

LETTER NO. IV.

To Alex. D. F., of Brucklay.

Belleside, Fergus Civ. 19 Nov., 1846

My Dear Cousin,—

I have been long in your debt in the epistolary way, but have always delayed writing till a matter struck me, which I thought might count on your friendly disposition as my excuse for mentioning. We want very much just now some charitable individual to assist us by raising a matter of £50 for the purpose of seating and doing some necessary repairs to our Church here: but I do not think I need ask your assistance in that way, although it would be of great service.

What I think you will not object to do for me requires some little explanation. You do not need to be told that our Canadian Synod split in 1844, and that the Fergus Clergyman, Mr. Smellie, joined the party which attached themselves to the Free Church of Scotland; that he had with him the greater part of his old congregation; but that we were not of the number of those who continued with him. It is unnecessary to open old sores without a prospect of doing thereby some good: so that I shall just mention that while on PRINCIPLE I disapprove of the Secession, I could not avoid seeing that those who joined it would be placed in very great difficulties from the expense of getting accommodation for themselves; and I took a step which I was well aware would by our own party have been considered a stretch of liberality quite unwarranted in one holding that there ought to have been no division, and that I was even thereby lending a hand to encourage it. I wrote to a friend, or one who was once so, and who, I was aware, had means at command and had used them on former occasions in a similar manner, (I mean Mrs. Arthur D. Fordyce) and stating the circumstances, suggested the idea of a contribution for the purpose of erecting a Free Church and Manse here. I did not disguise my own sentiments regarding it; but urged the matter strongly as one calculated to benefit those who, while differing from them I believe were, some of them conscientiously, and others ignorantly, bringing themselves into great pecuniary difficulties. At this time the Seceding party were keeping possession of the property, refusing to give it up, merely, I believe, on account of the inconvenience it would cause themselves; and determining to hold it as long as they could.

My communications certainly came from rather an equivocal quarter to carry all the weight I would have wished; but I did think