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## Free Church Moderator's Closing Address.

THE subject of Dr. Ross Taylor's closing address was "Scottish Church Life and Work in the Nineteenth Century." The address was eloquent in style, and buoyant and hopeful in tone, but misleading in view well-nigh throughout.

Dr. Taylor began by expressing great satisfaction at the spirit of unanimity and brotherliness which had characterised all the proceedings of the Assembly, and remarked that, as there was no suggestion of separation by brethren who differed from the majority on the subject of union, there was every reason to expect that the difficulties of these brethren would increasingly disappear. It is our fervent wish, on the other hand, that these difficulties won't disappear, and that, at least, some of the minority will find it utterly impossible to enter the United Church. For, let Dr. Taylor and Principal Rainy argue as plausibly as they may, they who enter this Church will have finally buried the testimony of the Free Church of 1843. Private "declarations" will avail nothing, they are no better than waste paper. And, moreover, it is purely a violation of conscience and consistency for men at one and the same moment to attempt to embrace the Calvinistic Church of Scotland Free and the Arminian Voluntary organisation, called the United Free Church.

Dr. Taylor is bold with an unwarrantable boldness. He affirms that the Church's testimony to the headship of Christ over the nations will be in no degree abated by this union, and endeavours to refute the statement made by the Moderator of the Established Church, that this vital principle heretofore enshrined in the name, "Church of Scotland Free," will have disappeared. "Alike," says Dr. Taylor, "for his Church and for this Church—the only authoritative statement of this principle is contained in the Confession of Faith; and in the entire course of the Union Committee's discussions not a single suggestion was made to alter a syllable of the Confession's statement on the subject. We shall enter the

United Church carrying the principle with us, and free to give it practical effect, according as our Divine Head may require." Now, this statement may be accepted by persons who are willing to be deceived, or who imagine that Moderators of Assemblies can speak nothing but the truth. But, if we mistake not, we see deception written over it in large letters. We ask—Is the Confession of Faith the only authoritative document in the nominal Free Church? Is not the Declaratory Act of 1892 also authoritative? It is. And we find there that the Establishment principle is now relegated to the category of intolerant and persecuting principles. Again, the decisions of Assemblies past and present are almost unanimous for disestablishment. Still further, the questions and formula of the United Church embody no testimony in favour of the nation's duty to acknowledge and support the Church of Christ. All these things go to prove that the Free Church will not, and can not, carry the principle of Christ's headship over the State and the State's duty to Christ's Church into the new body. The United Church will, in all probability, give *its* principle on this subject "practical effect" in a way that is quite alien to the principle of the Confession; it will, after a brief respite it may be, begin a crusade for disestablishment, thus endeavouring to destroy the present embodiment of the principle of national religion. And if, by any mysterious providence, it should not pursue this course, it will expend its energies in no better work. It is undoubtedly true that neither the Union Committee, nor any other, has ever had the courage to frame a new statement on the doctrine of the civil magistrate and his relation to the Church as a substitute in the room of that in the Confession. Such would have been perilous work in view of legal and other difficulties. But there is another and more subtle way of renouncing the authoritative statements of the Confession—namely, the adoption of a Declaratory Act whereby the Church's relation to the Confession is changed. This is the method by which the nominal Free Church has thrown off the Confession, and yet professes allegiance to it.

Dr. Taylor gives a sketch of what he describes as the struggle for freedom. He begins in the last century with Ebenezer Erskine, but he takes care to bracket with him Thomas Gillespie, the father of the Voluntaries. He then comes down to Disruption times, and, of course, pours forth a eulogium in praise of the worthies of that period. He praises the brave stand of Covenanters, Seceders, and Free Churchmen. He has no end of gratitude for the glorious things they did, and we can share with him. But all the while he is quite oblivious to the fact that the Free Church is at present under the reign of what is nothing better than Moderatism. There is a light which is darkness, even worse than darkness. The moderates preached salvation by works; Free Church ministers preach salvation by character—"Imitate Christ," "Do and thou shalt live." The moderates were a very

carnal, worldly set of men, who had no regard for God's commandments; Free Church ministers go to carnal amusements, concerts, and such like; many of them have little esteem for the Sabbath, and can indulge in common conversation on that holy day; there is not the slightest savour of spirituality about a vast number of them. Talk about moderatism! it is abundant enough in the Free Church at the present moment as surely as ever it was or is in the Established Church. And the same spirit can eject, and has ejected men from their churches and manses for nothing less and nothing more than standing by the very principles that the Covenanters, Seceders, and the Disruption fathers did. We make bold to say that some in recent times were honoured to suffer in as noble a cause as the former were—they were honoured to suffer for the inspiration and infallibility of the Word of God, the divinity of Christ, the doctrines of sovereign grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ's headship over the State, and the purity of God's worship. And, we may add, they were honoured to suffer for Christ's headship over the Church. There is a great cry as to the maintenance of this doctrine in the Free and U.P. Churches. But we don't find that they maintain it; the doctrine they maintain is the Assembly's headship over the Church, the Church over the Church. It is the Assembly or the Church that is the supreme court of appeal, not Christ in the word. But Dr. Taylor is utterly blind to these things. He garnishes the sepulchres of the prophets, but if he were to meet any to-day who are endeavouring in reality to follow in their footsteps, he would know them not.

Dr. Taylor proceeds to speak of later times, those of the previous union discussion in the Free Church. He refers to the matter of "open questions." The moderator of the Established Church happened the previous evening to say, with marked appropriateness of expression, that the United Church would be "a congeries of open questions." Dr. Taylor in triumphant tones replies—"The sounding appellation is now thirty years of date; the basis of open questions was abandoned a generation ago. We are now uniting on the Standards." The words quite take away the breath of the listener. He begins to wonder where he is; has the millennium come at last? Uniting on the Standards! What could be better than this, seeing the Standards are so agreeable to the Bible? But the illusion is quickly dispelled, the bright dream vanishes, and he is plunged with most uncomfortable rapidity back again into the quagmire of "open questions," for the reverend moderator, with a sublime disregard of logic, goes on to say—"And not a single question will be open in the United Church which has not been an open question in the Free Church, and open also, for that matter, in the Established Church." No doubt the moderator has accomplished something; he has thrown the Established Church into the same mire with the Free, and that is, after all, a satisfaction. A

companion in the direst misery is a slight relief to human nature. And we believe he is right on this point in regard to both Churches. They are both floundering among open questions. He says the Free and the U.P. are to unite on the Standards. They are both professedly resting on the Standards, but, if we are not mistaken, the seat which comes between them and the Standards is a box of Declaratory Acts.

One of the topics with which Dr. Taylor closes his address is "the increasing attention paid to the details of public worship." He alludes to "the greater importance attached to the element of worship." "The time was when the sermon was the one thing of consequence in the church service—the prayers and praises were simply the setting in which it was placed. Although the prayers might be a rambling, disconnected repetition of set phrases, and the singing a listless drawl, yet, if the sermon was orthodox and earnest, people were content. But now our Christian people feel that they go to the House of God to meet with Him in prayer and to lift up their hearts in praise, and what used to be merely the preliminary exercises, are now a vital part of the service." This contains a very uncomplimentary description of public worship in Scotland during times when the dew of heaven descended richly upon many congregations. The description does not at all adapt itself to the picture Dr. Taylor himself has already given of the past. Rambling prayers, listless singing, and mere sermon hearing constitute a poor kind of worship. Why is it, however, that the sermon occupied the chief place in public worship in the past, as it ought to do in every age? Simply because the sermon is or ought to be God's message to the worshippers. Our fathers went to God's house with the attitude of the Psalmist. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." They went not to listen to their own voices, but to the voice of God. But the case is now changed; the praises have become, according to Dr. Taylor's idea, "a vital part of the service," because the worshippers are living upon their own works, and so, if you take these away, their life is gone. They are taken up with the outer order of things, with the formal prayer that was composed beforehand by the preacher, with the notes of the organ, with the fine singing of the choir, and last but not least, with their personal exercises in worship. Indeed, the sermon may well have begun to shrink into the background and take a subordinate place; the voice of God is not in it; it is only the voice of a poor, vain man—a good elocutionist, it may be, but nothing more. It is quite easy to understand how worshippers in the olden time were of a different cast; it was God they were seeking; their own prayers and praises were very little in their eyes, they discerned the sin that mingled with them; they looked away from their own imperfect services to the God of salvation set forth in the glorious gospel. Dr. Taylor has nothing to substitute but mere ritualism for the spirituality of Christian worship as known in Scotland in

former days. But we have also to say that he misrepresents the prayers and singing in general. There may have been places where his description held good, but we believe that worship was never more becoming in manner and matter than in past times in our country. The prayers in most cases were reverent, orderly, and spiritual, a contrast indeed to the hard, unfeeling, or irreverent presumptuous utterances that pass too often for prayers at the present day. As for the praise, it was not an artistic musical performance that suggested the theatre or concert-room, but grave, hearty, vigorous, soul-stirring singing that betokened spiritual life and earnestness in the congregations. Art will never make up for life, nor dead organs for human souls tuned by the Spirit of God. Dr. Taylor imagines that the danger attaching to the newer worship is "slight." We think it is very great. It is such as will lead the professing Churches of this country into Romanism.

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## The Majesty of the King of Kings:

### A SERMON

BY THE LATE DR. JOHN LOVE, PREACHED ON THE SUBJECT  
OF THE REVOLUTION, 9th Nov. 1788.

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"He shall cut off the spirit of princes; he is terrible to the kings of the earth."  
—PSALM lxxvi. 12.  
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THAT wisdom which enables us to magnify the works of God enters into our souls by means of His Holy Word. This is true, even in reference to the ordinary appearance of things in the material universe. The vestiges of Divine Perfection are there so manifest, that the eye of reason hardly can avoid seeing something of God. But the ideas of God, which are obtained in this manner, even when the industry of meditation, and the investigations of philosophy have been applied, are too languid, confused, and destitute of majesty. We must hear the voice of God Himself describing His own works; then will our sentiments be similar to those which Job expressed in consequence of his being divinely enlightened to contemplate the universe: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Still more sensibly is the feebleness of our disabled reason felt when we turn our attention to the spiritual government of God, and consider Him as the lawgiver, the disposer, and the judge of creatures endued with intelligence, and formed with endless duration. All men feel cause to confess their foolishness and stupidity with respect to these high matters. That light alone which shines in the sacred oracles, reveals in such a manner the throne and perfections of the Great King, as to produce in us

holy, becoming, and heart-satisfying thoughts of His works and ways in His spiritual kingdom. While the heart remains shut against this celestial light, the ordinary course of Divine Providence is frustrated of its salutary tendency. In vain does day utter speech to day, and night unto night. Prosperity destroys, adversity hardens and irritates against God. To the unenlightened soul even the most solemn miraculous interpositions are in vain. The ancient Israelites gave sufficient evidence of this, of whom the psalmist complains in a humble address to God; "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt:" as Moses had done long before when he gave this warning to those stupid spectators of God's wonders, Deut. xxix. 2-4—"Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." What darkness and perverseness reign in the heart of man! How necessary and how precious are Thy illuminations, Thou Almighty Spirit of the living God!

