*  
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BELOVED in our Lord, this text is Christ’s farewell to the Church of the Jews. He is, as it were, half out at the door, leaving His harlot wife; and saying to her, Seek ye another husband, and I will seek another wife: and so He bids her adieu. The words contain,

1. Christ’s good-night: *“I will not feed you.”*
2. A fruit of His farewell: *“That that dieth, let it die.”*
3. The manner of His departing from them: *“I took my staff, and cut it asunder.”*
4. What followed upon that: *“The poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord.”*

* Taken from edition of “Fourteen Communion Sermons.”

5. Ere He go clean away, and give over His calling, He says, Pay me my by-gones: "*Give me my price.*"

6. They gave Him for His price, thirty pieces of silver to buy Him, that they might get Him crucified.

7. He is sorry, is offended, or grudges the price, and says, "*Cast it into the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them.*" As if He had said, Give it to your beggars and strangers, to buy a burial place for them: for I will have none of your wages, if that be all you will give Me. And so the Lord's wages was casten back again into the potter's field, to buy it.

1. "*Then said I, I will not feed you.*"—Here is a terrible word, and a hard threatening spoken by Christ, the great Shepherd, sent of the Father, to gather in His own sheep. "I will feed you no more." Beware, O people of Anwoth, lest He be saying this unto many of you; for your want of love to Him, and slighting His ordinances with the means of salvation and mercy offered unto you. Hence we may observe, that when Christ has gathered in all His own sheep, all His own elect children and people, He sometimes gives them up for a season. This prophecy has a relation to that time, after Christ's death and ascension, when the apostles left the church of the Jews, and turned themselves to seek and suit a young wife for their Master, even the church of the Gentiles.

Even in Abraham's days, when it was but morning, and the beginning of days, the Lord began to feed His sheep, and sent Moses and Aaron to herd them in the wilderness: and sent prophets and servants to His vineyard, with an order to say, Render fruit; send in the rent of your farm to my Father. But they slew and stoned the prophets (Matt. xxiii. 37). Then He sent other servants unto them, and they beat them. At length He sent the King's own Son, the Heir and Lord of all, to them; and they slew Him. And He sent the apostles last of all, and they persecuted and killed them (Matt. xxi. 36, 37, 38, 39). All this time Christ was gathering in His own sheep, for Christ will want none of them. And when Christ had gotten in all the lost money, even all to the last farthing, then He blows out the candle and cares not for the rest, but says, Take ye the sweepings of the house and cast them away, I have got My own. Wherefore holdeth a great man a house? It is not to entertain beggars and strangers: they get a bit, or a meal in the by-going, which is all their errand to the house. But he holds his house to entertain his children and servants in, and were it not for them he would give up housekeeping. When Christ's children are grown up and married to their new husband; and when His sheep are gathered into His fold, sealed and marked; and when there are but strangers without; then He gives up housekeeping, locks the door, and says He will feed them no more.

Hence also, here is a spark of hope to those who fear Christ. If He say to this land, I will feed you no more, yet there is in the

land children and sheep to be fed. Ye shall aye get your meat of it, go as it will. Though ye should be hounded and scattered from mountain to mountain, and though the dogs should bark at you, yet Christ must feed the poor of the flock till He get them out from among the rest. And therefore eat ye now, and take the meals that your Lord sends you with good will, it is for you that God feeds the flock. It is not for the rocks and the mountains that God sends down rain, it is for the grass and the corn.

2. The fruit of Christ's departure: says He, "*That that dieth, let it die.*" This, no doubt, is hard. Lord, if you feedest us not, we will die, we will be hounded and slain upon the mountains. Yea, I know, says Christ, it shall be so, but I shall be blameless, I shall give up with you and lay down My calling.

Hence we see what follows, when Christ turns His back on the sheep. They die, they perish, they eat one another's flesh for hunger. For not only were those people made vagabonds upon the earth, as they are at this day, but their souls famish, and they are groping in darkness for the coming of another Messiah. So we see when Christ—the Shepherd—goes away, the fox, the lion, the wolf, and all the dogs of hell come and run away with the flock. For this is Satan's way, when Christ has gone away, pulled down the Shepherd's tents, removed a preaching ministry, and taken His flock with Him. The leavings and the goats must fall to the lion. The devil gets Christ's leavings; what God refuses, by law falls to the devil; when Christ has gotten in His wheat, then Satan comes and takes up the loose sheaf. Woe to you who are not in Christ's bundle, but fall out and lie in the field, and will not be gathered into Christ's barn, for ye are the devil's by law.

Then, ere we proceed further, let every one try whose side they are on. Ye cannot deny that Christ is at His harvest, and gathering in His sheaves in this land. See whose mark and arms you carry: ye must carry either God's or the devil's. See whether ye be in Rome's black camp wherein the fallen star, the red dragon, and the prince of the bottomless pit, are the captains. For Christ is now mustering His men, and proclaiming, Who is for Me, and who is for battle? Some are saying, God help us, for we know not which of the sides is rightest: ye say one thing, and they say another. If ye say, "I am indifferent," I like not that. Ye will get a master ere long. Satan, by his due, gets the wandered sheep, I mean the indifferent man or him who is on none of the sides.

Many temporal evils come upon a people when Christ says, "*I will feed you no more.*" Multitudes who heard Zechariah would be glad at this "I will feed you no more." They would say, We will get the good old lucky world again; when we baked cakes to the queen of heaven we wanted nothing; we will get quit of that which the barking prophets are aye crying, "The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord." So say our people, If this religion

were away we will get the good old, merry, sonsy world again, wherein there was much luck and grace.

Then let our text answer you both. So, then, would you have the old, lucky, sonsy world again? Then take it to you out of God's mouth, "Ye shall eat every one the flesh of another" when the Gospel goes away. God said then—Devil, Antichrist, Jesuite, pestilence, famine, and sword, set on them! I have done with them. The Romans, sword, and famine, did devour them. Will a mother eat her own child of a span long for hunger? Yet this was done. That was the old world the Jews got when Christ turned His back upon them. For this, see Jer. xxv. 17. When the people rejected the word of the Lord and put it from them, as we are doing, the Lord put in Jerusalem's and Judah's hand the cup of the wine of the wrath of God, and bids them drink, and spue, and fall, and never rise again. Now what think ye of this old sonsy world? See also Psalm lxxiv., when God left feeding His sheep, in came the enemies, warred, burnt the sanctuary, &c. And when God left the flock (Psalm lxxix. 2), the dead bodies of His servants are given for meat to the fowls of heaven. And see what follows on God's departure (Ezek. viii. 9, 10, 11, and xii. 13). The prince shall flee away on his feet, with his flitting upon his back. "I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon." They shall be taken as birds, &c.

3. "*And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.*" Here there are three things. 1. What the staff is. 2. The name of it, Beauty. 3. The Lord's breaking of it.

I shall go no further to seek the meaning of it. The breaking of the staff is ~~the~~ breaking of the covenant; the staff itself is the Word of God and covenant. And indeed the Word of God is Christ's shepherd's staff, whereby He driveth His sheep to heaven, and awakes the conscience. For Christ has no rod over the neck of His sheep but His Word—it is His sceptre. Christ's strength, in bringing in His sheep, is in His Word, for it is His sceptre, and therefore it is called the Lord's arm (Isaiah liii. 1). And an arm must have a hand and fingers. It is even that whereby He wrestles with His enemies—with sinners—when He makes them saints, and no man dare separate them. The devil would fain separate Christ and the soul, when they are wrestling a fall, but Christ gives him a back-stroke, and with His staff can wound the conscience of one who has seven devils, and can cause them fall under Him. But know, our Lord useth this sort of staff against several sorts of men, wherein ye shall see the use of it.

(a) Christ casts His staff at many, and it misses them, for the pikes of it go no more in the conscience of some men than a pointless arrow in a wall of brass (Ezek. iii. 7). Are there not many who are no more moved nor touched with the sharp point of Christ's staff than a dead man is with the sound of a trumpet

blown in his ear? The Word never draws blood in their consciences, they can fence and ward their souls from a stroke.

(b) Some get a blad and a blea stroke in their conscience, as trembling Felix did, and despairing Cain, and others got. But the devil heals their wounds, as Cain got a plaster on his wound and went and built a city. See, for this, Hosea vi. There ye see how our Lord blads and strikes with His staff. Verse 5, He says, "I have hewed them in pieces by my prophets, and slain them by the words of my mouth." There was blea wounds in their conscience made by Christ's staff. But what then? Verse 7, "But they like men have transgressed the covenant." They mended again, after Christ's staff had wounded their conscience.

(c) Some get a dead stroke with Christ's staff. It is a dead trumpet to them, and cries nothing to them but God's curse and malediction; 1 Peter ii. 8; 2 Cor. x. 6, "Christ is to them a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the Word, being disobedient thereunto." Christ strikes with the rod and strength of His power; "He strikes through kings, and fills the highways with dead bodies."—(Psalm cx.)

(d) The Lord's own sheep get a wound in their consciences with the staff, Beauty, as when He cries, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul bled with the pikes of the staff, so that the law, and the curses and terrors of it, drew him off his high horse and made him lie on the breadth of his back; so that he cried, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Christ, with His staff, struck three thousand at once, until they were pricked in their hearts.—(Acts ii. 37.) And they cried—for their consciences were driven all to flinders—saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Lydia got such a back-stroke with the pikes of this staff that Christ, with infinite power, brake up all the locks of her heart till it was made to receive the Word. Then know ye when God's Word strikes the conscience? If ye did, ye would say, Lord, strike on! ye would wish that Christ's staff, Beauty, laid you in a swoon. Many of you are angry when it touches you. Ye are not wise, it is but Christ's staff knocking your crown.—(Rom. v. 10, 11.) He made Paul's head blood: "the law (says he) slew me." He gave to David, by Nathan, so many strokes with the Word that his bones were broken.—(Psalm li. 8.) Better get a broken head than get leave—with the silly, foolish sheep—to slip into a pit-hole or ditch for a little green grass, and be drowned there.

It is called *Beauty* because the Word of God is purer than gold tried in the fire seven times. And what a sweet sight it is to see Him, who is the fairest of men, the fairest among the sons of men, standing in all His beauty in the midst of His flock, with His staff, Beauty, in His hand.

(e) The breaking of this staff is of the greatest weight and concernment. And this our Lord speaketh, as a shepherd tired of his part of it, and threateneth to go away. So, as it were in a

passion, our Lord speaketh thus—I will go seek a new master, and seek ye a new servant. Nay, He was both angry and sorry, so that He shed tears at His flitting.—Matt. xxiii. 37, 38; Luke xix. 41—"If thou hadst known in this thy day," &c.

Doctrine. Then Christ has a term day with a particular Church, and when He is ill used He may go where He may do better.

But let us see whether Christ had good cause or not to break His staff and leave His flock to the foxes. *Answer.* He had, because He was true and faithful in His service, and was aye seeking out the wandering sheep; soon up and late up, with many a sore heart, seeking them; and He lost none, but made an account of them all to His Father. What were all these? Ezek. iii. 6, "If I had sent thee to a nation of a strange language," &c. Matt. xii. 41, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it." Chap. xi. 21, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin," &c. These show that Christ had but a hard life when He fed them.

But to come nearer yet. What causes a servant tire of his services? The ruler of the house changes his wages, and strikes him, howbeit he do his duty, and the rest of the servants mock him; he is set at the board foot and matched with every running beggar that comes to the house; few give him good words; they all look down upon him with contempt and scorn. Just so was Christ handled; the rulers, pharisees, and priests did not pay Him His wages; they smote Him. Every lown in the house made a fool of the honest servant, yea, the high priest's servants smote Him on the face and spat upon Him. Indeed, they set Him to the by-board, yea, to the foot of the board. Psalm xxii. 7, "I am a worm, and no man." They matched Him with every vagabond that came to the house, and put Him in the midst, between two thieves. They gave Christ the thief's seat, and Barabbas was thought better than He.

