

General Synod the time is come for the proposal of such amendments of the Federal Constitution, in the way provided by itself, as will supply the omissions above referred to, and secure a distinct recognition of the being and supremacy of the God of Divine Revelation.

Resolved, (2), That in the judgment of Synod the amendments or additions to be made to the National Constitution should provide not only for a recognition of the existence and authority of God, but also of the mediatorial, supremacy of Jesus Christ His son, "the Prince of the kings of the earth and the Governor among the nations."

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Application from a Licentiate of the Free Church for admission into the Church of Scotland.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, held on Wednesday, Dec. 30, the Moderator read a letter from the Rev. Andrew Begg, a licentiate of the Free Church of Scotland, and an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Australia, applying for admission into the Church of Scotland. The following document, giving Mr. Begg's reasons for seeking admission into the Church of Scotland, accompanied the letter of application, and was also read by the Moderator:—

The following are my reasons for declining to enter the Free Church on my return to this country, and for desiring admission into the Church of Scotland:—

1. I object to the "bond" of the Free Church, which the ministers of that Church, at their ordination, must sign; which "bond" forbids, upon pain of deposition from the office of the ministry, application to the Civil Courts in any case in which her assemblies have finally decided. I consider said "bond" not only an *illicitum pactum*, but an argument totally unwarranted by the word of God; and altogether unworthy of an association of men—much more of a body calling itself a Church of Christ, under a Christian Government. In my judgment it is also contrary to the very spirit and intention of Christianity; and is an uncalled for reflection upon the administration of the divine ordinance of civil government. Moreover, it is calculated to encourage a careless and partial administration of justice on the part of the office-bearers of churches, and to open a door for the exercise of malicious and tyrannical proceedings. Farther, I regard it as the denudation of the rights which belong to every subject of the British empire, and an unwarrantable interference with the exercise of the civil power, which must be supreme in all causes—*quoad civilia*, and open, *jure divino*, to all subjects of the realm, who choose to complain of injury to person, character or estate. And, still further, my opinion is, that perfect liberty

cannot be enjoyed in any country where the civil power would admit the legality of such a "bond."

2. I have come to the conclusion, after having been led to examine the question for myself, that the claims of the Free Church are, historically considered, unfounded. The Reformation Church of Scotland, which John Knox and his coadjutors established, knew nothing of the assumptions of the Free Church party. Knox knew nothing of the Free Church "spiritual independence;" of "a veto without reasons on the part of the people;" nor of "popular election, absolute and uncontrollable, in regard to the ministerial office." I consider the claims of the Free Church a departure from, and not a carrying out of, the principles enunciated by the earliest and soudest of our Scottish Reformers; and, consequently, I have no wish to follow the Free Church in her cause.

3. I consider the effects produced by the advocacy and the practice of the "distinctive principles" of the Free Church to be injurious rather than beneficial. The Christian people should not be deprived of their lawful rights; but, without doubt, it is not for the good of any people to have a power put into their hands which does not belong to them, and for the exercise of which they are not competent. Democracy in church matters is, in my estimation, as prejudicial to the interests of religion as democracy in civil matters is to the welfare of society. And the step from democracy in church matters to democracy in civil matters is short and easy: and the training which the former imparts has always been found a preparation for the latter. Therefore, the Church which descends from the divinely appointed office of teaching and ruling, and, for the sake of popularity, panders to an uneducated, it may be vitiated taste, is not the true friend of the people.

4. I have come to prefer, after three years of colonial experience, connection with a Church which does not occupy a "dissenting" or "protesting" position, on secondary grounds. These positions, in my estimation, are prejudicial to the interests of true religion, and hostile to the spirit of brotherly love and peace which is peculiar to Christianity. Dissent, and protest, on other than vital, and fundamental grounds, must, from the very nature of the case, be injurious. And they become doubly so when their grounds are slight and non-apparent. Consequently, the minds of men are, through the operation of these, led away from matters absolutely necessary and essential, to trifles and questions which engender strife, and minister to the lusts of the flesh. Nothing is more common among the Dissenting communities than the opinion that the "calling" of the members of these communities is to testify against the churches from which they have seceded. And every one who has studied the working of the human mind in religious matters must know