Some works of God give a complex display of the glorious character of their author in its general and leading features. These are peculiarly consecrated to the remembrance and instruction of mankind through all ages. At the creation of the world, the wonders of Divine Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Goodness, All-sufficiency, and Sovereignty, were held forth to view in the original state of human nature. With new and superior splendour, the glories of the invisible God shone upon the ruined world in the face of Jesus Christ, the second Adam.

But besides these most public appearances of Jehovah, there hath been, in splendid succession, a series of particular signal interpositions, which hath diffused, through the different times and societies of the church, His majesty and His praises. With a view to these subordinate displays of Divine glory, David utters a prophecy, which includes a long train of remarkable events, not to be finished till the end of the world, in the following words:—Psalm cxlv. 4, 6, 7, "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness." These words inform mankind, that, from time to time, they shall see coming forth to view such events as shall give further evidence of the divinity of God's Word, of the certainty of its promises and its threatenings, of the eternal counsels and the supreme power of the true God, and of the subjection of all events to His control, His designs, His glory, and the happiness of His people.

Such was that great public change in Britain, which the completion of an hundred benign years has lately brought back, with fresh delight, to our memories and mouths. God Himself doth observe, and will bring into judgment, the thoughts, words and

conduct of those who profess, or who decline to profess, a grateful recollection of that magnificent period.

That I may promote such sentiments on this subject as shall be honourable to God and profitable to us, let me endeavour to apply the light of God's Word to that event: for as the pieces of burnished metal, placed on the summits of high buildings, however bright in themselves, yet hardly appear till they are kindled into splendour by the beams of the sun; so, till we are specially enlightened by the Word and the Spirit of God, our ideas will fall exceedingly short of the dignity of this, and every other Divine work. I find therefore in the Scripture history, that the record of signal events is frequently accompanied with particularly inspired compositions, which celebrate the glory of God displayed in these events. Such compositions were of important use for directing and animating the praises of those persons who witnessed the occasions of them. By means of these compositions, believers, in succeeding ages, not only are excited to remember the great events, but are enabled, in the sympathy of faith, to enter into the feelings of those who were then present. And a third use of these sacred compositions is, that they remain in the Church's treasury, to be applied to new occasions, in some respects similar to the original occasions of their being written.

The words of my text are the conclusion of one of those inspired songs, which breathe wonderful sentiments of gratitude and triumph. We shall then do some justice to the memory of God's interpositions at the Revolution, when we feel something of that sacred fire which animated the writer of this psalm. It was composed, most probably, on occasion of that stroke, inflicted by an angelic arm, which repelled the blasphemies, and disappointed the bloody designs of Senacherib, the Assyrian monarch. This deliverance is recorded in three different places of the sacred book. Those who duly consider the mischiefs which were prevented by the Revolution, the blessings introduced thereby, together with the surprising concurrence of circumstances giving birth to that event, will not blame my application of this psalm to the present subject, as being over-strained or unnatural.

In attending to the words of the text itself, I feel something which peculiarly awakens to awe, and inspires with humble boldness. I wonder how any worm of the dust can venture to decline giving due glory to Him, whose majestic voice is here uttered. "He shall cut off the spirit of princes; he is terrible to the kings of the earth."

In handling this subject, I shall,

I. Inquire into this awful work of God, respecting earthly kings and governments.

II. I shall take a view of the Revolution, particularly in reference to Scotland, as implying in it a Divine work of this kind.

III. I shall show how these magnificent operations of God's holy providence should now be recollected and improved.

I. I am to make a short inquiry into the awful Divine work which the text describes in reference to the kings and governments of this earth.

In prosecuting this inquiry, I shall endeavour, in my thoughts and words, to maintain that reverence for civil government, as being the ordinance of God, which I know is required by the fifth commandment, and in many other places of the Scripture. I wish to be far from the spirit of those, whose ungovernable wickedness is thus characterized by the apostle Peter: "They despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." But while I stand here, by commission from Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, I must be still more afraid, lest he should be dishonoured by a grovelling timidity. I must endeavour, by grace, to ascend far above the carnal fear of whatever is earthly: I must speak with an authority becoming those majestic truths, before which the highest worldly powers shall bow and shall tremble, either in submissive obedience, or under the wound of avenging wrath.

Gird Thy sword on Thy thigh, Thou illustrious Prince of the kings of the earth! go forth conquering and to conquer!

"The powers that be are ordained of God; there is no power but of God." This is true, in a certain sense, of all civil governments that ever existed under heaven. If, independently of God, a sparrow falleth not to the ground, much less can any degree of civil power be by any means attained, without at least a permissive ordination from above. Psalm lxxv. 6, 7, "For promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Nor is the intrinsic dignity of civil government, as enstamped with the majesty of God, entirely removed, even when governors take many wrong steps, both in acquiring and in employing their power. Hence the Redeemer spake thus to Pilate, John xix. 11, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Here the guilt of the Jews is aggravated from their attempting to pervert the civil power to their detestable purposes; which civil power, even in the hands of the ambitious Romans, and managed by such a man as Pilate, still was, upon the whole, as is intimated by these words of Christ, a Divine ordinance for the good of mankind. Still, however, the beauty, majesty, and Divine origin of civil power, are then most clearly conspicuous, when that power is in such a manner obtained and used, as is marked with the approbation of the Supreme King. Beautiful are the words of David on this subject, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."



These general remarks make way for the proposed inquiry as to that awful work of God which the text denounces. That we may think more accurately on this subject, I shall divide the inquiry into these three parts.

1st, What are those sinful provocations which rouse up the Divine vengeance against princes and governments?

2nd, Wherein consists the execution of vengeance denounced in the text?

3rd, What are the ends for which God is pleased to exhibit in this world, at some times, such spectacles of his wrath?

1st, To raise up and establish a civil government of any tolerable kind, and much more such a one as is peculiarly excellent, is the work, as has been already observed, of God Himself. The dignity of such Divine works is represented in that noble allegory:—"Thus," says the monarch of Babylon, "were the visions of mine head in my bed: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."—Daniel iv. 10-12. Here is a grand production of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. Why then doth God destroy His own work? Why should such a stern command be issued from on high? "Behold a watcher, and an holy one, came down from heaven! He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches," verses 13, 14.

I answer, though God giveth not account of any of His matters, yet there are usually in such overturnings some remarkable transgressions, either on the part of subjects, or of governors, or of both, which sufficiently vindicate the justice of God's ways, and should stop the mouths of men from murmuring against His procedure.

Agreeably to the infallible Word of God I mention the following articles of guilt, as furnishing a just cause for visitations so dreadful and astonishing.

1. A spirit of pride, independence of God, and carnal confidence. Wherever this spirit is found, whether in rulers or subjects, it is like a conductor held up to attract the lightning of vengeance from the eternal throne. A wish, an imagination to be like God in dignity and independence threw down myriads of angels from their celestial seats. No throne of government on earth is so firm and sublime as that such a spirit indulged will not sooner or later lay it in the dust. If kings rule without fear of the Supreme Majesty, and trust in the multitude or courage of their subjects, and become too lofty for an humble subjection to the Great God; or, on the

other hand, if subjects place an idolatrous confidence in their rulers, or in their political constitution, or in their soldiers, or their sailors, or in their flourishing trade, or in their well-fortified situation, or in the friendship of other earthly powers, then both rulers and subjects lie like chaff to be driven off by the whirlwind of Divine wrath. "God resisteth the proud—Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord," Jer. xvii. 5. "But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him," Dan. v. 20. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee: thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."—Obad. 3, 4.

2. A spirit of tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, on the part of governors; or a turbulent, ungrateful, and seditious temper, generally prevailing among subjects, draw down such strokes of wrath from the Almighty Judge of the world.

3. When civil government and its blessings are perverted from their proper subserviency to the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and are sacrificed to the gratification of worldly lusts.

4. When the favour and encouragement of civil power are prostituted to the support of false and blasphemous religions.

5. When the awful mysteries of the true religion are debased, and rendered vile in the eyes of men, by their being used merely as tools for carrying on political schemes: and so the throne of the eternal and dreadful God of heaven is considered and treated as though it were a kind of footstool for miserable mortals.

6. When the sceptre and sword of civil power are managed in a directly hostile opposition to the truths, the ordinances, and the faithful people of the most high God.

In case of these, or the like provocations, God hath just reason to exhibit solemn and terrible testimonies of his indignation, to pour contempt upon princes, to sprinkle his garments with the blood of kings and kingdoms, and to raise up the glory and renown of his own name upon the ruins of all that is in the eyes of worldly men great, glorious, valuable, and impregnably secured.

These things might be largely illustrated and established by incontestible principles of reason, by the light of God's infallible oracles, and by the history and experience of past ages. But the design of this discourse requires me to hasten forward to the

2nd part of my proposed inquiry; namely,

Wherein consists that execution of vengeance which the words of the text pronounce against ungodly men, even when placed at the summit of earthly power?

"He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth."

It is to be remembered, that usually Divine judgments, when inflicted on the great and powerful, extend their influence to the inferior orders of men, especially when God has a principal view to the sins of the people at large in stretching out His hand upon their rulers. When governors and subjects are combined in revolting from God, it is perfectly just that great and small should be chastised or destroyed together. The description which I am now to give of God's work of judgment will be most completely applicable to such complex and extensive visitations of Divine anger as involve all the different ranks in society. It will afterwards appear what part of this general description belongs most immediately to the important period which I have in view to illustrate.

When the God of judgment comes near, then, instead of that excellent wisdom imparted from above to kings, nobles; and judges, enabling them to rule and to decree justice, instead of this there succeeds a dark and confounding infatuation, which secretly seizes the thoughts and counsels of those whom God designs to bring low. The majesty of this Divine operation is frequently celebrated in the Holy Scripture. So, in the book of Job xii. 17, 20, 24, 25, "He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged: He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man."

This paralytic stroke on the political body is attended with another, whereby the hearts of kings and of their subjects are disarmed of their former courage, and melt down into unusual and effeminate cowardice. This humbling degradation hath often been manifest in persons and countries once-remarkable for invincible fortitude. So the prophet Nahum denounced concerning the once warlike inhabitants of Nineveh, iii. 13, "Behold thy people in the midst of thee are women: The gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies, the fire shall devour thy bars." And concerning Babylon, another prophet spake thus: "All hands shall be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; and they shall be afraid: Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: They shall be amazed one of another; their faces shall be as flames." And another peal of prophetic thunder sounds thus: "The mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day, shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs."