Might not Christ break His heart for all these things, and say, What ails ye at Me? Might He not break His shepherd's staff, put up His wares, and flit? Might He not say, It's time for Me to pack to the gate, they are tired of My service. And yet I have gotten many a wet foot in seeking these sheep? Yea, He may say they are ill worthy of Him.

All that is true. But to come to ourselves. In His members He is ill used, banished, silenced, and treated worse than Barabbas. He gets no justice in our Parliaments. Papists, Arminians, and atheists get favour, honour, and court preferment, but an honest professor is counted an ill subject, a seditious man, and an enemy to authority. But see how God has met us; He has broken His staff, Beauty; the purity, power, and life of doctrine is away. The Word of God is not sharp from preachers' mouths, it draws no blood in men's consciences. Nay, we wield not the staff with force, until the fire fly from the pikes of it. We cast and handle it, as if our arm was broken! We see the sheep gone out of the

way, and over the march, in the Lord's forbidden pasture. We see every man out of his place and everything wrong in the Kirk. We see the sheep devoured and poisoned with popery and false doctrine in colleges and pulpits. The staff is not drawn, and why? Because it is broken, and ye will yet see it worse broken. Think ye that a pair of organs and an ill said mass (as King James the VI. termed it), and a busking of dirty ceremonies, the whore's abominations, which we once spued out, think ye that ever this staff will draw blood of a man's conscience? Nay, ere this staff break, or blood a proud hard heart that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, ye may as soon essay to break a man's head with a straw or a rush. The Lord says this is a broken staff, and we see it not.

"That I might break my covenant.—Because of the doctrine of the pestilent enemies of grace, I will crave leave to free this place, and to prove (1) That the covenant of grace with the elect cannot be broken. (2) Show in what sense the Lord says He will break His covenant.

For the first of these see Jer. xxxi. 36, 37, Isaiah liv. 10, "For the mountains shall depart," &c. I intend, at another occasion, to prove that the covenant is made fast with Christ, and so stands not in our free will. See Jer. xxxii. 40, chap. xxxi. 32, 33, 34, 35, Luke vi. 13. God's oath and promise is a sure thing. "Aye sure," say they. What then? "Sure and sealed on God's part, providing we sin not, for God swears that believers shall be saved." Nay, but the Lord made the covenant with Adam everlasting, for if Adam had stood the Lord would have done His part. Nay, the law of nature, given to the reprobate angels, in their creation, should have been as stable as the new covenant; for will any call in question that God would have rewarded the apostate angels, providing they had continued in their obedience. "Nay," say they, "the covenant keeps not men from sinning against the covenant, but sinning against the covenant breaks the covenant."

Answer. Sin on the elect's part breaks not the new covenant.—(Psalm lxxxix. 33.)

But the question is, If the elect can sin against the covenant? If that were objected,

I answer. They may sin, and sin against the doctrine of the covenant, and against the articles of the contract of marriage, as a wife may take another lover. But if this be in the contract, "She shall be my wife, howbeit she take another lover," then her harlotry by no law destroys the marriage contract. Now, when Christ marries His Church, He says He will forgive her sins, and swears He will forgive her harlotry.

But, I ask, What makes a man to be within the covenant? *Answer.* Not faith nor obedience. What then? God's free love. Ezek. xvi. 8, "Thy time was the time of love,—I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee." Then how long is a contract valid? So long as the chief clause is kept. Now, the

chief head of the contract is God's eternal love, and all here is fastened on God's free promise, and this is surer than mountains of brass. As long as the foundation and corner-stone is firm, the wall standeth. Now, in all the sins of the elect, the unchangeable love of God standeth still. And let Papists, Arminians, and Socinians come and loose this corner-stone if they can; it will break all their backs to aim at it, and has clouded their wits already.

To sin against the covenant is to cast the grace of the covenant fully away, so as if they were without it, so that they are not now within it, as Adam was after the fall. But, by sin, the elect cannot shake off the seed of God (1 John iii. 9), "For his seed remaineth in him." Here is a special difference betwixt the first and the last covenant that will clear the matter.

In the first covenant, Adam had not a tutor; he was like a daft young heir, who, having gotten infestment of all that his father gave him, he wastes and spends all. But, in the latter covenant, God does with us as a father doth with a bankrupt son; he gives him little at once, infests him not, but keeps a hank in his own hand, and gives him over to a tutor. Man has cracked his credit with God, and so the Lord will not put a sum in free will's hands again, but He doth two things. 1. He gives little in hand but the end of the covenant, and keeps the body of it in His own. Our writs and charters are in Christ's keeping; we lose aye the thing we get, and therefore God gives us only a copy of the charter; but while here we never get the principal; Christ keeps the great sum and gives us but like a penny to keep our purse. 2. We have not power to cast out the seed again, no more than a man child has power to make himself a woman child.

Now, the point is, Wherefore saith God He will break His covenant with His people?

Answer. It is not He will break His covenant with these same elect persons, as John, Thomas, Anna, Mary, and all who are elected, or within the covenant; but He breaketh the covenant with a new generation—a generation of castaways—who are their seed, and gloried that the covenant was made with their fathers, and call themselves Abraham's seed and chiefest kindred. Their kindred was better than themselves. That particular Church had so many years of Christ for mail and duty. The tack expires, they sin, and pay not; then Christ warns all the tenants, in His Father's name, to flit. The contract was made with their fathers, they came in their fathers' room but did not their duty, and God put them away. But as for the true, friendly, and tender believers, He takes some of them to their rest and some to their kingdom. And if here and there one be left, when the Shepherd's staff is broken, He feeds them secretly and is a little sanctuary to them, and they shall get crowns immediately from God. And therefore the breaking of the covenant is nothing but the breaking of the staff, and taking away of the Word from the people of the Jews.

And therefore we may learn our lesson, if we are good scholars. The Lord has given us summons, and our tacks are worn out. Many are called home who are within the covenant. God can separate His own from the wicked, and then God shall tear the contract of marriage. Therefore try your holding and look out your papers, and see upon what terms ye brock* Christ. I fear some have nothing but profession—empty, windy profession; others have the thoughts of their own head; many have little law or right upon their side for Christ. Therefore see to yourselves; Christ has said He will try your sitting, what shall either be His or your own. Your rights are growing old, renew them to-day, and make sure work.

"And it was broken," &c.—When God will break the staff, who can keep it whole? There can none come after God that can mend the thing that He doeth. When God gives out the doom, it is no empty talk. The thing that God makes crooked no man can set a foot on it and even it.—(Eccles. vii. 13, Job. xii. 14.) He says, Behold He breaketh down, and it cannot be built up again. Then, ere the decreet be given forth, let us return; for who will get a suspension on the Lord's decreet? Nay (Jer. xv. 1), "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my heart could not be towards this people." And therefore, if He give His Church a shake for her sins, it will try all our art to mend her; and if He shall drive our hard hearts all to pieces, then put ye your hands to mend it.

4. *"And the poor of the flock knew that it was the word of the Lord."*—Hear how He speaks of the remnant of election. Ask what is the Church, and especially after judgment has gone through the land? They are a number of on-waiters. There was nothing left now, when Christ had broken His two staves, Beauty and Bands, but to wait on an absent, hidden Christ. For we can all wait on and believe, when the Bridegroom fills our eyes with His presence, but see what the prophet Isaiah saith (chap. viii. 17), "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and will look for him." This is something to wait for a hidden God, and to kiss Christ in the dark night, that is a wonder. Psalm cxxiii., "Behold, as the eyes of servants look into the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden into the hand of her mistress: so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us." Ken ye not, when a poor servant has gotten a bloody skin, and comes in all bloody to his master, what a look will he let out, even as he would look through him: so are our Lord's children, when oppressed with bloody faces, looking up to our Lord and waiting on (see Psalm cxxx. 6). As the morning watch waiteth for the morning, so we see the saints holding out their tired arms to God, and longing and looking over the mountains. And they have little or nothing in hand but hope.

* Broke; transact business with.

Here is a doubt answered. Worldlings say, What have ye that we have not. Ye are a sick, poor, oppressed, banished, and mocked people, and where is your happiness? We have here an answer to such, we are on-waiters on God. Ken ye not some are very rich, and have thousands in this man's hand, and thousands in that man's hand. If ye ask them where their riches is, and bid them let you see what they are worth, they can let you see nothing but a number of papers and bonds; even so, heaven is the land of promise, and the land of hope to believers. Let the apostle answer in this (1 John iii. 2), "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him." We are the poor of the flock and the nothings of the world (1 Cor. i. 21). We are nothing, that is but little less than a straw or a feather. But stay, I pray you, our stock is in God's hand. Wait ye on until yonder day, until the fair, clear, and bright heartsome morning of your long summer day, when Christ shall take His weeping bride in His arms, kiss her and wipe her face, and say, "My dear sister, hold thy tongue," and shall busk her with His own hand.

Will ye let this foul black shower blow by; die not for sorrow. Wait on; now stir about Christ's door, cry over the wall, Lord, Jesus, take in a begging brother. Cry and wait, and I can assure you Christ Jesus is cautioner, and the Holy Spirit notary, who writes it, and takes heaven and earth, sun and moon, to be witnesses, that ye shall laugh and rejoice, and be forced to say, Believers indeed have a great to-look, and are very happy.

"*Then I knew it was the word of the Lord.*"—So soon as the staff is broken and the Lord flitted, the Lord's poor on-waiters miss Christ, they begin to clap their hands, and to say, Alas! He is away. And the rest know not what that means; they remember not that, though it was written as Zechariah had prophesied. So the *Doctrine* is, That Christ cannot steal away from His own, and beguile them, but they miss Him, and know that He is away. The faithful know when He goes and when He comes. If not so, what means that of the spouse? "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? And I charge you by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye tell him when ye find him that I am sick of love."—(Cant. ii.) The Church sees Him on the mountains, standing behind the wall; she misses Him (Cant. iii.), and cannot find Him with the watchmen. But, on the contrary, you see the wicked never miss Him; they know not what God is doing when the staff is broken. Nay (Hos. vii. 9), "Strangers have devoured him, and he knows it not." And even when our Church is falling, there are men who say she is rising, and that the staff is as whole as ever it was—and more so, and say our Church was under beggary and misery before. And why? They would have a kirk, conscience, and religion made of gold, silks, and velvets, and foot-mantles, and high horses, and much court. But this text says the poor of the flock are the only on-waiters on Christ.

5. But to proceed to verse 12, "*And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price.*"

Doctrine. A good servant, such as Christ was, should get his hire uncraved; but Christ gets leave to crave His hire thrice over, ere He get it; yea, and to seek His own by law. Now, I think I recollect to have heard of a humble, meek steward, speaking very modestly to his master, and saying, If it please you, I would have the thing I have wrought for. Even so (to speak with reverence) it is here.

Doctrine. Hence we see where Christ has laboured. He will seek fruit (Isaiah v.), "I looked for grapes, and behold wild grapes." He will not work for nothing. He bade John Baptist make ready His way ere He came. In Matt. iii. 8, says John, Bring forth fruit worthy of amendment of life. And in all His doctrine He urged the bringing forth of fruit. And as for the Jews' waste, He cursed the fig tree because it had leaves and no fruit; therefore every one in Christ's house, seeing Christ served you in hard service and gave His life in ransom for you, pay Him. Remember Christ is a hard craver, and will seek His own, especially His wages from you, even obedience and newness of life. O then! see that ye bear not bulk in His garden and no more; but do good for fear He pull you up and cast you over the dyke. When men are redeemed, and have gotten forgiveness, they are ready to sit down and do no more, just as if a drink of the well in David's house had made them drunken, and laid them over to sleep. Nay, but when ye have gotten mercy, ye must up the brae. For know ye that when Christ saves you, as your Shepherd, and gives His life for you, see that you bargain, or change with Him, to give Him yourself for His wages. When an honest man bargains with another, he says to him, Ye shall be no loser, I shall lose ere ye lose. So should ye, when Christ bargains with you; let Him not be behind, but rather lose yourselves ere Christ want a penny of His wages. Woe's me, to hear that professors, in buying or selling, will for five or six shillings more of a price let Christ's glory get a blot. Is this to pay Him His wages? It were something to be a servant, would ye pay Him for by-gones. In this ye may learn a doctrine.

