

pher. The modern infidel, after reading the contradictory reports of half a dozen different sects, might well ask the same thing. One cries this watchword and the other that; one protests that his party moves the world, his opponent cries 'Fudge!' and shows his superior leverage and nerve; the one side claims three-fourths of the population, and the other side the remaining four-fifths. It is something like the Chinese battle in which an Imperial general went out to fight 1000 rebels, of which he killed more than a thousand and took 360 prisoners; both methods of computation being based on the principle expressed in the Latin phrase *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, or as we more briefly say 'all and sundry.'

I have been led to make these remarks by comparing what I had heard on one or two interesting questions, with the results of my own investigations and inquiries. Before I knew anything of Scotland, I had been often enough told that the great mass of the people had left the Established for the Free Church. After I had traversed a good deal of the Lowlands, I saw clearly that such was not the case there; for while there were a great many more Established Churches than Free, the average attendance at one of the former was equal to that at one of the latter. Then I was told, wait till you go to the Highlands; there is the strength of our body and the insignificance of yours; there was the great Exodus and the great enthusiasm; there unless you are a Free Churchman, you will not lead the life of a dog, so great is the zeal and so tolerate the Christian charity of the people. Well, I did wait, marked and learned. Much of the Highlands I have not seen, and therefore do not now speak of that part. In other parts I found Free Churchism rampant, and the people darkly, deeply filled—not with the enthusiasm which is pervasive and beautiful, but with the fanaticism which is stern and fierce. But in the greater number of districts which I visited, I was happy to find the Kirk of Scotland not only holding its own, but recovering, rallying, and again taking possession of what in some cases it had lost. Thus in travelling up the West Highlands, I found good congregations in both Churches in Oban: in Lismore and Appin, three times as many of the people in connection with the Church as there are with the Free; in Morven, a Free Church there undoubtedly is, but no minister, nor 10 families to make a congregation; in the island of Mull, with its six or seven parishes, a good many stone and lime Free Churches, but only two congregations able to sustain ministers; in the island of Tyree with 4000 of a population, not 20 families in connection with the Free Church; and so with various other parishes in which I have been—though the proportions are not often so very greatly against the Free Church.

There is another point for connection with:

this deserving of notice. The great and displayed by those who left in '43 to proselytes, even in cases where they were able to provide ministerial supply. The most gigantic efforts were made to convert "the black moderates" of Morven especially during Dr. John McLeod's mission to British America,—it being considered that it was the most feasible time to split up a flock when the pastor was away on an errand of love, feeding other flocks. If I question if the very few whom they persuaded to join them have since heard two sermons in all. A worse case is that of Kilda, a lone island far out in the Atlantic with a few hundred Highlanders upon a simple, primitive and pious people, who live chiefly on the sea-fowl and shell-fish about the island. These people had always had a minister and schoolmaster provided them by the Established Church, for centuries back. They were induced to cast in their lot with the Free Church, and a bad lot it proved to them; for ever since they have been without a minister, except a stray one who turns up now and then to marry a batch who have waited long and patiently enough for his coming. To a population cut off from all communication with others, such deprivation of ordinances and ministerial visiting must be more than ordinarily severe.

I trust that no one will consider that I make these remarks out of any spirit of hostility to the Free Church. That Church I admire for its exertions, its self-sacrificing spirit; many of its members and ministers I know personally and esteem very highly as "brothers beloved." But it is not that I love the Free Church less, but truth more. And when I know that "shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon the views which many of my readers entertain of the relative state of parties in Scotland; and that a false state of feeling has been excited in the breasts of many, caused by false opinion and groundless prejudice, it would be wrong in me as a public correspondent not to speak the truth in "purity as well as in love."

In my next letter, I will be able to give some of what the General Assembly—which meets on the 17th of May—has been principally engaged upon. This year, there are several unpleasant cases of action against ministers, for offences which if proved will lead to their deposition by the Church. We have had only one such case of discipline I think during the last six or seven years. But however unpleasant the duty may be, it is satisfactory to know that the Church can proceed to the execution of impartial discipline, unfettered by the fear of consequences, civil or ecclesiastical.