Then comes forth the alarm, and the wound which reaches to the vitals of those persons whom celestial indignation pursues. Those calamities which were most the objects of their aversion and fear rush down upon them. Their idols, their beloved idols, are violently torn away from the mad embraces of their hearts. Forlorn helplessness, subjection to hostile and hated power, contempt and ignominy, pain and torment, complete the catastrophe.

But something must be added here, which is more dismal than anything hitherto mentioned. The remonstrances of a troubled conscience, the terrors of God, the gloomy forebodings of future unknown misery, the terrible glare of certain and eternal damnation; these where God withholds repentance and grace, brood with sable wings over those kings and kingdoms that, in its full extent, experience this vengeance.

I proceed to the 3rd part of the proposed inquiry :

What are the ends or reasons for which God is pleased to exhibit in this world some such spectacle of His just wrath ?

To this I answer in a few words that, The Holy Scripture assigns such reasons as the following—

To revive in the minds of men an awful sense of God's Being, Perfections, Presence, and Dominion over this world :

To confirm the promises and threatenings of His Word :

To realise the approach of the universal, perfect, and eternal judgment of mankind :

To comfort, establish, and embolden, the children of God in their present warfare and tribulations :

To make way for more benign exertions of civil power, under which the interests of the Redeemer's happy kingdom are cherished and widely extended.

Having thus finished the doctrinal illustrations of the text, I come forward to recollect (which should be done with a mixture of humble awe, gladness, and gratitude) that about a hundred years ago some drops of the wrath which my text declares, fell down on this island ; they fell down, but in such a manner as that the people then living, and the succession of inhabitants to this day, have had cause on that account to utter shouts of sacred joy. Terrible things were done in righteousness : there was a stroke of wrath ; but it was wrath, subservient to mercy : it was a gracious flame of Divine justice which carried off the pernicious materials ; a flame which purified the throne and court of Britain, and left behind it a clear æther ; and, in comparison of former times, a glad sunshine of truth, virtue, peace, mercy, and prosperity.

The general doctrine which hath been explained in this discourse might be largely applied to the memorable period which is now the subject of our thoughts, and much correspondence might be traced between that combination of events which issued in the Revolution - settlement, and the leading sentiments already delivered. This, however, I shall leave to the leisurely meditations of those who either already know the true history of those times, or have it in their power to become acquainted therewith.

But that all present, the young as well as the old, may so far be instructed in this matter, as to be able, if rightly disposed, to entertain some proper sentiments of gratitude for a deliverance which we are enjoying every day, I shall take one short look of that period, in correspondency to the inquiry which hath been now prosecuted.

Let it be then considered that such high provocations had been in those days committed against the majesty of the Son of God, as that it became a righteous thing with Him to remove the house of Stuart from the British throne.

I am now to speak of things chiefly relative to the kingdom of Scotland, the native country of a good part of my present hearers. There, as is too well-known to admit of being denied, in consequence of royal ingratitude and perjury, a bloody persecution was fomented, and carried on for almost the third part of a century. Of this persecution the chief avowed ground was a claim of power and authority made by the then reigning kings as wearing one of the Pope's titles, that of the head or supreme governor of the Church of Jesus Christ. A sinful creature having dared to intrude into the title, dignity, and power, which belonged to Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the glorious Trinity, the alone Head and Supreme Governor of His own Church, those who were not stupid and impious enough to approve of that sacrilegious usurpation were persecuted to death. On this point, the sufferings of many were expressly stated.

The big and fallacious words of prejudiced bigots, or of infidel scoffers at the majesty of the Son of God, may have influence enough on many in the present dissipated age. Many may be taught to look upon those children of God, who then suffered for the tenderness and zeal of an enlightened conscience, as a race of rebels who made a sacrifice of their lives to their own blind and perverse humours. Stand still thou proud censurer of the upright, thou child of Satan, the accuser of the brethren! Thy calumnious misrepresentations may sound sweetly enough in the ears of an effeminate race of professors, who would soon be scared away from the Redeemer's standard by the first whisper of the trump of persecution. But there is a Judge in heaven whom the opinion of worlds cannot bias, and whom the strength or solicitations of the universe cannot move aside from the path of righteous judgment. In his ears, "under his altar, the souls of many who were slain" in Scotland "for his testimony, are yet crying aloud," Rev. vi. 9, 10, and the answer of their cries is likely to alight in part on the heads of those in the present age, who serve themselves heirs to the deeds of their predecessors by justifying their sacrilegious cruelties, and by defaming the memory of those whom in their life and at their death God did glorify with His manifest presence, power, and salvation.

But leaving the contentious to look wise in their own eyes, I might here enter into a description of the dreadful cruelties exercised for the support of that presumptuous usurpation. I might bring into view the dark procedure of blood-thirsty counsellors and judges; the instruments of torture; the number of executions. I might shew you troops of licensed and cowardly murderers dispersed through the country; the sincere worshippers of God hunted like wild beasts; their sacred assemblies alarmed and

violated; immediate death inflicted for attendance on Divine ordinances. I might overwhelm your feelings by representing the situation of persons under terrors of conscience and fears of eternal wrath, seeking in the appointed means, for some dawn of saving mercy from above, but overtaken by heaven-defying ruffians, and in their departing moments troubled with the wantonness of cruel and blasphemous stupidity: or, I might point at a condition of persons dying in the pangs of obstinate despair, in consequence of having been ensnared into criminal compliances against the voice of conscience and of Scripture, through fear of torments and death. But these things I only hint at, their full investigation belonging to the Supreme Judge, who hath said, "The earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

That you may form some idea how much the heart of a savage persecutor was possessed by that king who was by the Revolution driven from the British throne, I shall recite only one fact recorded by an English bishop who lived in those days, and who had no excessive partiality for the sufferers of that period. But, in order to your understanding the fact I have in view, it is necessary to be observed, that an instrument of torture was then frequently used, called *the boot*. This was a piece of iron (emblematical of the hearts and faces of those who used it), a piece of iron having the figure which its name denotes. The leg of the sufferer being put into this machine, wedges of iron were driven between the iron boot and the leg, by repeated strokes, till the marrow was pressed out of the bone. You will now see the importance of the account I am now going to repeat. "When any," says the historian, "are to be struck in the boots, it is done in the presence of the Council, and upon that occasion almost all offer to run away. The sight is so dreadful, that without an order restraining a number to stay, the board would be forsaken. But when the duke was in Scotland he was so far from withdrawing, that he looked on all the while with an unmoved indifference, and with an attention, as if he had been to look on some curious experiment. This gave a terrible idea of him to all that observed it, as of a man that had no bowels nor humanity in him." This is the testimony of Bishop Burnet. I know not what may be the judgment of this enlightened age, as it modestly chooses to entitle itself: but I hope there is no person now hearing me so depraved as not to abhor such a character.

Such was the man who, having furiously supported the bloody intrusion of prelatial power on the Church of Scotland, at length attempted to stab the political constitution, and to deliver up the whole island into the hands of the blaspheming bishop of Rome.

His attempt was blasted. Infatuation, cowardice, and confusion (blessed be the God of heaven!) attended his counsels and efforts. He fled and melted away at the presence of God, and left the throne to be possessed by one whom God had brought forth to be the instrument of deliverance, and of lasting rest to His Church

in this island. This was a spectacle suited to instruct that and all after ages.

It remains that we consider how these magnificent operations of God's holy Providence should now be recollected and improved.

First of all, let us endeavour, by the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, to bring our souls under solemn and deep impressions of those glorious excellencies of the infinite God, which were manifest in those events.

In the gloomy period which preceded the Revolution, the God of glory had veiled His majesty from carnal eyes, though He was all along manifest to spiritual observers in the operations of His invincible grace among the seemingly miserable sufferers. Many signal triumphs of the Redeemer's power in baffling the externally successful fury of hell-enkindled persecutors had been exhibited. The gates of heaven had been wide opened, and the sweet savour of glory descending into redeemed souls, had so perfumed prisons and gibbets, that the demon of persecution was almost fatigued and ashamed.

Still, however, some visible interposition was necessary, to shew that earth, as well as heaven, is the Mediator's territory, to justify the hopes of dying martyrs, to make way for the fruit of their sufferings in the church below, and to silence that profane insult, "Where is now your God?"

Such a visible interposition did appear in the Revolution, bearing upon it a glorious engraving of the faithfulness, wisdom, power, mercy, and justice of God.

"O generation, see ye the word of the Lord: Have I been a wilderness to Israel? a land of darkness? The man of wisdom shall see thy name."

2nd. Our thoughts being spiritualised and exalted with a sense of God's glorious name displayed in that great crisis, let us, from that beginning of peaceful days, take a wide range through a century of prevailing prosperity. I shall not speak of inferior improvements respecting the transitory affairs of the present world. It is of higher importance to think of what the God of salvation hath been doing in this long season of order and tranquility. The long-suffering and forbearance of God in suspending deserved calamities, and in continuing abused blessings, is a glorious object of contemplation. But it is more deeply pleasing to wise and humble inquirers into the ways of God, to trace out the bright progress of salvation, and of peculiar love shining forth and conquering, amidst the black shades of human licentiousness, ingratitude, backsliding, and incorrigibleness. Much of this kind is to be ruminated upon in our review of the series of things since the Revolution. What multitudes of souls have been in this period converted and prepared for heaven, either in a more silent and unobserved manner, or in seasons of remarkable Divine influences, will not be fully manifest till the second coming of the Lord. But the work of God in raising up, in different parts of

the island, able and zealous ministers of the gospel, in continuing the dispensation of His ordinances, and in exhibiting, at some times, signal evidences of His presence and power attending these ordinances, gives fair occasion for charity to expect a happy meeting with multitudes of saved and perfected spirits in the world of light, who shall look back to this period with endless and joyful thanksgivings.

3rd. Let us look to the present times. In many respects they are evil. The valuable fruits of much deliverance are devoted, by the lusts of men, to the will of the prince of darkness. We see around us not only the budding and blossoming, but the maturity of wickedness. Infernal sights, sounds and reports, distress and overwhelm all who have sensibility enough to be moved with whatever is monstrous in vileness. To a refined and spiritual discernment, a putrid mass of hypocrisy, of spiritual delusion and incorrigibleness, is manifest.

Is there then amongst us no remainder of the ancient glory which dwelt of old in this island? Blessed be the Lord of Hosts all is not yet gone. The power and excellency of the truth is yet known amongst us. Monuments of converting power are yet here and there to be found. Amidst various corruptions and irregularities some clusters of enlightened and upright souls are yet to be traced out. There are some who mourn in Zion. Some of the unconverted are still overawed with the majesty of God's ways and ordinances, and continue seriously to attend the vital sound of the Redeemer's voice. There are some who contend earnestly for the true faith and power of Christianity. Precious are these stones and this dust of Zion. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." And His dispensations have somewhat corresponded to the words recorded by the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."—Isaiah lxxv. 8.