Doctrine. Christ is made a servant, and a servant is not his own, but a bond man; an hired servant is his master's, and all his work is his master's; and he is bound to serve no other. How is this? Was Christ our servant? Yea, He says (in Matt. xx. 28), "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

But it were well done here to clear the matter to you, and to let you see that Christ was hired, and who hired Him. We hired Him not. Why then should He crave His wages of His Church?

Answer. His Father hired Him. For understanding of this:—God, our Father, and Christ's Father, had a necessary piece of service to do; He had His sheep to bring out of hell; sheep that

had gone astray, over and beyond the black river of death and hell; and our merciful Lord would fain have them brought home again. The angels could not take the service in hand; they could never have won the hire; but in comes Christ, and says, I will win the wages. And He struck hands with the Father, and was booked God's servant. Isaiah xlii., "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen." At the meeting, Christ said, I will do your bidding, and so He did (Psalm xl. 7, 8), "Then said He, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is written within my heart." And Isaiah l. 5, "The Lord hath opened," or pierced, "mine ear." As the servant under the law, who would not leave his master's service, so was our Lord. And further, He says, I was not rebellious, neither turned I away My back. Verse 6, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." And Phil. ii. 7, "He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." There is Christ saying, My Father bored My ear, and hired Me as a servant, to suffer shame and death. And, says Christ, I did My duty, I played not the truant, I brake not to Him; or I came not back, nor turned to a back side; I brake not away from My Master, as an ill servant. Now then, ye see, God hired Him to Himself, and God hired Him to us; and Christ was true to His Master, and God trusted all to Him. Isaiah lii. 13, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently." And so God gave Him in hand grace and strength above His fellows for the work, and promised Him a willing people or a kingdom. And Christ accepted of the condition, and said, Send Me, a bargain be it.

Now, God be thanked for that hired Servant. And God gave to Christ something in hand, even our nature. By taking a body, Christ bound Himself to us head and foot, as well as He was bound to God. For He, having taken our nature, was sworn to bestow His manhood upon us, to redeem us. For had He taken on man's nature, and not saved man, He had not kept the condition as a faithful servant; but now, being bound, He then puts His hand to the pen and says Amen to the bargain. So then, when Christ became man, He said, A bargain be it. It's true, naked manhood was not enough to make Him a sufficient servant, but Christ said I shall put to that which is wanting. I shall put to My grace to your nature, and My Godhead to your manhood, to make the work hold forward. Now know that the Lord was bound to God and to us, not merely to do His best to perfect the service; not to bring our salvation under free communing betwixt God and us; not as if He had said, I shall do what I can to make the agreement betwixt you, and to save you; I will see if I can please parties; and, if not, I shall leave it no worse than I found it. Nay, but accepting the office of a mediatorship, He took upon Him an absolute submission to make up the difference, or else to stick by the gate, and that what God had

left undone (to speak so) Christ was bound as a Servant to make it up. So God and man made it up, for God had lost the glory both of His truth and justice, of His active and passive obedience. Man had taken it from Him; and Christ said to His Father, All Thy losses be upon Me, and crave Me for all; and here what man had stolen, Christ gave it again, of the same kind; as if money was stolen, and money was given again to him from whom it was stolen.

Let us learn, then, to bind ourselves to Christ, as He bound Himself to us, for He could not run away when once He was bound. So, when once we are His, we may not take the play. Christ once gave in obedience (when we had lost heaven) to justice and truth; and Christ said, My dear brethren, all your losses be on Me, Amen. Now, well said, Lord Jesus. Look then now, how Christ was bound for you, and yet ye think much to bind your necks to His service for thirty or forty years, and then to go to heaven through Him. But he went a rougher gate for you—to hell and the grave. Now, be content to bind yourselves to Him, I pray you.

"And if not, forbear."—As if Christ would say, If ye will not pay Me, I will not break My heart for the matter; keep it to yourselves; I will do My work; My Father will pay Me. He is even speaking as they use to do to dyvours. Either pay me or say ye will not: shift me not. Give me either wages or surety, that I may seek my own by law.

But then I see when all is done, Christ cares not much to want His wages. He resolved to do the work whether He got hire or not. It was another He was looking to than man. He had an earnest desire after the work, howbeit we should pay Him nothing. For the matter stood not upon our will and our love, so as if Christ had said, I work My work and die, upon condition they will pay Me. Nay, it was not so, but a reason in His death and mediation was to win our will to obedience, and to purchase grace, whereby we should be made willing to pay Him His wages. And here we see if a nation refuse Him, as Scotland, He will get others willing to pay Him His wages. He will not want a new master.

6. *"So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver."*—Consider this answer was neither boasting nor high; but like the meek Lamb of God, like a poor oppressed servant, He craved His wages, and said, Give Me My hire for My labour. See the rough answer they give Him—Give You Your wages; the carpenter's Son who has a devil! Give Him thirty pieces (say they) to buy Him to the gallows! Hire Judas to put Him out to us, that we may take Him and hang Him, for that is the wages we allow upon Him. Is not this indiscreet talking to the Son of God? They pay the Shepherd His wages with many a blea stroke, saying, Let Him take that for His pains. They answered even as a rough master does to an ill servant, who says, Pay me, and let me go my ways. The master answers, Give you your wages! give you the

gallows! So do they answer Christ, as if He were an ill servant. But His Father sent Him with good words, "I am that good shepherd, come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden. If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." Then might not the priests have given our Lord a good answer? Nay, see two words in Matt. xxi. 38, 39. The heir came to seek fruit of the vineyard, they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. Would ye have believed, when Christ came to His own vineyard, that the servants would have slain Him and casten Him over the dyke, denied Him a grave, and let Him borrow another man's? Would ye not wonder to see Him come into the Church, into the Parliament House, and to see men cast the door in His face and hold Him out? Yet even so (Acts iv. 11), He was the stone set at nought and thrown over the wall. O, a strange thing! Would they give Him no room in the wall? Might they not have made Him a pinning, or was He not fit for the work?

Now ye may say, Foresaw not Christ all this; saw He not, ere He was hired, what wages His masters would give Him? Ay, this text tells, in Zechariah's days He saw it. Wherefore then entered He on the service?

Answer. If ye look the text, ye will see He took the hire and would not return it again; but in His providing, He cast it to the potter's field, and went on in His service for all that. See yet more, what a meek and patient servant Christ was. He cried, Pay Me My wages; but they said, Give You wages! give You thirty pieces of silver to buy You to the gallows. Thus they stormed at Christ's answer, and ran away. Yet indeed He took it, and employed it as He thought good. He calls it His wages; as if He would say, This is even as much as refusing to pay Me. Why not willing, My dear spouse? Thirty pieces of silver to buy Me to the cross! I am even content; a bargain be it. I see it will be so; I foresee and prophesy it will be so.

Then the Lord saw how matters would go, and how He would be handled, but yet He would not repent of the bargain; He would not give it over; He accepted of the money, and goes forward in His service, until He be betrayed, slain, and buried. Ye may see then, Christ had resolved on the worst, to swallow all indignities, and set His face against the stormy blast. Now, see ye, all that Christ got was a hard reward for His service; He had many a wet foot in seeking His sheep, and got but twenty-six pounds Scots for His pains. Christ did not stumble on the matter by guess, as one who makes a bargain, and when he sees what it will cost him he says, It had been good for me if I had never seen it. Nay, but Christ saw the worst, and resolved on the worst. Nay, but has He not been serving all along, ever since the Reformation? And who can deny that He has been feeding His sheep amongst us, craving His wages, and seeking His fruit? But alas! we have given Him as little as they did before the Reformation. We have sold Him and His truth. What fruits has He

gotten? They are worth nothing. Nothing but ignorance of God, idolatry, cursing, lying, and swearing; and on His Sabbath He gets but raw service, an hour and a half, and on some days mickle vanity and pride in apparel, extortion, no justice, but many false laws, incest, and adulteries, many unrevenged bloods—a wicked and windy profession.

"A goodly price."—Christ speaks as a man to be pitied or bemoaned, like a poor servant beguiled of his wages. As if he had said, God kens if I wan it not dear. I endured the winter's cold and the summer's heat. Many a weary night was I awake when they were asleep, and look at the hire they have given me! Indeed, a good price that I the Lord was valued at! These worldlings like Judas, the scribes and pharisees, who love the world and never have a right estimation of Christ; for thirty pieces of silver the kirk-men bought and sold Him. If the world be great in your books, Christ has then lost court in your hearts, for faith and a good conscience die and live together. Make once a hole in a good conscience, and bring in the world into your hearts, and ye shall see faith sink very soon. I wish men saw with two eyes here, that the world is a golden hammer to break religion in pieces, and that it breaks down the kirk walls. For what has overturned Christ and religion but men's love of the world, court, and honour. Go over to Rome, and see how they love God, who make golden kirks and golden images their religion. They have riches and fat benefices, and therefore they have put a tongue in Purgatory's mouth to cry, Money, Money. They love honour well, and therefore their doctrine cries, A pope above all kings and emperors in worldly glory. And because the second commandment speaks against their images, they have shut it out as a servant. Men see not their court,* and the world can put a lie in their consciences, and cause them to believe black is white, and idolatry is a thing indifferent. Would ye know the cause of it? (but men will not believe it). When once the affections are passionate, and when, therefore, the truth comes into the soul of men of corrupt minds and affections, it is like good wine put into old bottles, our hearts sour the truth. Or, like a beautiful stranger coming into a very smoky house, who is all bleared and blackened to-morrow. And why? God's truth charges us to bow to it, and to deny our own wills and lusts, and yield obedience to it. But when men's affections are poisoned with their lusts, they change the law to say as they say, and wrest, patch, and make religion and the truth as a wide shoe to suit their foot, or as a coat with a wide bosom, that they may take both religion and their lusts into it. Hence the adulterer will not bow his back to the seventh commandment; he would have it get a back-blow with his hammer, that it might crook and bow to his lusts. And the covetous man, because he will not be reformed, would wish a reformation on the tenth

* Interest.

commandment. The fool's poisoned heart says, God will not bow to him, therefore he gives his conscience a back-throw, till it take the cramp again, and then he says in his heart, There is no God. And do we not see it so this day? Religion goes straight, and the truth of God takes even, out at the gate; but men's hearts are upon policy, state, benefices, honour, and court; therefore they would cast religion in a pair of moulds, and give it a back-throw, to cause it go halting and clinsing after the world. And if Christ would say and do as the rulers of the people would have Him, He should not be crucified.

"That I was valued at:" which I—the Lord Jesus, Jehovah—who brake the staves of Beauty and Bands, was valued at. This is clear in the 13th verse, and in Matt. xxvii. 8, 9. It is the man Christ, whom Judas sold, for Matthew cites the text, but he says that it was cited by the prophet Jeremiah. Now, the text is here in Zechariah, and there is not such a place in Jeremiah, therefore it is like that Zechariah was also called Jeremiah. For it was ordinary for the Jews to have two names, and especially because Zechariah and Jeremiah come both from the same fountain in the Hebrew, and they have both one signification, and both, in our language, signify a man exalting God.

But here the thing I would be at against the blinded Jews. Zechariah says Jehovah was valued at thirty pieces of silver. Matthew says the Son of Man was valued at thirty pieces. So these two are one and the same person, which is a clear proof that our Mediator is both Jehovah, God Almighty, and also a betrayed Man, for thirty pieces of silver. The Jews might have remembered this prophecy when they gave thirty pieces of silver for Christ, and before their eyes it was cast down in the Lord's house, and by themselves made use of to buy the potter's field. So then, Christ is God and man (the Jews will not have Him, let us take Him); for thus it behoved the work of our redemption to be a mixed work, coming from two natures. Then take Him as sib* to you: Christ, God-man, is all beauty and fair to behold.

Two things commend a wife—a sweet smell and a fair colour. Christ-man smells of love, as sib to us; and Christ-God is all beauty and fairness itself to behold. A precious stone for beauty and colour, and also for the rareness of it, most excellent. So then, in everything Christ is excellent. For the Godhead and manhood are like two men lifting a dead man out of the water, and each of them lifts to the other's hands. For the manhood draws dead and condemned men from under sin and wrath, and the Godhead lends strength, and holds out an arm to the manhood to do it. The manhood prays, is sad, hungry, thirsty, cold, weary, dies, and suffers God's anger. The Godhead stands it out as a back-friend, lifting and bearing up the manhood under that great

* Closely related.

work, at that great day of law, when our action is called. The Godhead backed Christ, and convoyed Him to the bar of God's justice, where He answers for it. The Godhead cannot suffer: the manhood suffered, the Godhead being overclouded, yet so as it broke the force of the stroke, by doing and supporting. As an arrow shot at a brazen wall, the point of it is broken and driven back. So the arrow of God's indignation went through Christ, soul and body, and made Him heavy unto death; but the Godhead, like a brazen wall, brake the point of the arrow, and held up the man Christ.

This was a rare work, strange and uncouth* to see! The angels marvelled to see God stand. The Godhead stood to ward off the Lord's arrows, shot against the holy child Jesus. And never a hole that the arrows had made in Christ-man but the Godhead was aye at hand immediately, to pour in balm and fill it up in the very moment of suffering. And as Christ-man was burnt in His soul, the Godhead held a well of faith, comfort, hope, and courage to His head, to drink His fill. For Christ ever believed, and still hoped, and prayed in faith.

Then, believers, count heaven a precious thing that was so dear bought. Here was an uncouth, wonderful yoking for it! Then fy upon thee, if thou sell it for clay and swinish lusts. The thing that Christ wan with His sweet life, wilt thou slip from it like a knotless thread? Alas! I see men have not the estimation of salvation that Christ had. He gave much for it: they cast it at the cocks for a penny, for a feather. The young heir knows not how hard the conquest was to his poor father; who was soon up, and late up, and ventured through the seas, and was shipwrecked thrice, and taken with Turks and pirates. So we are but young, daft heirs, and know not how dear Christ bought our inheritance. He wanted the night's sleep for it; it cost Him many a weary and heavy heart; yea, He swimm'd the salt sea of the Lord's wrath for it.

7. *"And I took the thirty pieces and cast them to the potter."*—To buy a field with, for beggars and strangers; for the Jews would not have the uncircumcised buried with them. See ye not how Satan served Judas. He sought in his heart how to betray Christ. Satan said to him, Thou servest a hungry Master. Wilt thou put Him in a purse, and get something from the high priest for Him that will do thee good? Judas does so. And now, when Judas got it, it burns his conscience, and he throws it from him, and it is cast to the potters to buy a field. What gets Judas' heirs and executors of his thirty pieces? First, he makes a dog's testament; then he leaves nothing to his heirs. Many a purse gotten with selling Christ is casten to the potters: strangers and beggars get it. Then look to court, honour, and benefices, and estates gotten with the selling of Christ, if they thrive to the third heir. Many

* Uncommon.

earldoms and lordships that come this way will be casten to the potter's field. Satan filled Judas' head and heart with hope when he tempted him; now, when he casts away the money, he gives him the cheat for his bishopric; he would laugh him to scorn. For, when Judas was conscience sick, he would not come and hold his head. I think Satan is like a lown, or sporter, who has put in his finger among ashes where there is fire, and burneth himself, and, tempting, he says to his neighbour, It is not hot, and makes him put in his hand, till he is burnt, and cries; and then he laughs, and says, Good speed. The devil has burnt his hand with sin, and he says to Judas and others, It is not hot, put in your hand and feel. And when they are scalded, and cry, and cast away the thirty pieces of silver, he but laughs at them. Nay, I have now mind how Jacob took Esau at the right time, when he was dying for hunger; he would not give him a soup of his pottage till he sold him his birthright. Satan, finding men dying for hunger after the world, court, and riches, he makes them trow they shall get nothing unless they sell their birthright. And when Satan once gets them in a right mood, and to lust after the world, hence he gets them to sell their birthright for sin. But, believe me, ye but burn your lips with the devil's pottage, when ye quit Christ and your birthright for sin. Ye but scrape and draw together for the potter's field. Ay, but stay till it come to Saul's and Judas' case, in the hinder end of the day. When a house takes fire, it is not long in going to all the corners thereof. So if ye sell your birthright to Satan, sin, and the world, when death comes, the fire of hell will kindle in your conscience, till all be in a flame, and ye will not get water to quench it. O then take heed, and beware of Satan's flatteries, sin's vain pleasures, and the world's deceitful allurements, for they are all but empty nothings, a matter of mere moonshine. It is storied of men going over to Italy and selling their goods to wizards, and getting, as they supposed, chests full of gold; and when they came home and opened their chests, they had nothing but a number of round slate stones, and were all beguiled. So, in believing the world, Satan, and sin, you can meet with nothing but deception. Ken ye not that the devil, the world, and sin, can all cog* the dice and promise gold, while all is but mere nothings, empty shadows, and worse than slate stones?

Now, I pray and beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the blood of the eternal covenant, by the price of your soul's redemption, by the salvation of your immortal souls, and by your compearing naked and bare before the judge of the quick and the dead, cast this world and sin over behind your backs. Hate and abhor every sin, whether in yourselves or others, and go up through this world leaning upon Christ, keeping your eye fixed upon Him, as your only safety. The Lord bless His word to you. Amen.

* Load the dice so as to cheat in playing.

Meeting of Synod.

THE Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met in the hall of St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, on the 16th November. Sederunt—Northern Presbytery—Revs. D. Macfarlane, Raasay; John R. Mackay, Gairloch, and John Macleod, Ullapool, ministers; and Mr. Finlay Macdonald, Shieldaig, elder; Southern Presbytery—Revs. Alexander Macrae, Kames; Neil Cameron, St. Jude's, Glasgow; and J. S. Sinclair, Knox's Tabernacle, Glasgow, ministers; and Messrs. Benjamin Dawson, Kames; Duncan Crawford, Oban; Donald Kelly, St. Jude's, and Jonathan Anderson, Knox's Tabernacle, elders.

The proceedings began at 12 noon with a service conducted by Rev. Alexander Macrae, Kames (retiring moderator), who preached from the words "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."—(2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) At the end of the service, Mr. Macrae constituted the Synod with prayer. He then intimated that his term of office as moderator had expired. It was moved by Rev. D. Macfarlane, and seconded by Rev. Neil Cameron, that Rev. John R. Mackay, Gairloch, be appointed moderator for the ensuing year. Mr. Mackay accordingly took the chair, and thanked the Synod for the confidence reposed in him. He stated that by his new appointment the office of clerk was vacant. The Synod then appointed Rev. John Macleod, Ullapool, as Synod clerk. Mr. Macleod thanked the Synod, and promised to perform the duties of his office to the best of his ability. The minutes of last meeting were read and approved of. A committee was appointed to arrange the order of business for another sitting. The Synod then adjourned to meet again in the evening at half-past five.

The Synod met at half-past five and was constituted, Rev. John R. Mackay, moderator. The minutes of the former meeting were read and approved of. The court proceeded to take up the case of the Fraser Street Congregation, Inverness. At meeting of Synod on 7th July, Revs. Neil Cameron and J. S. Sinclair, were appointed to frame answers to the protest and reasons tabled by the Rev. Allan Mackenzie against the Synod's finding in the above case. Mr. Sinclair read the answers that were prepared, and they were unanimously adopted by the Synod. (These answers are given hereafter.) The Clerk then read a series of resolutions adopted at a meeting of the Fraser Street Congregation on 22nd July, 1897, and shortly after forwarded by Rev. Allan Mackenzie to clerk of Synod. He further stated that Mr. Mackenzie had been cited three times before the Northern Presbytery to answer to the charges; (1) of having refused to carry out the instructions of the Synod held at Inverness on 7th July, 1897, affecting the Fraser Street Congregation, Inverness; (2) of having refused to

call a meeting of the kirk-session at the request of his elders in a letter addressed to him by them on 23rd July, 1897; and (3) of setting up a new order of things in the Fraser Street Congregation, of which he is pastor. On each of these occasions Mr. Mackenzie had failed to attend, and the Presbytery at its last meeting had remitted the whole case to the Synod. Of this course Mr. Mackenzie had been advised. Rev. Alexander Macrae, Kames, in rising to propose a resolution, said that Mr. Mackenzie had been advised to do everything in his power to bring about cordial relations between the divided sections of his congregation, and when the Synod came to the finding referred to, it was with the view of bringing about a settlement. But from the resolutions that had just been read, it was evident that Mr. Mackenzie had renounced the jurisdiction of the Synod. The Synod asked Mr. Mackenzie to call a meeting of the kirk-session. Mr. Mackenzie did not call a meeting of his kirk-session, but on the contrary he called a meeting of the congregaton, without having any authority from the kirk-session to call it, so that the congregational meeting was unconstitutionally called. Mr. Mackenzie having renounced the jurisdiction of the Synod, and also the jurisdiction of the kirk-session, it was the duty of the Presbytery to call him to account for the irregularity of his conduct. The resolutions passed by him at the congregational meeting were the data on which the Northern Presbytery proceeded. They thought it was the right of the Presbytery to act as it did. Although Mr. Mackenzie's case had come before the Synod, and it was the Synod's duty to dispose of it, nevertheless this was a new phase of the case, for by this step he renounced the jurisdiction of the Synod. Having done so, and set up a new order of things in his congregation, it was the duty of the Presbytery to call him to account. As the clerk of Synod had told them, Mr. Mackenzie had been cited three times to appear at the bar of the Northern Presbytery. He failed to comply. The Presbytery having referred the matter to the Synod, it was the Synod's duty now to pronounce judgment in the case. Mr. Mackenzie had been notified that the whole case had been referred to the Synod. He had not put in an appearance, and therefore he moved that the following be the Synod's finding. This finding (which we give in full elsewhere), is based upon the resolutions adopted by Mr. Mackenzie and those adhering to him on 22nd July, and upon Mr. Mackenzie's refusal to answer the citations of the Northern Presbytery. The result is thus expressed:—"Therefore, the Synod find that the said Rev. Allan Mackenzie must by fair and necessary inference be regarded as having separated himself from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and as having by his own act in passing the aforesaid resolutions, ceased to be a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland." It is added, however, that Mr. Mackenzie will have a final opportunity to reconsider his position before a meeting of the Northern Presbytery, to be held at Portree, on

Wednesday, 1st December, 1897, and that if he does not compear then, the case will take end.