4th. What are the present duties becoming the faithful people of God, when the Mediator summons them around Him; saying as it were, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me."

Our sounds of heart-felt gratitude for ancient and long-continued deliverance should be loud, frequent and joyful. But what if that majesty which hath formerly appeared to deliver, to shield, and to comfort us, should appear to cast us down, to chastise, and to terrify us? Are we in no danger of this? Are we indeed so much better than our fathers who felt the rod of God? Or is God become less holy, less jealous, less righteous, or less able to disturb the sinful peace of the world, than in former ages? Is not the Divine majesty and excellency of gospel ordinances in a great measure removed? and are they not very generally dwindled down into a kind of human contrivance for a little weekly amusement, or something less than amusement, when more important business cannot decently be attended? And shall the protecting arms of



God continue to encircle and to cherish a dead trifle? Is it worth while that the sun should shine over the heads, or the light of reason in the breasts of a people who have buried in oblivion the glory of their Creator? Should not the offers of mercy be withdrawn from those who like swine trample them under their feet? Should not the courage and vigour of those persons be tried by the feeling of infinite wrath, who have defied that wrath viewed at a distance? Should not the temples of rational brutality be laid in ruins? Should not blaspheming breath be stopped? Should not "the faces of the proud be bound in secret, and hid in the dust together?"

Loud and solemn is that voice of offended majesty which, in the unflattering oracles of Jehovah, hath long sounded against this perverse island. It would well become God's children to listen to that voice in such a manner as was done by the holy prophet, when meditating on deliverances wrought out for the church many ages before by the overthrow of enemies, not worse than those who in his days assumed the sacred name of God's people. "When I heard," says he, "my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: When he cometh up unto the people, he will cut them in pieces with his troops."

"Is there then no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" There is. The insulted Son of God, by His merit and power, is able, consistently with the glory of infinite Justice, to heal those breaches which are great like the sea. Here, therefore, we who fear God, and love mankind, take up our wrestling ground. We try what may be done by the importunity, and perseverance, and fervency of prayer, in improving the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah, the Supreme God, and therefore mighty to save. We try whether God may not thus be prevailed with to lengthen our tranquility, and to grant such effusions of His Almighty Spirit, as should produce in all corners of the land a general reformation of heart and of life.

But should we fail of success, should the wickedness of men, and the sovereign decrees of God, obstruct that answer of our prayers which our hearts desire, then we know what to do. In that case we shall learn, through grace, to say with sweet submission, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!" "True and righteous are thy unsearchable judgments!" That reward of our work shall meet us in heaven which could not be found on earth. There shall our eyes see a full world of holy and blessed worshippers of God, and of the Lamb. There shall the secret and deep reasons of God's procedure in withholding, as well as imparting His mercy, be gloriously disclosed to our perfected understandings. In the meanwhile, amidst the tempests of judgment, as well as in the calm of God's patience, we shall solace ourselves with such strains as these: "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about

thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea : when the waves thereof arise thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rabab in pieces, as one that is slain ; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine : as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them : Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm ; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne : mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound : they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day : and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength : and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence : and the Holy One of Israel is our King."—Psalm lxxxix. 8-18.

Now, to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the King of the ages ; immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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## The Assemblies.

THE annual Assemblies of the Established and Free Churches have come and gone. The following are a few notes that may have special interest for our readers.

### *ESTABLISHED CHURCH.*

On Friday, May 25th, prior to the opening of the Assembly for the day, the usual communion service took place in St. Giles' Cathedral. The officiating ministers were the Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod, Inverness, the Moderator ; the Rev. Dr. Pagan, Bothwell, the ex-Moderator ; the Rev. Dr. Leishman, ex-Moderator ; the Rev. Mr. Playfair, and the Rev. Mr. MacLeod. On previous occasions, the Rev. Jacob Primmer, Townhill, Dunfermline, has attended the service and has entered a protest against its legality, and last year he repeated his protest on the ground that the service was against the laws and usages of the Church of Scotland and against the constitution of the country. At the first sitting of the Assembly on Thursday, it was agreed that it should be an instruction to the Committee of Arrangements to see that no one was admitted to St. Giles unless they were to partake of the communion. Shortly after the church doors had been opened, Mr. Primmer entered the building, whereupon one of the church officers requested him to wait, before taking a seat, until he had informed members of the kirk session of his presence. Several members of the session then entered into conversation with Mr. Primmer. Among their number was Mr. A. D. M. Black, W.S., who asked Mr. Primmer whether he was to communicate, as only communicants were to be admitted to the

service. Mr. Primmer replied that he intended to communicate if it was to be the Lord's Supper that was about to be dispensed. Mr. Black stated that it was the communion that was to be dispensed by instruction of the General Assembly, and asked Mr. Primmer if he was prepared to promise to sit quiet, to partake of the elements, and to be a peaceful worshipper. Mr. Primmer answered that he would obey his conscience and his ordination vow, "and no other person," and that he was bound to stand up for the constitution of the country and of the Church of Scotland. Mr. Primmer was then informed that, in the circumstances, and as he declined to give any promise, he could not be admitted. The reverend gentleman left the building quietly, protesting against "any mass in masquerade being performed in this church." The incident ended there; but at the close of the service—after the benediction had been pronounced and the congregation were about to disperse—the same question was raised in another way. Just as the organist had begun to play the voluntary, a layman rose in his place, and in a loud voice made the following protest:—"As a member and communicant of the National Church of Scotland, I beg to protest against this service. It is entirely contrary to the laws and usages of the Church of Scotland and at variance with the law and constitution of this land."

The Rev. Dr. Paton, Dumfries, submitted the report of the Committee on Aids to Devotion, which stated that the demand for the books of devotion was steady, although it was not what might be expected from the fact that the books were issued by authority of the General Assembly. The small prayer-book for soldiers was still in great demand, 13,287 having been sold—11,000 to the War Office and 2287 to the trade. Since the account was closed, the War Office had taken 6000 additional copies, which were sent out from the publishers "for shipment to South Africa." Its influence had been great, and there could be no doubt that many a Scottish soldier had been glad to use it in camp or hospital, while far from home, and while passing through the dangers and privations of the war. The Rev. J. A. Johnston, Dryfesdale, who seconded the adoption of the report, remarked that the very sluggish circulation of the publications was a sad sign of the decadence of worship in the family and social circle, and he suggested that more should be done to bring them under the notice of the people.

It would be no sign of revived worship in the family though these books of devotion were bought by the thousand throughout the country. It is, indeed, a sad sign of the decadence of spiritual life when a Presbyterian Church is issuing prayer-books for the people. Religion has degenerated into a mere round of formalities. What is required is the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon men's souls in conviction and conversion. Spiritual prayer would then ascend to God from the family circle. These devotional books, we fear, contain much doctrinal error that is

fitted to delude and destroy the souls of men, whether they be soldiers or civilians.

Dr. Wallace Williamson, Edinburgh, gave in the fiftieth annual report of the Committee on Sabbath Schools, which stated that the number of schools reported was 2182, being a decrease of 18 on the previous year. The number of scholars was 227,665, being an increase of 213, and the average attendance was 176,246, being a decrease of 2343. The number of teachers was 20,606, of whom 7076 are males and 13,530 females, being a decrease of 237 males and 9 females. It was a matter of great regret that men in the Church were not coming forward in greater numbers to take part in this important church work. In each of the last five years a most gratifying increase was reported in the number of ministers' and other Bible classes, as well as in the number attending these classes. This year, however, there was a decrease of 73 classes and 2339 in attendance. This year the number of classes is 1310, attended by 51,022, of whom 21,790 are males and 29,232 are females. The collections in Sabbath schools amounted to £8288, being an increase on the previous year of £1287.

Professor Scott Lang, St. Andrews (elder), in seconding the motion, referred to the great falling off in the number of male teachers, and said it was not only the need for teachers, but the great gain to themselves that should prompt members of the Church to take up this work. He had recently to renew his experience as a Sunday school teacher, and he was horrified to find the state of ignorance of the class which he had to take in hand. They scarcely knew the books of the Bible or the New Testament, and could not find the Psalms they were asked to turn up. On examining the class, he found them almost wholly ignorant of the most outstanding facts in the Bible, and they knew nothing, so far as he could find out, about Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, of whom every child was supposed to know something.

#### THE SUBSCRIPTION OF MINISTERS TO THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

On Thursday, the 31st, the Procurator presented the report of the Committee appointed by last General Assembly "to consider the powers which the Church possesses of modifying the terms of the ministers' formula of adherence to the Confession of Faith," with authority to consult counsel. After considering the various Acts of Parliament and Acts of Assembly bearing upon the question, the committee obtained returns from the Presbyteries of the Church in regard to their practice in admitting ministers during the period 1690-1711. The committee were divided in opinion, and they took the opinion of counsel—the Dean of Faculty, Q.C., Professor Rankine, Q.C., and Mr. H. A. B. Constable being consulted. Counsel gave it as their opinion that the provisions of the Act of 1693, with regard to the subscription of the Confession of Faith and the relative declaration, had not been

abrogated, and were still binding on the Church. They did not think that the subsequent statute of 1695 could operate as a repeal of the religious tests imposed in 1693, unless it did so expressly (as to which there was no question), or unless its provisions were necessarily inconsistent with the imposition of such tests. On the assumption that the provisions of the Act of 1693 were still in force, it would not, in their opinion, be competent for the General Assembly to enact a new formula for ministers. They were also of opinion that the Church could not lawfully impose a more stringent formula than was warranted by the Act of 1693. They further thought that the formula prescribed in 1711 was more stringent than the statute warranted, and could not be lawfully revived. The committee concurred generally in the views expressed in this opinion, and suggested that it should be engrossed in the minutes of the Assembly as a weighty and probably correct statement of the powers of the Church quoad the formula for ministers. In moving this recommendation, Sir John Cheyne said he had no doubt whatever that the opinion was a sound one, but, be that as it might, he thought they had in it as authoritative an expression of opinion as they could possibly get short of a judicial decision.

The Rev. Dr. Mair, Earlston, seconded.

Sheriff Vary Campbell, Edinburgh, moved that the opinion of counsel be not recorded in the minutes in the meantime. It had started a new point, and gave a false impression as to the relations of the Church to the Confession, because the question raised by the Presbytery of Auchterarder was the very simple one, whether the Act of 1695 did or did not repeal the Act of 1693. He was not going to say whether he agreed with the opinion of counsel or not—he had his own opinion—but he wanted to call attention to the incaution of putting it upon their minutes, for they were thereby going to declare that an Act of Assembly in 1711 was illegal and had been kept up illegally for 105 years, and they were going to admit that, as a matter of civil right, in the case of persons claiming to be ministers, the Church had no right whatever to impose one word beyond the terms of the Act of 1693. He did not dispute that in law, but he suggested for the consideration of the House that it was only one side of the picture, and that it gave a false impression that the Church was fettered and bound by the Act of 1693 in a way he did not think it was. He held that the Act of 1693 was not merely negative or prohibitive to the Church's powers, but was a charter of freedom, and that if people would have the courage to examine the Confession and the Act of 1693, they would find that the spiritual independence of the Church was perfectly safe, and that under the legal conditions of that Act the Church was the freest Church in Scotland—he would say the only free Church in Scotland. (Applause.) Why put in the minutes of the Assembly the negative, and refuse to take the positive side of the Act of 1693?

why record a finding which stated all that was against its spiritual independence to be found in the Act of 1693, and left no room for the great freedom, which he held was conferred by that charter on the Church?

The Rev. G. D. Macnaughtan, Ardoch, in seconding, said he had been disappointed with the result of the committee's inquiries, but they had cleared the air in connection with this matter, and they knew much better to-day than they did at this time last year how the Church exactly stood in regard to its powers of amending the formula of subscription. Nothing had impressed him more in connection with the inquiry than what might be called the limitations of the legal mind. (Laughter.) He complained that the lawyers had refused to look at history. They asked one question and one question only, and it was this—"Where are the Acts of Parliament, and let us see them?" Thereupon they put on their spectacles, and they consider the Acts of Parliament grammatically, and they arrived at certain results—that was to say, they took this big universe of God in which they dwelt, and they turned it into a kind of market garden, where they grew such legal vegetables as they chose. (Laughter and "No, no.") If history was not to be used in the interpretation of the law, then the method would arrive at the most ridiculous results. As a purely legal opinion, they were bound to accept this opinion, and the net result was that the Procurator, with their friend Dr. Mair, were too securely entrenched in their legal kopjes for their position to be taken by direct assault, and accordingly, under present circumstances, they had sorrowfully to recross the Tugela until they could find some new method of outflanking the enemy. (Loud laughter.)

On a division, Sheriff Vary Campbell's amendment was carried by 78 votes to 61 for the Procurator's motion.

Sheriff Vary Campbell then moved the adoption of an overture from members of the House asking that it be remitted to an enlarged committee to consider the whole powers of the Church with regard to the Confession of Faith, and to report to next Assembly.

The Rev. Dr. Hunter, Galashiels, seconded Sheriff Vary Campbell's motion, which was agreed to; and on the motion of the Rev. Dr. Scott, Sheriff C. N. Johnston was appointed convener of the committee.

This discussion, which took place on the same day as the union debate in the Free Assembly, needs little or no comment. There are evidently not a few in this Church that are bent on getting the Church's relations to the Confession modified. Whether they will succeed or not, remains to be seen. But it would be no wonder though they should and that speedily, for the greater number of people in the Church are quite out of sympathy with the whole doctrine of the Confession. In fact, it is our opinion that they would have had a Declaratory Act long ago similar to

that which obtains in the Free Church, if it were not for the legal difficulties in the way.

The Assembly closed on Monday evening, 4th June, with an address on "The Closing Century" by the moderator, Dr. Norman Macleod. The address was a very able and eloquent one. We cannot say, however, that the speaker showed any discernment of the fundamental defects in the spiritual condition of the Church; he has a very favourable opinion of her, and looks forward hopefully to the future. While he expresses himself as opposed to very extreme changes in doctrine and worship, we can clearly see that he approves of many of the unscriptural views and practices that are at present current in the Church. The Established Church is now numerically and socially a vastly greater power than she was immediately after the Disruption in 1843, but, spiritually, she is no better. She is probably worse, for Ritualism and Rationalism in very pronounced forms have made great progress within her pale.

### *FREE CHURCH.*

The chief subject of interest that came up at this Assembly was union with the United Presbyterian Church. This subject, as is well known, has been before the courts of both Churches for some years, but has now reached the last stages of discussion. The final debate upon it in the Free Assembly, took place on Thursday, the 31st May. The hour of meeting was 10.30 a.m., but such was the interest the proceedings had aroused, that long before that time the hall was crowded.

Principal Rainy rose at eleven o'clock and submitted the report of the Committee on Union. In the course of his speech, he said he was humbly yet thankfully proud to have been associated with the history which, he hoped, was now reaching its accomplishment. As to the name of the Church, to be composed of the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church, they were guided very much to the conclusion that on the whole "The United Free Church" was the name which, in all the circumstances, ought to be the name; which recognised the fact that two Churches were meeting on equal terms. It was proposed in the report that the union should take place in October. The conclusive reason for a General Assembly then, was that they were sending down this overture under the Barrier Act. Everyone, he thought, would acknowledge that the spirit of the Barrier Act was, that whatever went down under the Barrier Act, should be agreed to by one Assembly, asserted to by Presbyteries, and the Act completed by another Assembly. All these three steps were necessary in order that anything that was proposed might become a standing constitution to the Church. He himself thought, and many thought with him, that they had been too apt sometimes to send down Acts through the Barrier Act that did not need to be so sent down, and that in that way they had imposed a difficulty in

the administration of the affairs of the Church that had fettered the flexibility of their operation. But nobody could doubt that a great Act like that they were sending down just now was one in regard to which the provisions of the Barrier Act should be complied with in the fullest way. Therefore, it would be necessary that arrangements for the election of a General Assembly should be made before the month of October. As to the legal question and questions of property, he said that everybody who knew the committee's work, knew that they had taken great pains about it. He himself was never disposed to regulate his proceedings, or to recommend the Church to regulate its proceedings by too scrupulous and previous a regard to the questions of risks to property. While there was a prudential regard to property which was natural to Scotsmen, he held that the Church should always be ready when any important privilege or duty arose, to go forward under the conviction that God could take care of their property as well as of their other interests. He found, however, that he was just in the prosaic condition of asking the Assembly to do what any man did in the conduct of his business—to go by the best advice he could get. He had five opinions, and they were in favour of the Church. In closing he made reference to the motions of Mr. Macintyre and Mr. Galbraith. He pressed the latter and those who agreed with him, that they owed a great debt to their people to make known to them what they meant to do, whether to separate or not. He believed it might be far easier for some of their brethren to slide into a disruption, than to take the course he suggested. He assured them that if they saw their way to remain in the United Church, as he knew many of them would do, their position would be as honourable and as independent as they could desire. He recommended to them the example of the Reformed Presbyterians and others who had entered into similar unions at earlier dates. He formally moved the deliverance.

The Procurator (Mr. Guthrie, Q.C.) seconded the motion. He said that they had looked at the names of the counsel that had given an unfavourable opinion in 1873, and found only one of them alive. They resolved to consult him, and submitted to him a bare statement of reference to all the documents which he would require to consider in coming to an opinion. On that full information, he gave as his opinion that there was no risk whatever of any portion of the Church's property, heritable or movable.

Rev. Angus Galbraith, Lochalsh, moved the following amendment:—"That the General Assembly receive the report and record their thanks to the committee, and especially to the convener; and considering that the committee's proposals do not conserve the distinctive principles and testimony of the Free Church in their integrity, disapprove generally of the report, and decline to take further steps towards an incorporating union of



the two Churches on the basis proposed." He said that the bulk of their people in the Highlands were praying that the union should not take place. He was bound in a consistent way to try to oppose this union as long as there was any use of opposition. Otherwise he could not seriously have the courage to face the west Highlands, because his position from the beginning had been that he disapproved of the union. They were very unwilling to give up the hope that something might be done to prevent such a calamity as disruption which he did not court. They on his side mourned the loss of men who used to lead them. He feared they had been taken away from the evil that was to come. However, he hoped their very weakness was a reason why there would be extended to his party a patient and indulgent hearing. He did not acknowledge they had a weak cause, but a cause very intimately connected with principle and with truth. If it was only a matter of conscience, he could give it up without scruples of conscience. He would at once give up the agitation of which he was a thousand times tired, and it was about time the matter was coming to an end. The principal point of his motion was, that in entering into union they did not conserve in their integrity the distinctive principles and testimony of the Free Church. The minority stood on the old-ground principles of 1843, and they were not willing to give them up or compromise them in any way.

Mr. J. Hay Thorburn (elder), seconded Mr. Galbraith's proposal. He said that was a day that for good or ill would leave its mark on the history of their Presbyterian life in Scotland. He yielded to no man in his desire or in his exertions to promote a real and lasting union on honourable terms, and whilst he must oppose the report and motion, he was willing to credit sincere motives to those opposed to his friends and himself. This was a very memorable day for Principal Rainy, as to him and him alone the whole burden and responsibility of this movement had by acclamation been accorded. But he took the liberty of reminding him that there were such things as victories which had been more disastrous than defeats—(cries of "No")—and victories which had cost more than they were worth. Now, what was the first thing that would strike the student of history when he read the rise, decline, and fall of the Free Church of Scotland? Was it not that after incessant internal strife its members were educated up to extinguish itself and its testimony? Starting in 1843 protesting against Voluntarism on the one hand and Erastianism on the other, launching itself on an unknown future in strong faith on the promises of God, it commanded the respect of its enemies and the admiration of Christendom. When he thought of the men who bequeathed this priceless legacy to them, and to know that they were actually met together there to try and cut it down with their own hands, should surely cause great searchings of heart. How were they to account for the transformation—the

protest against Voluntaryism in 1843 and of Voluntaryism against them in 1847, and the abject surrender to the same Voluntaryism in 1900? He was forced to ask—Had we, as a Church, been faithful to the trust committed to us by the great Head of the Church Himself? Where had their testimony been hid for so many years, until at last the candlestick was about to be removed out of its place? Were not all their troubles that day due to the fact that instead of minding their own business, instead of filling their own pews and building the walls of their common Christianity, they had been eager to quarrel among themselves and revenge themselves on their neighbours, and actually laboured to destroy the very system of which they themselves claimed to be only lawful representatives? Let them look at the proposal before them. They were asked to join in creating a new Church, differing not only in name, but which was under no obligation to promote or even recognise the distinctive principles of the Free Church. They were asked to join a body of, say, 1000 members not one of whom would be asked to sign the new formula, and yet those who did it would place themselves to be judged by the rules and regulations of the present United Presbyterian Church. One example would suffice. Chapter IV., 1-6—"Members are not to have recourse to the civil authorities against the decision of the Courts of the Church, or against resolutions adopted at congregational meetings." He wondered how many in this Assembly were aware that they were placing themselves at the mercy of a congregational meeting without recourse. Again, as to subscriptions to the Standards, it was qualified not only by their own Declaratory Acts, but by the United Presbyterian Act of 13th May, 1847, which was antagonistic to the Free Church Standards. Never in the history of Christendom had such a scheme been devised. The new body would contain two distinct testimonies diametrically opposed the one to the other, and yet men would be ordained, and sign the formula, and they would have some ministers ordaining others holding opposite views altogether. But while the Declaratory Acts had as yet not been binding Acts, now they would be in the very forefront of the Church's testimony, or the Church would very soon need to exercise its power under the clause which gave it power to change what did not enter into the substance of the faith in any Assembly, or in every Assembly, so far as that went. He therefore apprehended that the two conflicting testimonies would by the deletion of one be very quickly assimilated to one. It was urged that the Free Church carried in her testimony, and that the United Presbyterians only carried in their views of our testimony, and not a contradictory testimony. 'To say so was to trade on the ignorance and credulity of the people. It had been ably said, the new Church would be tied neither to the Confession nor to the Bible, but if asked what a member of the Free United Church must believe, the answer was, he must believe the doctrines of the United Church. If further asked