The Rev. Neil Cameron, Glasgow, in seconding the motion that the foregoing be the finding of the Synod, said it was remarked once of the sons of Levi, "They do not know their brethren." When it came to tampering with holy things, and trampling upon the cause of Christ as if it were a thing that ought to be allowed to be trampled upon at the caprice of men and their own peculiar ideas, which they could not defend in any court, either ecclesiastical or civil, it was high time for the Church to act. Mr. Mackenzie had all along, as it were, held his hand between the eye of the public and the real state of matters in his congregation. When Mr. Mackenzie spoke of the congregation in Inverness, he spoke of the part of it which followed him in this division that had taken place. When their Synod spoke of the congregation of Inverness, they spoke of the congregation they gave Mr. Mackenzie at his ordination in Inverness. As had already been mentioned, it was agreed on both sides that this congregation was split almost into two. Now, it was but right that the people should know that according to Mr. Mackenzie's own statement, which they had a right to take into consideration, the petition which demanded of the Presbytery the Sacrament of the Supper—though the congregation was so divided that they might not be able to speak to one another on the street—was signed by 52 of the congregation. They were aware that either six or eight of these withdrew their signatures. There are over 80 members in the congregation. That would not leave more than 46 in his petition, and they had 34 on the other side. They might say that the congregation was just in two halves. One half of the congregation, agitated and excited by Mr. Mackenzie's speeches, demanded what was non-constitutional, while the other half did not make any demand at all. The Synod was not acting in any one-sided way. They were speaking from facts that would stand the test of being examined in Inverness at any time. The law of the Church demanded of a congregation that it should first of all go about the election of minister, elder, or deacon, in the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They asked any person if it was the Spirit of Christ that appeared in all the letters and speeches which the Rev. Allan Mackenzie sent to the ends of the earth, as far as Scotch newspapers went. They desired to bring one thing more before them which was concealed from the public. They were told that the congregation was almost quite unanimous, only four or five being against the minister. They could tell them from the very best authority that there were 120 against him in Inverness, who never made such a demand. Not only that, but they saw that Mr. Mackenzie, instead of taking the advice of the Synod and trying to make it possible to bring about an amicable arrangement, went on exactly on the old lines, and refused submission to the three Courts of the Church; also trampled the laws of the Church under foot, and

claimed in the face of that that he alone of all the ministers and office-bearers of that Church contended for truth, for principle, and for everything that was right in the constitution of the Church. He had great pleasure—not because he was dealing with a brother—in supporting the motion, and for this very reason, to show that neither Mr. Mackenzie nor he, nor any other one, could be allowed to trample upon the Church of Christ in any way without being brought to task; and to show that the Church was strong enough to defend its constitution.

The motion was unanimously agreed to. The moderator, in declaring it to be the Synod's finding, took the liberty of quoting one sentence from Mr. Mackenzie to show that the finding, so far as it said that he renounced the jurisdiction of the Church, was correct. In his last sentence in a paper on this controversy, he said:—"Therefore I say, to abide by our principles we must now show our determination by the grace of God to refuse submission to a Church that forces quasi courts upon us." It was evident that they had not come to a different conclusion from what Mr. Mackenzie himself had come to in regard to his relation to the Church.

The Synod next proceeded to deal with the finances of the Church. In regard to salaries, Mr. Macrae moved that the sum of £65 instead of £80 be paid to ministers for this half-year, and that missionaries and others be paid at a corresponding rate. This was agreed to. It was also decided that Rev. Allan Mackenzie be paid up to 23rd July of this year. A reference from the Southern Presbytery in regard to a petition from the interim kirk-session over Edinburgh Congregation for the sanctioning of this congregation as a regular charge, was spoken to and supported by the Rev. J. S. Sinclair, who concluded by moving that the petition be granted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Donald Kelly, elder. The Synod unanimously agreed to grant the petition. A similar case was taken up from congregations in Harris. Rev. J. R. Mackay spoke to the enthusiasm of the people in that quarter, and the desirability of having a regular charge established among them. The Synod sympathised with the case, and remitted it back to the Northern Presbytery to make further enquiries, and to take any proper steps in the matter. At this stage, Mr. Jonathan Anderson, elder, Knox's Tabernacle, Glasgow, rose and proposed that the Synod should take steps to define the position of the Free Church between 1852 and 1893, and that certain persons should be appointed as a committee to consider the matter. The moderator stated that Mr. Anderson had already sent him some days before similar resolutions making specific reference to the relation between the Free Church and the separate position taken up by the late Rev. J. R. Anderson, in 1852. He had replied to the effect that when Knox's Tabernacle was received as a congregation of this Church, the supreme court of the Church never had Mr. Anderson's special testimony before it so much as to consider

it, and while we do not at all condemn that testimony, it is and ever will be incompetent for us to define the late Mr. Anderson's relation to the Free Church, and that this was the opinion, he believed, of the other ministers. He had brought the whole matter before the committee appointed for the arrangement of business, and they had concurred in his reply, so that the matter could not now come up. Mr. Anderson's present motion, though changed in expression, was practically the same. It was then moved, seconded and agreed to, that it was incompetent for the Synod to discuss the motion. Mr. Anderson was, therefore, not allowed to proceed with his speech on the subject. It was agreed that the Synod should meet again in Inverness on Tuesday after the first Sabbath of July, 1898. The meeting was closed with the benediction.

Answers to Reasons

Tabled by the Rev. ALLAN MACKENZIE, Inverness, in support of Protest against the findings of Synod, 7th July, 1897, anent the case of the Fraser Street Congregation, Inverness.

REASON I.—"Because it (the Synod) refuses to the members of the congregation the right to elect their own office-bearers."

Answer I.—This reason is expressed in terms of the petition presented to the Northern Presbytery by certain members and adherents of the Inverness congregation in which it is stated that "the members of the said congregation have hitherto been deprived of the right to elect their own office-bearers." The petitioners craved this court to allow an election of office-bearers. The Presbytery, for reasons given, refused to grant the request of the petitioners. The Synod acquiesced in the judgment of the Presbytery. Mr. Mackenzie tabled a protest against the finding of the Synod on this and other points. He affirms in this first reason that the Synod refuses to the members of the congregation the right to elect their own office-bearers. We understand by the words "refuses the right to elect" not merely that the Synod refuses to allow an election of office-bearers, but that the Synod refuses the absolute right of election. In the latter case the word "refuses" is used in the sense of "denies." It is therefore asserted by Mr. Mackenzie that the Synod "denies to the members of the congregation the right to elect their own office-bearers." To this assertion we give a direct negative. There is not one word in the Synod's finding that interferes with the rights of the Inverness or any other congregation of our Church. Its terms are the following:—"The Synod, having heard parties at the bar, find: (1) that the Northern Presbytery have fully justified their procedure in respect of their having deemed it inadvisable to sanction the election of office-bearers in the divided state of

the congregation." The chief point in this statement is the word "inadvisable," and the Synod simply supported the judgment of the Presbytery in considering it inadvisable, because inconsistent with wise or orderly procedure, to sanction an election of office-bearers while the congregation was in a state of division. The whole matter, therefore, turned upon a question of orderly procedure, and not upon a question of principle. All parties were agreed that in ordinary circumstances it would be right to have additional office-bearers, but the Synod endorsed the view of the Northern Presbytery, and of the two elders in the kirk-session at Inverness, to which court belongs the immediate right to decide the matter that the divided state of the congregation justified and demanded delay. Mr. Mackenzie under-estimates this division, and charges the courts of the Church with depriving the members of his congregation of their rights. He embodies in the reason he gives a piece of most fallacious reasoning. He concludes that because the Synod has refused to allow, at the request of certain members of his congregation, an election of office-bearers under present exceptional circumstances, therefore the Synod refuses or denies, as a necessary consequence, the right of election to these persons. It is surely most evident to ordinary reason that this is an unsound conclusion, unwarranted by the premises. The conclusion, however, is a very serious one, and involves the grave implication that the Synod tampers with one of the principles of the Church—the right of congregations to elect their own office-bearers. We here repudiate the implication most emphatically. Not one principle in our constitution has been interfered with, nor any step taken that denies to one of our congregations any constitutional right which they possess. It will appear most clearly in the explanation given of the finding of the Synod at the end of this answer that the Synod and the other courts acted in entire consistency with the laws and principles of the Church, and if they had acted otherwise, would have broken most important laws in order to acquiesce in the wishes of Mr. Mackenzie and certain members of his congregation.

It is to be noted that Mr. Mackenzie's reason gives the impression that the members of the congregation, without exception, declared that they were deprived of the right to elect office-bearers, and petitioned for election. The fact remains that a considerable minority made no such declaration, nor showed any sympathy with the petition. The persons constituting this minority are manifestly of the opinion that they are denied none of their rights by the courts of the Church.

We further notice that Mr. Mackenzie has made no protest against the finding of the Synod anent the administration of the Sacrament, which ran as follows:—“(2) That the Presbytery acted wisely and Scripturally in expressing their agreement with the elders that the Lord's Supper should not be dispensed till a better state of feeling prevail in the congregation.”

We consider it necessary, before passing on to the second reason tabled by Mr. Mackenzie, to give a brief formal statement of the grounds upon which the Synod proceeded in coming to its decision anent the subject of an election of office-bearers in this congregation. For this purpose we notice the following facts:—

(1) The Synod took into consideration *all* the principles of the Church. Mr. Mackenzie makes much of the principle of Presbyterian government. There are, however, other principles as well as this that require to be observed, principles without the observance of which no Presbyterian government or any other can exist. It may be thought by some that office-bearers should be elected in congregations no matter what the condition of affairs. But it ought to be kept in mind that the duty to elect office-bearers is not a part of the moral law that must be observed in all circumstances. It is possible to have a congregation where none might be suitable for office. It is quite possible to have a congregation in such a state of contention and strife that no election could be proceeded with in a proper spirit. The moral law, the rule of Christian conduct, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," must at least first be observed with some manifest sincerity. This can on no account abate its claim even for one moment. The law for election of office-bearers can easily stand aside, in fact, must, in the very nature of the case, stand aside until this is done. It was with a desire to commend this rule, without the practical observance of which Presbyterian or any other order is a mere name, that the Synod came to their decision. They were no less anxious on this account for the maintenance of Presbyterian government in the congregations of the Church.

(2) The Synod took into consideration the law of the Church in regard to the election of office-bearers, and divisions in congregations. It is admitted by all parties that division and strife had arisen in the congregation at Inverness. This had taken place, not among obscure individuals in the congregation, but among the leading and representative persons in it. It assumed, therefore, the proportions of a very serious division. The Synod therefore fell back upon the law of the Church on the subject, as the Northern Presbytery had already done. An Act of 1846 regulates the election of office-bearers. It specifies ministers in particular, but includes all office-bearers, such as elders and deacons. The following is a quotation:—"The General Assembly are of opinion that the present circumstances and necessities of the Church greatly confirm the propriety of what is in itself a good rule, and well fitted to promote the peace and edification of congregations, viz., that, in general, a Presbytery should not proceed to moderate in a call until they have ground to believe that the congregations are on the whole very much of one mind as to the person whom they mean to choose. There is satisfactory evidence that this was the way usually followed by the

Church under the Revolution Settlement, and even in earlier times. But this system can be expected to succeed, and to work well, only if the Church courts act fairly upon the great principle that "it appertaineth to the people and every several congregation to elect their ministers" (elders or deacons), and in the execution of the functions which undoubtedly belong to them, such as (in the case of a minister) supplying the vacant pulpit and moderating in a call, show a reasonable regard to the inclination and convenience of congregations; and if congregations, on the other hand, are influenced in all the steps they take in regard to the choice of a minister (elders or deacons) by a deep sense of the solemnity and importance of the duty they are called upon to discharge, by the habitual recollection that it is from Christ alone they can get duly qualified and useful pastors (elders or deacons), and by a sincere determination that all things be "done decently and in order," and that the utmost care shall be taken to avoid caballing, party spirit, and division."—(See Moncrieff, 4th ed. rev. page 153.) Now, much emphasis has been laid in this case upon the rights and inclinations of congregations—a section of the above statement—but there seems to have been largely forgotten the fundamental importance of the frame of mind which should characterise congregations in exercising these rights, such as a determination for order, and an avoidance of caballing, party spirit, and division. It is impossible for a congregation rightly to discharge the duty, be it of the election of minister, elders, or deacons, if disorder and division exist within it. It was upon the ground that such did exist in the Inverness congregation that the Synod took their stand, righteously and constitutionally, against a present election of additional office-bearers in this congregation.