where that doctrine was to be found, the answer was set forth in the Confession—but in what part of the Confession no man knew. And if it be asked—What, then, was the doctrine of the United Church? the most remarkable answer was—The sense in which the ministers of the United Church understand the Bible. That was poor consolation to the laity who had been brought up in the testimony and priceless traditions of the Free Church. The question before them that day was therefore—Are we prepared to surrender our testimony to the whole doctrine of the Confession as heretofore understood, and create a new Church, whose testimony is to be “the doctrine of this Church approved by Acts of General Synods and Assemblies? Do you acknowledge the said doctrine as expressing the sense in which you understand the Holy Scripture?” What did that mean? What distinctive principle would the new Church maintain? Let them be honest about this. It could not be both the Claim of Rights and the voluntary testimony. They asked him and those who thought with him to enter that Church, and contribute to the support of men who declared that his principles were “unscriptural and unjust,” and they asked ministers to ordain men to the sacred office of the ministry to preach doctrines which no human being could defend. (Oh.) It did seem to him that this was a very poor scheme after all the years of striving and agitation. Meanwhile, what had been the result to the religious life of Scotland? He thought there had been a tremendous price paid for the time and attention given to this and other things. What did they find that day in Scotland? They found in 1851 that the average church attendance per 1000 was 239; in 1876 it had fallen to 191, and in 1896 it had fallen to 171. They had a statement the other day that half the population of Glasgow were outside church influence altogether; they had had a statement as to the falling off of students, and to a decline in the attendance at Sunday School. He thought it was time to pause and consider what the result of this union would be on the religious life of Scotland. (Ironical hear, hears.) They heard the other day of how the Episcopal Church of Scotland had increased in such an enormous ratio as compared with the population. Where were these people coming from? In a large measure from Free Church families—those who ought to be the backbone of the Free Church of Scotland in years to come. He asked the house to pause and consider before it took this step of throwing away their priceless heritage. He honoured all who had taken part in this matter, and believed it had been done for the advancing of the cause of Christ, but he could not help feeling that it would have very different consequences from what the majority expected.

Rev. R. S. Macintyre, Maxwelltown, presented a declaration signed by himself and the Rev. Messrs. Matheson, Tarbet; Macintosh, Rogart; John Ross, and J. Robertson, Rayne, ministers; and Messrs. J. A. Scott and James Simpson, Edinburgh,

elders. The declaration bore, that in remaining in communion with the Church after the union, they were not yielding any of the principles which were essential or peculiar to the Free Church as existing in 1843, and that they understood that no new principle was imposed on the United Church. On the motion of Mr. Macintyre, seconded by Mr. Robertson, Rayne, the Assembly agreed to receive the declaration and to record it in the minutes of the house.

Several speakers followed, such as Mr. W. R. Brown, elder, Glasgow; Rev. Mr. Traill, Wick; Rev. R. D. Dobbie, Glasgow; Mr. Archibald MacNeilage, elder, Glasgow; Mr. J. C. Lorimer, elder; and the Rev. G. Campbell, Kennoway.

Principal Rainy rose at ten minutes past two to reply on the discussion. He expressed himself as profoundly thankful for the condition of things disclosed that day. It had been a very serious and friendly-considered debate, or rather conversation between them. He was sure they would like very much to provide some help to their friends to go into that union. He also referred to the smaller Presbyterian denominations in view of the union, and the very remarkable statement made by the Moderator of the Original Secession Church in the beginning of the Synod the other day, as to the sufficiency of the basis on which they were proceeding to union. It would gladden their hearts if they could gather together Original Seceders and Reformed Presbyterians with themselves into the Church they were about to form.

The result of the vote was—for Dr. Rainy's motion, 592; for Mr. Galbraith's amendment, 29. Majority for the motion, 563.

Mr. Galbraith then tabled the following dissent:—

"The subscribers, for themselves and those who may adhere to them, dissent from the resolution of the General Assembly for, *inter alia*, the following reasons:—(1) Because the proposals anent union approved by the resolution contain provisions which are at variance with and violate the standards and constitution of the Church in certain of their fundamental principles, to which the memorialists adhere, and which they desire to maintain inviolate; (2) because, approving of the proposals, the General Assembly is acting in *ultra vires*; and (3) because no steps have been taken to inform the General Assembly of the attitude of kirk sessions and congregations towards the proposals."

It may be stated that Mr. Galbraith had, to begin with, the words "protest against" instead of "dissent from" in the above statement. But Dr. Rainy at once challenged the former words as constituting an irregularity in terms, and Mr. Galbraith, without a moment's hesitation, changed them into "dissent from." Of course the Assembly would not receive a protest against their decision, and if a protest was necessary to satisfy Mr. Galbraith's conscience, he should have been there and then prepared to renounce the Assembly. But we fear the circumstance referred to is just another illustration of the elasticity of conscience that,

sad to remark, has become the order of the day in the nominal Free Church.

The following are those who voted in the minority in the division on union:—Ministers—W. W. Aitken, H. N. Bonar, A. D. Cameron, George Campbell, Roderick Finlayson, John Fraser, William Fraser, Donald Munro, J. A. M'Caskill, John M'Donald, John M'Iver, Donald M'Leod, Malcolm M'Phail, W. W. Smith, A. J. Watson. Elders—John Fraser, Ronald Fraser, Rev. R. Logan, Alexander Mackie, Archibald M'Callum, Peter M'Lennan, John Nicholson (Dunvegan), William Ritchie, John Watson. Tellers—J. Hay Thorburn, W. Rounsfell Brown, Rev. Angus Galbraith, Rev. H. Cameron, A. M'Neilage—29.

On Friday, June 1st, Principal Rainy, on behalf of the committee appointed to answer the reasons of dissent from the union resolution tabled at the close of Thursday's debate, submitted these as follows:—1. The proposals in the report preserve and affirm every principle which the Church's standards announce as hers. 2. The action of the Assembly is in the line of carrying out the ordinary duty of all Presbyterian Churches in reference to unity. 3. No representation from sessions or congregations which has reached the committee has been withheld from the Assembly.

Principal Rainy submitted the report of the Committee on the relations of Church and State. The report was to the effect that the Church ought firmly to maintain the same attitude as hitherto on this subject, and to hold herself ready to carry her views into effect when natural opportunities for doing so arise. The meaning of this is, that the Church is still to wave the flag of disestablishment, and to put forth every effort for the accomplishment of it when the best opportunities come—namely, when the U.P. and Free bodies are united. Rev. D. M. Ross, Glasgow, moved that the interests of the Free Church, especially at the present juncture, do not call for the reappointment of the committee. Rev. W. M. Macgregor, Edinburgh, seconded. Mr. Archibald M'Neilage proposed a further amendment disapproving of the report and affirming that, in the interests of the peace of the Church, the call for disestablishment should not be pressed from within the Church. Rev. R. S. Macintyre, Maxwelltown, seconded.

Mr. Ross's motion received 68 votes, as against that of Mr. Macneilage, which received 32. The final division gave 327 for Principal Rainy's, and 96 for Mr. Ross's.

It appears that a section of the Assembly is wincing under the charge that one of the chief motives for union is a desire to overthrow the Established Church, and it is anxious to give a denial to the charge. The result, however, shows that the Assembly is determined to pursue the disestablishment crusade as formerly.

The Assembly was closed with an address by the Moderator on "Scottish Church Life and Work in the Nineteenth Century," which we notice elsewhere. The next meeting was fixed to be held in Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 30th October, 1900.

## The Union Debate in the Free Assembly.

THE Union movement is nearing its goal. The discussion in the Free Assembly came to an end in four hours and a half, a much shorter time than on previous occasions. Principal Rainy began with a speech, which was marked by his usual subtlety and plausibility. He was seconded by Mr. Charles J. Guthrie, Q.C., who tried to persuade the opposite side by a quotation from his father, the late Dr. Guthrie, though he might have known that the latter was never a favourite with the more stable orthodox people in the Church. Again, he quoted the legal opinion of the only one now alive of the counsel that had been consulted by Dr. Begg and the anti-unionists of former days. This opinion was *now* favourable to the party proceeding to union. The probable explanation of this is as follows:—The Free Church is not now what it was in 1873. The Declaratory Act of 1892 passed through all the steps of the Barrier Act, and thus became a standing constitution in the Church. The original constitution was by this means changed; it became similar in character to that of the U.P. Church. The body therefore that held the property from 1892 until now may go on without risk to hold it in the United Church. The constitutional party lost their claim to the property when they continued to acknowledge the courts of the Church after adopting the Declaratory Act. Be this as it may, we believe it is the Free Presbyterian Church that is the rightful owner of the Free Church property. But our ministers did not see their way to enter into a legal contest in 1893; they had too much to occupy their attention in other important directions. There are, however, some congregations of the Free Church whose property is their own, and they at least ought to have no difficulty whatsoever at the present time in taking the step of separation.

Mr. Galbraith's motion was simply a disapproval of this Union. His speech appears by the report to have been without much point or power, and, as far as can be gathered from it, he will in all probability go into the United Church. Mr. Hay Thorburn's speech contains some very good points, and we quote it in our notes at considerable length, but it is disfigured by complimentary references to the other side. The appearance of Mr. Ronald G. Macintyre, Maxwelltown, as an advocate of 1843 principles, has been hailed with as much surprise as was expressed in the old question—"Is Saul also among the prophets?" The declaration which he and others have signed is a very futile affair. They may delude themselves with the supposition that they will be standing on the same ground as formerly, but the only ground under their feet will undoubtedly be the Arminian Voluntary constitution of the United Church. Perhaps they were prompted by a fear lest there should be divisions in their congregations, and so they would require to do something, if possible, to check these. The speeches

of Messrs. Brown and Macneilage were very flat and "feckless." These gentlemen, office-bearers in the congregation of the Rev. John Geddes, Glasgow, might have been expected to take a stand for the truth at the present crisis, but they give not the least hint of any prospective separation. They are apparently quite prepared to go into a union that will bury Disruption doctrines and principles forever.

The first answer, given by Principal Rainy and a committee, to the reasons of dissent tabled by Mr. Galbraith is, that "the proposals in the report present and affirm every principle which the Church's standards announce as hers." It is clear from this that "the Church's standards" embrace more than the Confession of Faith and the Disruption documents—they are inclusive of the Declaratory Act of 1892. Constitutionalists were wont to affirm that this Act was in no way binding on them, and that it did not form any part of the standards of the Church, but their error is now clearly exposed. The Declaratory Act is as much a standard of the Church as any other Act from the beginning. It is only such principles, therefore, as are found in the Confession after modification by this Act, that the Church announces as hers. The views of Mr. Galbraith and his handful of supporters are consequently no part of their Church's standards. Those who profess to represent the Free Church of 1843 exist only on toleration within this body. They have no standing ground within her, and their great mistake has been that they have acknowledged so long the majority as in any sense Free Church brethren.

It is reported that a few of the "Constitutional" party intend to take the step of separation in October. We hope that the intention will not fail of being carried out into practical accomplishment.

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## Are the United Presbyterians the True Successors of the Erskines?

IT was while reading the latest volume of the "Famous Scots Series"—"The Erskines," by Dr. Macewen of Glasgow—that the above question suggested itself to us. Dr. Macewen himself makes no such claim for his Church, but it is a claim that is made nevertheless, and often by those who ought to know better. The disposition of individuals to rejoice in their descent from venerated ancestors who made a deep and abiding impression on the world, is lawful enough in its own place. But when men rejoice in an ancestry whom they do not truly represent, they allow this disposition to enter forbidden ground. The Jews of old laid claim to be the true children of Abraham, and, in doing so, they were unconsciously proclaiming their right to belong to a larger

family, and a more ancient parentage; for they were but giving expression to the disposition that is well-nigh universal. "Abraham is our father," said they in all the pride of a noble descent. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," was the gentle, but pregnant, rebuke of the Lord, who recognised a deeper and a more honourable connection than that of mere blood-relationship. As were the Jews, so are we; we, too, pride ourselves in our ancestry, and especially in our ecclesiastical ancestry. The Wesleyans have their John Wesley, and the Anglicans their Richard Hooker; in Scotland, Presbyterians point to the venerated names of Knox, Melville, Henderson, and Carstares; the Free Churchman calls our attention to Dr. Chalmers and the Disruption fathers, saying, "We are their children" (one would hope that this year it would be said with some qualms of conscience); and the U.P. Churchman, not to be behind his neighbours, and somewhat forgetful of the facts of history and the damaging evidence of Associate Presbytery Acts and documents, speaks of the Erskines as the fathers of his Church. That such a claim should be made is natural: that it is illegitimate is the purpose of this paper to show.

The influence of the Erskines in their own day was extraordinary. Their power for good may not have been quite so extensive as Boston's, but there can be no doubt that there have been few preachers in Scotland whose preaching so deeply moved their hearers, and whose influence for good was so abiding. There were, combined with a moral grandeur and sublimity in their mode of presenting divine truth, heart-moving appeals, in which the Gospel offer of salvation was made with a freeness that moved their hearers to "silent weeping." As they discoursed on the incomparable glory of Christ as the exalted Head over all things to His Church, their souls were filled with a wonderful ecstasy of joy, and the hearers were awed as they listened to the words that fell with power from these Spirit-taught men. "It is the desire of my soul," said Ralph, "to make His name to be remembered to all generations." They were men whose lives were much spent in controversy. They came through the Marrow Controversy only to find themselves involved in a controversy that cost them their connection with the Established Church; and most bitter and trying of all was the Burgess Oath Controversy in their own Church. It was at this time some of their own followers excommunicated them from their fellowship. But they came through all these trials, having the confidence, as Ebenezer expressed himself, "of a good cause, a good conscience, and a good God." Much of the bitterness engendered by the Burgess Oath controversy was forgotten as Ebenezer lay a-dying at Stirling. Burgher and Anti-Burgher forgot for a season their ecclesiastical differences, and hastened to pay homage to a venerated father that was passing within the veil. "Did you never hear him preach?" said Adam Gib, the doughty Anti-Burgher, who had a



part in excommunicating him. "Well, you have never heard the Gospel preached in its majesty." By laying stress on the glory of Christ, and protesting against the lax views held of the Deity of the Son of God, they saved Scotland from that Arianism which wrought such fearful havoc in the Presbyterian Churches of England and Ireland. By their insisting on the free offer of the Gospel they saved the Calvinism of Scotland from drifting away to the tenets of Hyper-Calvinism, as it did in many cases in England under Crisp and Gill and others. We pay them a homage, not due to their genius, but to their position as men taught by God's Spirit. This was the true secret of their success.

It now remains to be shown that, however natural it may be for the U.P. Church to claim connection with the Erskines owing to the venerated place they occupy in Scottish Church history, that claim is altogether illegitimate, as they are directly opposed on two main points to the position occupied by the early Seceders. These two points are the principle of the Establishment, and the doctrine of the Atonement.

#### I.—THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

1. When the Commission of the General Assembly expelled the "Four Brethren" (Ebenezer Erskine, Fisher, Wilson, and Moncrieff) in 1733, they protested against the Commission's high-handed action, and appealed to the "first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." The U.P. Church, continuing in her present state of mind, can never think of making such an appeal.

2. There appeared in 1739 a work entitled "Defence of the Reformation Principles of the Church of Scotland," written by Wilson, of Perth, in reply to Currie of Kinglassie's strictures on the Seceders. While the Erskines are not directly its authors, yet it has always been recognised as the best defence of the Seceder principles. It was afterwards revised by Fisher and Moncrieff, and Dr. Macewen admits that, while not the work of the Erskines, yet it presents "with precision and fulness, that view of the relation between Church and State which Ebenezer and Ralph habitually asserted." In this work it is distinctly maintained that the legal establishment of religion is good in itself, and the opinion that the civil magistrate has no right to meddle with religion is as distinctly disavowed.

3. The point now to be established is to show that the U.P. Church, instead of tracing her history back to the early Seceders, can legitimately go no further back than the time when the New Licht, or Voluntarism, appeared among the Seceders. And in doing so we find ourselves in the greatest labyrinth that Scottish ecclesiastical history presents to us. The Seceders were expelled from the Established Church in 1733; in 1747 they broke up into two sections—Burgher and Anti-Burgher—over the Burgess Oath. The New Licht or Voluntarism, first appeared among the

Burghers in 1795, but it was not until 1799 that they broke up into Auld Licht Burghers and New Licht Burghers. The majority of the Auld Licht Burghers joined the Established Church in 1839. But what had become of the Anti-Burghers when their "auld enemies," the Burghers, were enjoying the New Licht? They, too, were partaking of its blessings, and began to deal in a very high-handed manner with four of their brethren (Professor Bruce of Whitburn, Messrs. MacCrie, Chalmers, and Aitken) because they did not regard this New Licht as light at all. These four brethren maintained that the Synod was departing from its original principles in accepting Voluntaryism, but it was of no use. Led by the New Licht, they deposed the ministers in question. It was during this controversy Dr. MacCrie published his famous *Statement*, an edition of which was republished in 1871 by the late Professor Smeaton of the Free Church. It is a work that is worthy of the biographer of John Knox, and is regarded as the best work in the English language on the important topic with which it deals. But while all these matters are going on, what has become of the New Licht Burghers: under the guidance of the new light which they have received, they determined to forget all about Burgess oaths and join, with their friends, the New Licht Anti-Burghers, which they did in 1820, forming the United Secession Church. And in 1847, the country saw another union when the United Secession joined with the Relief, and thus formed the present U.P. Church. While these unions were taking place among the New Lights, the Auld Lights were coming together too. In 1827, some who did not join with the New Lights in 1820 came over and joined with the Constitutional party (Dr. MacCrie, Professor Bruce, etc.), and formed the Original Secession, and in 1842 the part of the Auld Licht Burghers, who did not join the Established Church, came over and joined the original Seceders, thus forming the United Original Secession Church—a Church which still exists, and is, though small in numbers, the true representative of the principles of the early Seceders, having likewise the honour of producing Dr. MacCrie, the distinguished biographer of Knox.

The above must prove somewhat bewildering to the ordinary reader, but it clearly establishes two points, (1) that the United Original Secession Church is the true successor of the Church of the Erskines; (2) that the U.P. Church has no right to trace her ecclesiastical ancestry any further back than the first dawning of the New Licht or Voluntaryism. "It fought none of the great battles of the Reformation," said the late Professor Watts, of Belfast, speaking of Arminianism, "and when it appeared on the ecclesiastical arena, it did so only as a disturber of the peace." What is true of Arminianism is still truer of Voluntaryism, as far, at least, as Scotland is concerned—it has had no part in her great ecclesiastical movements. In the Reformation, the Secession, and the Disruption, this New Licht or Voluntaryism was

conspicuous by its absence. But its fame as a disturber of the ecclesiastical peace is notorious, and the high-handed action of its votaries in dealing with those who had the misfortune to have none of the new light is anything but praiseworthy.

## II.—THE ATONEMENT.

The Marrowmen, to which party the Erskines belonged, were in the habit of saying, when speaking of the death of Christ, that, while he did not die for all men, yet that "He was dead for all." This mode of speaking of the Atonement seemed to savour of a universal reference, and that the Marrowmen were charged by the dominant party in the Assembly with this, is a well-known fact. In our own times such a careful theologian as the younger Dr. Hodge is found classing the Marrowmen with Drs. Brown and Balmer, of the United Secession Church, and an article which appeared in *The Watchword* charges the Marrowmen with a departure from the Calvinistic position on this point. Of course, the Marrowmen repudiated all such charges that they taught a universal Atonement, and in the Acts of the Associate Presbytery there is sufficient evidence to show that they held no such position. To class them with Drs. Brown and Balmer as holding the same views is likewise beside the point. The position occupied by these two divines is what is known as the Double-reference Theory of the atonement, sometimes as Amyraldianism, after Amyraldus of the French School of Saumur, in France, and sometimes as Baxterianism, after Richard Baxter, who held these views. Dr. Brown explains his own position. In speaking before the United Secession Synod, in 1845, he said:—"In the sense of the great body of Calvinists, that Christ died to remove legal obstacles in the way of human salvation by making perfect satisfaction for sin, I hold that He died for all men." That this double-reference theory has received the official sanction of the United Secession Church, we have the words of Dr. Balmer himself to bear us out. In a preface to Polhill's "On the Extent of the Death of Christ," he says:—"Twelve years ago the supreme court of the United Secession Church passed an act condemning the doctrine of a universal atonement and forbidding the use of the phrase. But how great the change effected within the last two years. *The doctrine of a general reference in the death of Christ has been officially recognised, such a reference as necessarily implies a universal atonement.*" But it may be said that this refers to the United Secession Church, and not to the United Presbyterian. This is true, but materials are by no means lacking and sufficient to convict the U.P. Church of holding the same position on this doctrine: besides, she is the inheritor of United Secession principles and doctrines. What now was the position of the early Seceders on the Atonement?