(3) The Synod took into consideration the law of the Church in regard to the rights and powers of kirk-sessions. Kirk-sessions have their rights as well as congregations. It would be simply the encouragement of anarchy to assert the rights of the latter at the expense of those of the former. This appears to be the tendency in the present case. The following things were considered by the Synod:—(1) The legal standing of the kirk-session in this congregation. The kirk-session was constituted, with the Rev. D. Macfarlane as moderator, in 1893. It was this session which, along with members of the congregation, called the Rev. Allan Mackenzie as minister, and it was the same session which he acknowledged as a lawfully constituted court at the beginning of and throughout his ministry. Some objections have been recently raised to it by Mr. Mackenzie because the elders, though office-bearers before then, were not formally elected at the time by the congregation to jurisdiction over them. This formal election, however, was not essential in the peculiar circumstances of the congregation's origin. The session was constituted with the sanction of the Presbytery, and the congregation accepted it without objection.

(2) The rights of the kirk-session. It lies with the kirk-session to determine, among other things, as to the election of office-bearers. Whilst it is the privilege of the members to elect, it is the privilege of the session to say when an election should take place. The Synod and Presbytery laid necessary emphasis upon this fact. It seemed to be forgotten by Mr. Mackenzie and certain members of his congregation. The following is the law of the Church on the subject:—"The kirk-session determine when it is expedient to have an election of ruling elders (or deacons) and what number is required."—(See Moncrieff, p. 12). "While recognising the pastor as their moderator, they determine as to the admission of ruling elders and deacons to office, and their exclusion from it." It will be seen that the two elders forming the majority in this session did not exceed their lawful rights in dissenting from the minister's motion for the election of office-bearers. (3) These elders refused to go on with an election of additional office-bearers for lawful reasons. They refused because strife had already arisen in the congregation. It was not till this strife began that Mr. Mackenzie had moved in the kirk-session for an election. The strife originated not in connection with Church principles, but with business and financial affairs. Some time after Mr. Mackenzie's ordination disagreements sprang up about the taking of a manse, the allocation of annual surplus funds, and the giving of a testimonial to the minister. The financial affairs had from the first been conducted by a committee of which the minister was convener, and the elders were members. But it was not until this dispute arose Mr. Mackenzie asked for the dismissal of the committee, the appointment of assessors along with the elders, and lastly for an election of additional office-bearers. The elders objected to these proposals, not absolutely, but relatively in view of the strife that had sprung up. They thought it was the first duty to get order and harmony restored, and held it was impossible to proceed in a right spirit with an election in the disturbed state of affairs. This attitude is evidently supported by the law of the Church already quoted.

The Northern Presbytery in their treatment of this case refused to grant the petition of the members of this congregation in view of the several facts here enumerated. The Synod sustained the judgment of the Presbytery.

Reason II.—"Because in asking the session to appoint four or five members of the congregation to act with them, the Synod simply gives them instructions to appoint the equivalent of another Committee after their own mind."

Answer II.—In answering this reason, we first quote the actual finding of the Synod on the point:—"The Synod, having considered the whole circumstances of the case, instruct the session that, instead of carrying on the financial affairs as at present by means of a Congregational Committee, they at their first meeting constitute themselves into a deacon's court, and that, until a better state of things prevail in the congregation that would justify the

election of office-bearers, they ask four or five members in full communion to assist them unofficially in financial matters." It is manifest from this finding that the Synod decided that the financial affairs of the congregation should be henceforth conducted by a deacon's court, and not by a committee. The session is instructed to constitute itself into a deacon's court. This was a step in the lines of Presbyterian government. It was, however, only a preliminary step. The limit of time fixed by the Synod for this deacon's court is stated in the words, "until a better state of things prevail in the congregation that would justify an election of office-bearers." Mr. Mackenzie in his reason treats the constituting of this court as of no value. He objects to the whole finding because of its closing provision. The Synod gives instructions to the session in the form of a deacon's court to "ask four or five members in full communion to assist them unofficially in financial matters," and he objects because he considers the Synod simply gives instructions for "the equivalent of another committee." While we by no means hold that committees are regularly constituted courts of the Christian Church, yet we do not consider them as essentially an evil. They have been regarded by the Church in the past as a good temporary arrangement for the assistance of the regular courts of the Church in financial and other matters. The Synod did not, however, give instructions even for "the equivalent of another committee." The four or five members to be appointed by the session were only to be allowed to act "unofficially." They were to have no official standing, and so no power of deliberation. A committee has this power, and so these assistants could not be "the equivalent of another committee." Their functions were necessarily to be of a purely subordinate kind. They would have no vote in the disposal of the funds. They would simply be collectors in the congregation, and would hand in contributions to the session as a deacon's court for its disposal. The members of the session being in the meantime few, this arrangement was regarded as a good temporary means of giving them help in their work. It would cease to exist as soon as the congregation was in a fit state for the election of office-bearers. Mr. Mackenzie in speaking of the appointment by the session, constituted as a deacon's court, of what he terms "the equivalent of another committee," adds the words "after their own mind." Do we understand him to refer to the session's mind? If so, we fail to see where the valid ground of objection lies. It was surely by no means wrong to ask the session to exercise their own mind or judgment on a matter lying under their jurisdiction. It would seem, however, that the words "after their own mind" are applied to the elders in the session. Now, the Synod does not address these elders at all; it addresses the session. It does not question Mr. Mackenzie's standing as member or moderator of the session, but concludes that his will, as well as that of the elders, would be heard in the appointment of these unofficial assistants.

It appears to us, nevertheless, that Mr. Mackenzie here pushes into unkindly and uncalled for prominence the difference of opinion existing between his office-bearers and himself, and draws the prospective and hasty conclusion that they would on no account agree to the appointment of any names he should suggest. We do not see therefore any validity or relevancy in the objection embodied in the words "after their own mind."

Reason III.—"In expressing disapproval of what I have said, the Synod disapproves of my having told the truth publicly, while it condones the conduct of men who have been responsible for circulating untruthful statements and even submitting them to a court of the Church."

Answer III.—The Synod in their finding on this head deplore the injudicious conduct of Mr. Mackenzie in widening the disagreement that existed by rushing to the public prints. They considered this was specially wrong "while the matters in dispute were under the consideration of the courts of the Church." Such procedure would have been condemned by a civil court. Mr. Mackenzie was a party to the dispute, and it was his incumbent duty to have kept silence, as far as the public prints were concerned, at least until the matter was decided by the court under whose consideration it was. He literally sat in judgment on his own case, after having committed it to the judgment of the highest court of the Church. He prejudged the case, before the Synod as such got an opportunity to deliberate upon it, and give their judgment. If such procedure can be defended we know of no such thing in existence as order, civil or ecclesiastical.

Further, the Synod did not deplore his conduct because of his "having told the truth publicly" or privately. The question in this case was not one of truth or error in statement, but of practical conduct. The truthfulness or otherwise of his public statements was not under their consideration.

It is also our humble opinion that in rushing to the public prints with matters pertaining to the cause of Christ, and under the immediate consideration of courts of Christ's Church, Mr. Mackenzie appealed to the judgment of the world. We consider therefore Mr. Mackenzie's action as disorderly, unbrotherly, and un-Christian. His objection to the Synod's finding from what he terms his having told the truth publicly is therefore quite valueless.

Mr. Mackenzie concludes his reason by stating that the Synod "condones the conduct of men who have been responsible for circulating untruthful statements, and even submitting them to a court of the Church." These assertions are quite gratuitous. The Synod had none of these statements before them, and therefore were not in a position to come to any decision. The Congregational Committee did submit a statement to the Northern Presbytery, but as it formed no part of the present process it could not be received by the Synod. If this committee circulated what Mr. Mackenzie describes as untruthful statements they at least did

not do so in the public prints. If they as parties to the case had done so, they would have laid themselves open to the same disapproval as the Synod showed to Mr. Mackenzie's procedure.

Conclusion. In concluding these answers we feel constrained to say that it has pained us much to deal with the unnatural and unjustifiable constructions Mr. Mackenzie has put upon the findings of the Synod. He has to all intents and purposes charged the Church with a departure from her principles. He has also undoubtedly obscured the actual state of the case. We hope these answers will shed light upon its real position and merits. In our opinion, the Synod adhered closely to the laws of the Church in all their aspects, and have made not the slightest infringement upon her constitution. We desire to express deep humiliation before the Most High that any necessity has arisen in our midst for such answers as these, and that the cause of Christ has suffered so much public reproach from a division in one of the congregations of our Church.

Finding of Synod Anent the Case of the Rev. Allan Mackenzie, Inverness.

“THE Synod, taking into consideration resolutions passed by the Fraser Street congregation, Inverness, on the 22nd day of July, 1897, a copy of which was sent to the Clerk of Synod for the Synod's instruction, anent the decisions of the Synod on the 7th July, 1897, and the Synod, also taking into consideration the reference from the Northern Presbytery anent this case, do hereby resolve on the following finding. That is to say:—Whereas at a meeting of the Fraser Street congregation, Inverness, on the 22nd day of July, 1897, called by the Rev. Allan Mackenzie, minister of said congregation, resolutions were adopted in which the relations of the said congregation to the findings of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met on July 7, 1897, were set forth:

And whereas, in the first of said resolutions, the said Rev. Allan Mackenzie, minister, and members and adherents of the said congregation, protest that the findings of the kirk-session, the Northern Presbytery and Synod relative to the election of office-bearers in said congregation ‘shall not be binding upon them in any future action that they may, in the providence of God, be called upon to take in this matter:’ And whereas in the second of said resolutions treating of the decisions of the kirk-session, Northern Presbytery and Synod, relative to the administration of the Sacrament in the said congregation, they for reasons of their own, ‘protest that they cannot submit to them as having any binding authority upon their consciences:’ And whereas in the third of said resolutions they ‘intimate that if the ministers and

elders who have endeavoured to inflict this unlawful yoke upon them should, at their next meeting in November, wholly rescind their unrighteous and unconstitutional finding, and return to their principles from which they have departed, it shall be open to this congregation, pastor and people, to consider what steps should be taken for the purpose of anew co-operating in the affairs of Christ's house, with the said ministers and elders, provided always that such co-operation be carried out in accordance with the constitution and principles of the Free Presbyterian Church; and they further intimate that, according to their abilities and opportunities, it is their desire to co-operate with those who may now or hereafter in this land cleave to the original constitution and principles of the Free Church of Scotland, as set forth in the Deed of Separation of this Church.'

And whereas at the same meeting it was moved, seconded, and agreed to, to 'appoint Mr. John Fraser to be general treasurer for the congregation, and all those who may now or hereafter adhere to it, and to the Rev. Allan Mackenzie, pastor of this congregation,' and to 'instruct the treasurer to lodge all contributions to the Sustentation Fund in the bank until after the meeting of Synod in November.'