1. In their Judicial Act and Testimony (1736) they affirm "and they hereby reject and condemn . . . all other Arminian and

Baxterian tenets contrary to or inconsistent with (Confession, Catechism.)

2. In their Act concerning Doctrine of Grace, it is asserted "The Presbytery did and do hereby reject and condemn the tenet that God the Father in his making a deed of gift unto all mankind that whosoever of them all shall believe on his Son shall not perish but have everlasting life, infers a universal atonement or redemption as to purchase."

3. In the Act concerning Arminian errors, they assert "That there is but one special redemption by the death of Christ for all the objects thereof; as he died in one and the same respect for all those for whom in any respect he died; or he died out of the greatest special love for all effectually redeemed and saved unto the glory of free grace." The above Act was passed by the Associate Synod in 1754 to discountenance certain Arminian tendencies that had been broached in a work entitled "A Treatise on Justifying Faith." The work is usually ascribed to Fraser of Brea, though it was not published until 1749. Its references to the extent of the Atonement are distinctly of an Amyraldian tendency. This work was recommended by Mair, one of the ministers of the Associate Synod. He had not much of a following in his own Church, but in the Reformed Presbyterian Presbytery, the new views gave rise to a bitter controversy that ended in Hall and two elders forming themselves into a new Presbytery. They published a defence of their position, and this pamphlet was warmly recommended by Mair. The Associate Synod now thought it was time for them to act. The result of this action is seen in the above Act and in the deposition of Mair in 1757—all of which goes to show that the early Seceders were by no means favourable to the Double-reference Theory of the Atonement.

In view of the principle of the Establishment, the doctrine of the Atonement, and it may be added, recent innovations in worship, the present U.P. Church has no real connection with the Church of the Erskines. The claim that the Erskines are the fathers of this Church is wholly unjust and unwarrantable.

D. B.

A CHRISTIAN in the world is like a man transacting his affairs in the rain. He will not suddenly leave his client because it rains; but the moment the business is done he is off, as it is said in the Acts, "Being let go, they went to their own company."—*John Newton.*

DON'T tell me of your feelings. A traveller would be glad of fine weather, but, if he be a man of business he will go on. Bunyan says, you must not judge of a man's haste by his horse; for when the horse can hardly move, you may see by the rider's urging him, what a hurry he is in.—*John Newton.*

## Letters of the late Donald Duff, Stratherrick.

(XX.)

STRATHERRICK, *26th December, 1876.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am longing to hear how matters are going on in your parts, and hope this will find you and yours well.

For ourselves, perhaps we should acknowledge, to the praise of free grace, that we have had worse times than now, which ought to humble us and keep us in the dust, wondering, with shame, that after all the provocations we have given the Lord to leave us to ourselves, He has not yet done so, but is continuing to deal with us in mercy. There have been some tokens of late in this place that the power of the blessed Spirit has been accompanying the truth to our souls, and that not only in secret but also in the public means. Our meetings were never so well attended or had more warmth; and a few Sabbaths ago one individual was so much overcome that it could not be hid, although that was quite contrary to the inclination of the individual. We do not know what it may come to, for conviction is one thing, and conversion is another; but I desire to be abased before the Holy One for His goodness. I have been thinking that this and other tokens of His favour, which of late He has vouchsafed to us, may be meant, in His gracious condescension, as a confirmation of the decision I came to last summer, not to remove at the call of man without some intimation of its being the will of the Lord. But I am telling you this as a friend.

What are the pious people with you thinking of the state of our Church? In my humble opinion things are getting darker and darker every day. Indeed, there is such an increasing craving after a religion that is formal and not spiritual, that I would not say but that you yourself may live to see organs and other shreds of Popish worship in use in the Free Church. But even should that be so, that could not be compared—as a sign of judgment—to the case of this Professor at Aberdeen. Alas! there are such depths of infidelity, of unbelief, and of atheism in the human heart, that I make bold to say that any man—let him be who he may—that would strengthen that infidelity by raising doubts as to the integrity of any part of the Word of God, is assuredly a messenger of Satan. And I begin to fear that this evil is more widespread than we are aware of, for did you observe that the Convener of the College Committee, in replying to Dr. Begg in the Commission, said that this man would be an ornament to any Church? Alas! alas! how are our young ministers to be trained under such men? Are they to be taught to receive or to reject

any part of Scripture according as it squares with their reason? Is it not written that "*All* scripture is given by inspiration of God," and although He used men as His instruments in making known His mind and will, these men "*spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" (2 Peter i. 21.) But blessed be His name, the elect will not be deceived. They have been taught to believe that the Word of God is divine as sure as Jehovah Himself.

Wishing to be remembered to all the friends.—Yours, &c.,

D. DUFF.

## Notes and Comments.

**The Gaelic.**—We regret that there is no Gaelic in this issue. Mr. Cameron, who takes charge of the Gaelic, has had his time fully occupied at Communion in the Highlands during the past month.

**The Synod.**—The Synod of the Church will (D.V.) meet at Inverness on Tuesday, 3rd July. The moderator, Rev. George Mackay, Stornoway, will preach at 12 noon.

**Communion.**—July—1st Sabbath, Inverness; 3rd, Halkirk, Caithness. August—1st Sabbath, Dingwall; 2nd, Portree.

**A Short-lived Iniquity.**—In the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* for December, 1896, we noted the proposal that had been made to run a Sabbath excursion boat on the Clyde, and we surmised at the time that the scheme would fail of success. Our forecast, we are now glad to state, has proved accurate. Three seasons the managers persevered with their attempt, but on this, the fourth year, they have proclaimed their failure by locking their steamer up in the harbour, and offering her for sale at a small price. The vexed waters of the Firth of Clyde have now rest on the Sabbath day, so far, at least, as this ill-omened vessel is concerned. We are glad of the evidence thus afforded of the remaining vitality of the Sabbath sentiment in Glasgow.

**Death of Dr. Ryle.**—Dr. Ryle, the eminent Evangelical Churchman, died on Sabbath, 10th June, at Lowestoft. He had attained the ripe age of 84 years. The deceased was long and favourably known as an able and earnest champion of the Evangelical faith. His departure deprives the Bishop's bench of the English Church almost of its last defence and ornament. Dr. Ryle was appointed the Bishop of Liverpool in 1880, being nominated for that post by Lord Beaconsfield. Previous to this turn in his career he had made his mark as an able defender of the Calvinistic Protestant faith. He was the penman of many sound and earnest tracts, as well as more laborious, expository works. His "*Christian Leaders of the Last Century*" is a fine work, introducing the reader to the goodly fellowship of Toplady, Romaine, Hervey, Grimshaw, and other heroes of the faith, who fought the good fight one hundred and fifty years ago. Whatever

defects and errors have attached to the Church of England, it were mere folly to deny that Christ has signally adorned it from age to age with shining examples of true Christianity. With these Dr. Ryle was always in full sympathy. The generation of apostatising Ritualists and Rationalists may now congratulate themselves on their deliverance from a troubler of Israel; but the God of John Bradford, of Romaine, and Berridge, is the living God, and though He buries His workmen, He carries on His work.

**Newspaper Theology.**—Theology is usually a minimum quantity in the columns of the daily press, and among newspapers the *Glasgow Evening News* is distinguished by the levity of its contents. Its chief specialities are football matches and cynical pleasantries on passing topics. Nevertheless, a religious mood sometimes seizes this up-to-date journal, and then it will discourse on a devotional point like a very churchman. Thus, on Saturday, 9th June, the first item in its column of varieties was a paragraph on "Trinity Sunday," reminding the readers that to-morrow was the anniversary of that important observance. A few historical notes were also added, connecting the establishment of the custom with Thomas a Beckett and Pope John. We do not quite see of what value this information would be, either to the football world or the general public. It is, of course, a fine sample of High Church lore, and would be interesting to the sect of the Ritualists, but would an Original Seceder or a Free Presbyterian be allowed to plant a statement of his distinctive principles on the forefront of the *Evening News*? We trow not. It is the old story of the bold and sly exploiting of the daily press in favour of Rome, and however grotesque such sallies of devotion may appear amid the cynicisms and secularities of the modern newspaper, yet no one seems to take the matter much amiss.

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## The Hiding of God's Face.

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"Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?"

—JOB xiii. 24.

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**W**HY dost Thou shade Thy lovely face? O why  
Does Thy eclipsing hand so long deny  
The sunshine of Thy soul-enlivening eye?

Without that light, what light remains in me?  
Thou art my life, my way, my light: in Thee  
I live, I move, and by Thy beams I see.

Thou art my life; if Thou but turn away,  
My life's a thousand deaths: Thou art my way;  
Without Thee, Lord, I travel not, but stray.

My light Thou art ; without Thy glorious sight,  
 Mine eyes are darken'd with perpetual night.  
 My God, Thou art my way, my life, my light.

Thou art my way ; I wander, if Thou fly :  
 Thou art my light ; if hid, how blind am I !  
 Thou art my life ; if Thou withdraw, I die.

Mine eyes are blind and dark, I cannot see ;  
 To whom or whither should my darkness flee,  
 But to the light ? and who's that light but Thee ?

My path is lost, my wand'ring steps do stray ;  
 I cannot safely go, nor safely stay ;  
 Whom should I seek but Thee, my path, my way ?

O, I am dead ; to whom shall I, poor I,  
 Repair ? to whom shall my sad ashes fly  
 For life ? and where is life but in Thine eye ?

And yet Thou turn'st away Thy face and fly'st me ;  
 And yet I sue for grace, and Thou deny'st me ;  
 Speak, art Thou angry, Lord, or only try'st me ?

Unscreen those heavenly lamps, or tell me why  
 Thou shad'st Thy face ? Perhaps Thou think'st no eye  
 Can view those flames and not drop down and die.

If that be all, shine forth and draw Thee nigher ;  
 Let me behold and die, for my desire  
 Is, phoenix-like, to perish in that fire.

Death-conquer'd Laz'rus was redeemed by Thee ;  
 If I am dead, Lord, set death's pris'ner free ;  
 Am I more spent, or stink I worse than he ?

If my puff'd life be out, give leave to tine  
 My shameless snuff at that bright lamp of Thine ;  
 O what's Thy light the less for light'ning mine ?

If I have lost my path, great Shepherd say,  
 Shall I still wander in a doubtful way ?  
 Lord, shall a lamb of Isr'el's sheep-fold stray ?

Thou art the pilgrim's path, the blind man's eye,  
 The dead man's life : on Thee my hopes rely ;  
 If Thou remove, I err, I grope, I die.

Disclose Thy sunbeams, close Thy wings and stay ;  
 See, see how I am blind and dead, and stray,  
 O Thou that art my light, my life, my way.

—FRANCIS QUARLES.