And whereas in the above resolutions the Rev. Allan Mackenzie, minister, and members and adherents of said congregation, by protesting that the findings of the Synod and Northern Presbytery and kirk-session 'shall not be binding upon them in any action that they may take in this matter,' and 'that they cannot submit to them as having any binding authority upon their consciences,' show that they renounce the jurisdiction of the courts of the Free Presbyterian Church:

And whereas by now denominating the Synod merely as 'ministers and elders,' they thus ignore them as an ecclesiastical court, and they give additional proof that they have renounced the courts of this Church:

And whereas by intimating that in the event of the aforesaid 'ministers and elders' rescinding the finding of the Synod of 7th July, 1897, 'it shall be open to this congregation—pastor and people—to consider what steps should be taken for the purpose of anew co-operating in the affairs of Christ's house;' they distinctly declare by passing these resolutions that they cease to co-operate with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland:

And whereas further, by intimating 'that according to their abilities and opportunities it is their desire to co-operate with those who may now or hereafter in this land cleave to the original constitution and principles of the Free Church of Scotland as set forth in the Deed of Separation of this Church;' they constitute themselves into a new body separate from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland:

And whereas by appointing a treasurer with a view of instituting a separate Sustentation Fund for the said congregation, they have

set up from that date a financial arrangement distinct from that of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland :

And whereas further the said Rev. Allan Mackenzie, by refusing to constitute the kirk-session in accordance with the finding of the Synod of 7th July, 1897, and at the request of his elders in a letter dated 23rd July, 1897, as also by refusing to compear before the Northern Presbytery when cited three times to answer to the following charges, viz. :—(1) Of having refused to carry out the instructions of the Synod held at Inverness on the 7th July, 1897, affecting the Fraser Street Congregation, Inverness: (2) of having refused to call a meeting of the kirk-session at the request of his elders in a letter addressed to him by them on the 23rd of July, 1897 : and (3) of setting up a new order of things in the Fraser Street Congregation, of which he is pastor: he thereby showed contempt of the Synod, Northern Presbytery, and his own kirk-session :

Therefore, the Synod find that the said Rev. Allan Mackenzie must by fair and necessary inference be regarded as having separated himself from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and as having, by his own act in passing the aforesaid resolutions, ceased to be a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

At the same time, the Synod, in order to give the Rev. Allan Mackenzie a final opportunity to reconsider his position, instruct the Northern Presbytery to hold a meeting of their court within the Free Presbyterian Church at Portree, on Wednesday, the 1st day of December, 1897, at 7 p.m. If Mr. Mackenzie compears at the said meeting of the Northern Presbytery, seeks re-admission to the Church, expresses regret for his conduct hitherto in this case, and promises obedience to the courts of this Church according to his ordination vows, the Synod instruct said Presbytery to deal with him in a brotherly manner and according to the constitution of this Church. If Mr. Mackenzie does not comply with these instructions, the Synod hereby instruct the Northern Presbytery to appoint one of the ministers of the Presbytery interim moderator of the kirk-session at Inverness, and that the case here take end. Further, the Synod instruct the clerk to send a copy of this finding to the Rev. Allan Mackenzie, along with a copy of the citation put already four times into his hands."

Letters of the late Rev. Archibald Cook.

(II.)

DAVIOT FREE MANSE, 16th September, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—I received your kind letter some weeks ago. I should have answered it sooner, but I hardly know what to say, nor have I at present hardly anything, being like an empty cistern

or a dry tree. I was glad to hear from your dear sister since her return to her father. I hope she does not repent coming north, at least in regard to her body. I felt the time very agreeable that she had been with us. We were at last beginning to understand each other when she left us, and perhaps beginning to be too happy when it was perhaps time to separate us. Poor sinners can hardly bear long too much sorrow, or too much cheerfulness. Sacred wisdom knows well this, because there is in each a mixture of sin; each sin opens a door to the enemy; hence we are warned to mix our joy with trembling. Very often a proportionable sorrow may be at our door, so that there is need of watchfulness. "Be sober, because your adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Yet the Great Advocate reigns, He knows well how to deal with His poor people. Satan cannot hurt them, or do anything to them, but as He permits. In sorrow one becomes exposed to his temptations. It is easy to prevail on one while already on his back. It is easy to make one believe he has no grace, when one sees and feels that he has none. It is easy to make him believe his sins are unpardonable, when himself sees them more in number than the hairs of his head. It is easy to believe the day of grace is past, when the heart refuses to repent. It is in such cases the enemy comes; surely he is a merciless being, his aim in all things is to ruin the poor soul, but the Saviour rules over him. He knows how far he should be permitted to bruise and break the creature. Hence the Saviour has the tongue of the learned, knows how to speak a word in season to the weary-soul, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one. He will not be always wroth, because the spirit which He made would fail before Him. He knows well what His people cost Him. He also knows all their difficulties, but He knows His own expense to meet all, and that they shall come forth at last as gold tried in the fire. It is therefore our duty to be about His door, to look to His promises, and plead the fulfilment of them to ourselves. This may take time. There are many things to be worn out of us before the consolations of the gospel could do us good. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." The time for comforting the soul is fixed with Himself. He is a wise Physician, and will not apply the balm while the poison is at the root. He uses His lancets, cuts deep to the very bottom of the wound, lets out the poison of the old covenant. "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin."

Remember me kindly to your dear sister and to your father, though I have not had the pleasure of seeing him. Grace be with you. Miss — is still here. She thinks of leaving us next week.—Yours sincerely,

ARCHD. COOK.

Tus Comhairle an Eòlais.

LE A. MACCOLLA, MINISTEIR NA H-EAGLAIS SAOIRE,
ANN AN CILLE-CHUIMEAN.

(Continued from page 277.)

4. Fathast, chi sinn iomlanachd an àrd-thighearnais a thug an t-Athair do Chrìosd, air a chur an céill gu farsuing anns na h-earrannaibh do 'n Fhìrin a leanas: "Agus chuir e'n a shuidhe air a dheaslaime fhéin e, anns na h-ionadaibh nàmhaidh, gu ro àrd os ceann gach uile uachdaranachd, agus cumhachd, agus neirt, agus tighearnais, agus gach ainm a dh' ainmichear, cha 'n e mhàinn san t-saoghal so, ach san t-saoghal ri teachd mar an ceudna; agus chuir e na h-uile nithe fo a chosaibh, agus thug se e gu bhì 'n a Cheann os ceann nan uile nithe do 'n Eaglais."—(Eph. i. 20, 21, 22). Faic 1 Pet. iii. 22: "Neach air dha dol gu nàmh, a tha air deas-laime Dhé, air do ainglibh agus do uachdaranachdaibh agus do chumhachdaibh bhì air an cur fo a cheannsal-san." "Thugadh dhomhsa gach uile chumhachd air nàmh agus air talamh."—(Mat. xxviii. 18). "Oir chuir e na h-uile nithe fo a chosaibh."—(1 Cor. xv. 27). Tha iad so nì 's leoir air son daingneachaidh d' ar beachd; agus a nis ainmichidh sinn cuid do dh' aobharaibh air son gam bheil na h-uile h-uachdaranachd agus cumhachd air an tabhairt do Chroisd, mar ar Fear-saoraidh.

1. Tha so air a thoirt dha, chum gu 'n stiùireadh agus gu riaghladh e na h-uile fhreasdalan, an co cheangal ri Rìoghachdaibh na talmhainn, air son crìochaibh a ghlòire chur air an aghaidh. 2. Chum gu 'm fosgladh e slighe chum craobh-sgaoilidh an t-soisgeil agus 'aobhair féin feadh uile chinnich na talmhainn: agus, mar sin, gu 'n cuireadh e suas a Rìoghachd spioradail féin 'nam measg: "Imichibh agus searmoinichibh an soisgeul do na h-uile chinnich." 3. Chum gu 'n coimheadadh agus gu 'n dìonadh e 'Eglais féin o a h-uile naimhdeb. 4. Chum gu cuireadh e 'n gnìomh a bhreith-eannais air Rìoghachdaibh easumhal, agus nach strìochd dha; agus nach dean seirbhis dha; oir s' ann aige-san tha an "t-slat iarunn le 'm brisear iad; agus le 'm pronnar iad mar shoitheach a' chriadhair." "Oir thugadh na h-uile breitheanas do 'n Mhac." 5. Agus a chum gu deanadh e a leithid a dh' atharrachadh fadheòidh air Rìghribh, agus air Rìoghachdaibh, 's gu faigh an gealladh làn-choimhlionadh "Rinneadh uile Rìoghachdan na talmhainn 'n an Rìoghachdaibh do ar Tighearn, agus d' a Chrìosd." "Bithidh Rìghrean nan oideachan-altruim agus Ban-rìghinnean 'n am màithrichèan-altruim d'a Eaglais."

Aig àm an Ath-leasachadh, thog Dia suas ann an iomadh earrann do 'n Roinn-Eorpa Prionnsaibh, a bha a' cur dìon air na daoineibh ainmeil a bha a' toirt air a h-aghaidh na h-oibre glòrmoire ud; agus bha iad a' toirt an gnùis agus an còmhnaidh dhi. Agus tha e air a thoirt fainear, anns na Dùtchchaibh anns nach d' rinneadh so gu 'n d' thàinig an obair gu neo-nì. An Ti a chuir so ann an cridhe Chruis, 'n a latha féin, chuir e an cridhe iomadh Rìgh e o 'n uair sin.

Co a thogas agus a leagas Rìoghachdan fa seach, ach Crìosd? Co dha dh' fheumas iad cunntas a thabhairt, ach do Chrìosd? Uime sin, 's e 'n dleasdanas ùmhlachd a thoirt dha, agus a thoil fhoillsichte 'ghabhail mar an riaghailt 'n an suidheachadh follais-each agus uaigneach. Ach, faicemaid a nis, o 'n Fhocal, dleasdanaid Rìghrean agus Rìoghachdan 'n an riaghladh follaiseach, do 'Chrìosd, do 'Fhìrinn, agus d' a Eaglais, réir mar a cheadaicheas tomhas ar farsuingeachd.

1. Tha sinn a 'cur an céill agus a' daingneachadh o Fhìrinn Dhé gur h-e dleasdanas Rìoghachdan 'n an riaghladh, creidimh, no, Rìoghachd Chrìosd aithneachadh, aideachadh, agus an deadh-ghean agus an còmhnaidh a thoirt dhi, cha 'n ann a mhàin a thaobh a bhi sealbhachadh nan sochairean mòra sin, Focal Dhé, anns am bheil a thoil air a foillseachadh; ach mar an ceudna, gu bheil iad fo ùghdarras agus fo chumhachd Chrìosd. Tha 'n teagasg so 'n a Fhocal ag agairt so uatha; oir cha 'n e mhàin gu bheil Eisan a' riaghladh 'n a fhreasdal thairis orra, ach gu 'm bheil aige, mar an ceudna, ùghdarras modhanail os an ceann. Dh' fheudamaid ann an so, an t-eadar-dhealachadh a tha eadar, mar tha Crìosd 'n a Cheann nan uile Chinneach, agus mar tha e 'n a Eaglais 'g a nochdadh, na 'm b' e sin a bhiodh 'n ar n-amharc. Tha Chrìosd 'n a Cheann beò a chuirp dhìomhair, eadhon, na h-Eaglais—'s e Ceann a beatha, a h-òrduighean, a h-ùghdarras, agus a feartan, le comharrachadh an Athar, mar a'taisbeanadh na Diadhachd gu léir. Ach, tha e, mar an ceudna, air chomharrachadh an Athar, gu bheil ùghdarras agus cumhachd aige thairis air uile Rìghribh agus Rìoghachdaibh na talmhainn: "Chuir e na h-uile nithe fo a chosaibh." "Agus thug se e gu bhi 'n a Cheann thairis air na h-uile nithibh do 'n Eaglais." Tha cuid ag ràdh gu 'r h-ann mar Mhac slorruidh Dhé, an dara pearsa, agus nach ann mar an Diaduine, ann an dreuchd na h-eadar-mheadhoinearachd, a tha so aige. Ach bheir sibh fainear, gu bheil na h-uile ùghdarras agus cumhachd aige, mar Mhac slorruidh Dhé, gu nàdurra—'s an t-seadh so, cha b' urrainn e bhi air a thoirt da. Tha fios againn ciod a tha Deòrsa Gillespie ag ràdh mu so; ach cha 'n 'eil aobhar air labhairt air sin 's an àm. Ach their sinn so, ma 's ann mar Mhac slorruidh Dhé a mhàin, 's nach ann mar Eadar-mheadhon-air, tha na h-uile nithe air an cur fo chosaibh Chrìosd, 's èigin gu bheil beachd luchd-leanmhuinn Ariuis fìor, a tha a' cumail a mach, gu bheil-am Mac ni 's ìsle na 'n t-Athair ann an nàdur agus an urram. Ach nach biodh an teagasg so 'n a thoibheum na 'n tugamaid gnùis dha. Chi sinn anns a' xv. 27, 28, do 'n cheud litir a chum nan Corintianach: . . . "Agus an uair a chuirear na h-uile nithe fodha, an sin bithidh am Mac féin fo 'n Tì a chuir na h-uile nithe fodha-san, chum gu 'm bi Dia 'n a h-uile anns na h-uile." Ann am Fìrinn eile tha e'g ràdh, "Is mò an t-Athair na mise." A nis, an ann a thaobh a dhreuchd mar Fhearsaoraidh, no, 'n ann a thaobh a nàduir agus a phearsa mar Dhia a mhàin, a tha e'g ràdh so? 'S èigin gu 'r h-ann a thaobh a dhreuchd, 's

nach ann a thaobh a nàduir, 's a phearsa mar Dhia a mhàin-Bhiodh a chaochladh do bheachd 'n a thoibheum. Ach noch daidh sinn a nis, gu 'r h-ann air son maith na h-Eaglais gu h-àraidh, a thugadh dha an Ard-uachdaranachd so, mar Eadar-mheadhonair, os an ceann. Ma 's i so a' chrìoch àraidh a bh' aig an Athair, ann an tabhairt an ùghdarras agus a' chumhachd so dha; nach fheum gu bheil dòigh-éigin ann anns am bheil e comasach dhoibh maith Eaglais Chrìosd a chur air aghaidh. An urrainn sinn a shaoilsinn, nach e dleasdanas an Riaghlaidh aimsireil, maith na h-Eaglais a chur air aghaidh, leis na h-uile meadhon laghail a ta 'n an comas? An urrainn sinn a chreidsinn, nach 'eil iad fo fhiach-aibh do Chrìosd, cha 'n e mhàin, gu h-uaigneach 's gu pearsanta, *mar chrìosduidh bh eile*, ach, mar an ceudna, 'n an dreuchd fhollaiseach, a' chrìoch airson an robh iad air an cur fo a cheansall-san, a chur air a h-aghaidh?

2. Tha 'n dòigh air am bheil Focal Dhé 's an Tiomnadh Nuadh a' labhairt air na dleasdanasaidh a tha 'n dreuchd a' cur mar fhiachaibh orra, a' daingneachadh ar beachd:—"Oir cha 'n 'eil uachdarain 'n an aobhar eagail do dheadh oibribh, ach do droch oibribh. Oir is esan seirbhiseach Dhé chum maith dhuit. Ach ma ni thu olc, bitheadh eagail ort, or cha 'n ann gu dlomhain a tha e a' giùlan a' chlàidheimh; or is e seirbhiseach Dhé e, 'n a dhioghaltair feirge air an ti a ni olc."—Rom. xiii. 3, 4.) Am bheil sibh a' saòilsinn nach 'eil maith agus soirbheachadh aobhair agus Eaglais Chrìosd 'n a earrann do 'n mhaith, a tha fiachaichte orra, chur air aghaidh, 's a chòmhnadh? Agus an urrainn sinn a chreidsinn nach 'eil an eucoir a nithear an aghaidh fìor dhiadhachd, no aobhar Chrìosd, 'n a earrann do 'n olc is còir dhoibh àicheadh, 's a chur sìos? Tha co-cheartas a choimhead eadar duine is duine 's na nithibh a bhuineas do'n bheatha so, 'na ni maith agus rofheumail; ach an e sin crìoch a b' àirde bh' aig an Tighearn ann an comharrachadh òrduigh cho cudthromach ris an Riaghladh aimsireil? 'S i a ghlàir féin, gun teagamh, a' chrìoch àraidh bh' aige ann an comharrachadh 'nan uile nithe. Nis, ma ta, ma 's ann tre 'n Eaglais tha a' ghlàir a 's mò gu bhi aig Dia; an urrainn sinn a shaoilsinn gu bheil an dreuchd aimsireil a 's àirde, a 's cudthrom-aiche, agus a 's urramaiche 'chur E air chois, 's an t-saoghal, air a druidealh a mach o' ghnòthuch 's am bith a bhi aice ri Fìrinn agus Eaglais Chrìosd; ach an cead a leigeil leotha no, a mhàin an dìon sin a chur orra, a ni e do chomunn coitchinn 's am bith eile anns an Rìoghachd?

Cha 'n 'eil sinn ag ràdh gur h-e seirbhiseach na h-Eaglais an Rìgh; ach gur h-e seirbhiseach Dhé e, chum maith do 'n Eaglais.

Nach e lagh nam modhanna an riaghailt ùmhlachd a thugadh do 'n Fhear-riaghlaidh aimsireil 'n a dhreuchd, thairis air lochd-anaibh; agus nach 'eil dàimh mhodhanail eadar Dia agus esan; agus nach ann a réir so, a dh' fheumas e cunntas a thabhairt do Dhia? Ma tha so fìor, mar gu bheil, c' airson a tha na Saor-thabhart-aich a' cumail a mach, nach buin e do 'n Fhear-riaghlaidh aimsireil,

'n a dhreuchd, no ann an cleachdadh a dhreuchd, gnothuch a ghabhail ri ceud chlàr an lagha? Nach 'eil briseadh air ceud chlàr an lagh 'n a pheacadh cho gràineil am fianuis Dhé riutha-san a tha 'n am briseadh air an dara clàr, agus nach 'eil iad cho cunnartach agus cho cronail do shoirbheas agus do thèaruinteachd na tire? Ach tuilleadh air so a ris. 'Tha iad so do 'n bheachd, ma ta, nach 'eil gnothuch aig an Ard-uachdaranachd aimsireil, ann a coimhlionadh an dreuchd, ris an diadhachd, no ri Eaglais Chrìosd; ach gur e 'àite-san leigeil leis gach neach, no gach commonn, an ni is toigh leo aideachadh, no a theagasg, no chur suas mar chuspair aoraidh, mur dean iad nithe a bhios air am meas cronail do leas aimsireil na Rìoghachd. Seadh, gur còir dha dìon a chur orra, ann an lànshaorsa, ann an sgaoileadh bheachdan toibheumach, saobh-chreidimh, agus ìodhol-aoraidh, dìreach mar ni e do Eaglais Chrìosd, ann an coimhead òrduighean Chrìosd chum a ghloire. Co a dh' àithn do 'n Uachdaran aimsireil peanas no smachdachadh a dheanamh air mèirleach, luchd-reubainn, mortairibh, slaughtiribh, agus luchd-brisidh air sìth na tire, a tha uile 'n am briseadh air dara clàr an lagha? Nach e Dia? Agus nach e 'n Ti ceudna a' dh' àithn gu 'm bitheadh luchd-ìodhol-aoraidh, fàidhibh bréige, luchd-toibheum, luchd-magaidh na Diadhachd, luchd-mi-naomhachaidh na Sàbaid, agus an leithidibh sin, air an àicheadh no air an smachdachadh?—peacaidhean a tha fo cheud chlàr an lagha. Their cuid, gu 'm biodh so an aghaidh saorsa coguis, agus 'n a ghéur-leanmhuinn. C' àit am bheil saorsa coguis air a ceadachadh gu bhi peacadh an aghaidh Dhé, agus bhi a' saltairt air a lagh naomha le làn-shaorsa? Their iad mar an ceudna, gu 'm biodh e 'n a bhuntuinn r' an saorsa—saorsa 'tha a' ceadachadh do dhaoineibh toibheum a labhairt, ìodhol-aoraidh a chur air chois, an t-Sàbaid a briseadh gu follaiseach 's gu h-an-dàna ni 's mò na mèirle, no reubainn, no eas-onoir ann am malairt, agus an leithidibh sin? cha 'n ann o Dhia a ta i. 'S ann a tha i a' sruthadh o bheachdaibh àicheidheil air Dia, 's air diadhachd. 'S muldach an ni, gu 'm biodh a leithid do bheachd aig muinntir a tha 'g aideachadh Fhocal Dhé mar an aon riaghailt creidimh agus dleasdanaais. A' mhuinntir a tha d' an bheachd, nach 'eil gnothuch aig an riaghladh aimsireil ri ceud chlàr an lagha, ach mar chrìosd-uidhibh uaigneach eile, 's 'éigin gu bheil iad 'g a dhruideadh a mach o gnothuch a gabhail ri fìor dhiadhachd, no ri Eaglais Chrìosd; ach mar ni e ri aidmheil no ri commun 's am bith eile, ciod sam bith cho mì-fhallain 's a dh' fheudas an creud a bhi, no cho cronail 's a bhios am beachdan. Tha sinn a' faicinn gu bheil an t-Olla Harper, Ceann-suidhe a na Buidhne-Aonaidh aig an Eaglais Chléireil Aointe, a' gabhail bhriathribh an Olla *Wardlaw*, a bha 'n Glascha, mar fhìorbheachd féin. "*Cìod e,*" ars' esan, "*àit an fhir riaghlaidh a thaobh a' Chreidimh no na Fìor-dhiadhachd?*" "*S e fhìor 'àite laghail,*" ars esan 's an freagradh, "*E bhi gun àit idir?*" An so, tha sinn a' faicinn a bheachd a tha aig an Eaglais ud, mu òrdugh a chuir Dia air chois, gu h-àraidh chum

a ghloire féin ; e bhi gun àite 'sam bith aig', 'n a dhreuchd fholl-aiseach, thaobh Eaglais no creidimh Iosa Criosd. Sgrìobh Maighstir *Cerr*, an Glascho, fear do 'n Eaglais cheudna, a bheachd anns na briathribh ceudna. Ciod 'sam bith an dreach bòidheach, 'dh' fheudas daoine gleusda, comasach, a chur air ; s e so am flòr bheachd.

(*To be Continued.*)

Notes and Comments.

THE NEW MODERATOR.—Dr. Whyte of St. George's, Edinburgh, has been appointed Moderator of the forthcoming General Assembly of the Free Church.

DELIVERANCE OF JULY SYNOD ON SABBATH OBSERVANCE.—Replies have been received from the Secretaries of Lord Salisbury, Mr. A. G. Balfour, and other Cabinet ministers, acknowledging receipt of the above deliverance, copies of which were sent to the whole Cabinet.

A THRIVING ESTABLISHMENT.—This is Free St. George's, Edinburgh. The managers are having an anxious time of it, by reason of the crowds who now beset the lectures and the other performances. Not only is Dr. Whyte carrying himself with as much distinction as ever, and Mr. Black, the assistant, developing more brilliancy, but as if this had been too little, the managers have now added an extra attraction in the shape of a new organist, a man of remarkable powers. This gentleman is a great acquisition, and his musical displays are quite fetching, insomuch that the house from the reserved seats to the remotest gallery is ever and anon crowded with citizens and strangers. We were never present in Free St. George's, nevertheless, while the feast proceeds, in our mind's eye, we see the handwriting on the wall. It is the penmanship of Dr. Candlish, the late minister of the church. He is saying, "For my part, I am persuaded that if the organ be admitted there is no barrier in principle against the sacerdotal system in all its fulness, against the substitution again in our whole religion of the formal for the spiritual, the symbolical for the real." Let Dr. Whyte note this pronouncement, and see what answer he will make.

INCREASE OF SUICIDES.—A correspondent to the *Northern Chronicle* draws attention to the increase of suicides during late years. Since 1881 the rate in England has grown from 75 to 92 per million, and in Scotland from 49 to 65 per million. The correspondent rightly refers this terrible state of matters to the lack of religious principles. Faith and hope die together. To cast off the faith and fear of God, as the nations are at present doing, is to pave the way for immorality, misery, despair, and self-murder. Life at the best has a sufficiency of cares and disappointments, but when men cast themselves adrift on a sea of atheism and fleshly pleasure they run a risk of increasing their sorrows tenfold, so that the pressure becomes intolerable.