

it is no longer dutiful or desirable to maintain a separate judicial organization, but that it is at once our duty, and for the interests of the great cause which we have at heart, to propose uniting ourselves with the Free Church of Scotland. To this conclusion we have been led, by considering that the Free Church now occupies such a position, in respect of her constitution and administration, as renders it unwarrantable in us to maintain and prosecute an active and positive secession from her communion, and that she is the true representative of that Church from the prevailing party in whose judicatories our fathers declared a secession. Believing also that she not only professedly but practically adheres to the Westminster formularies, as her subordinate standards of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, as these were ratified, with certain explanations, by divers Acts of Assembly in the year 1645, 1647, and 1648, we are fully satisfied that all the grounds of secession as originally stated have been removed, and that all the ends of that Testimony hitherto held by us in a state of separation may be now warrantably and faithfully prosecuted in communion with the Free Church of Scotland.

With this view the following resolution, forming the substance of an overture for union with the Free Church, signed by nineteen of our ministers, was moved and carried at our late meeting of Synod, viz. :—

“That this Synod do now recognise the Free Church of Scotland as being constitutionally, both by Divine and human right, the Church of Scotland, to which our fathers appealed; and also, that the Synod do affectionately and respectfully propose to unite with the Free Church of Scotland on the basis of the Westminster standards, held in integrity, and suitably applied, in the way of prosecuting the ends of our National Covenants to which we are bound by our ordination vows, namely, ‘in the way of abhorring and detesting all contrary religion and doctrine, but chiefly all kinds of Popery, in general and particular heads, even as they are now condemned by the Word of God and Kirk of Scotland,’ which is the end to which we are bound by the National Covenant of Scotland; and, more particularly, that we propose to unite with them in the way of ‘endeavouring to maintain the Reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies—to promote the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, and to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Government, Directory for Worship, and Catechisms,’ and in the way of ‘extirpating,’ that is, endeavouring to root out, ‘Popery, Prelacy, superstition, schism, profaneness, and whatever shall be found

contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness,’—the ends which we are bound to prosecute by the Solemn League and Covenant; it being understood that these ends are to be prosecuted in a suitableness to present circumstances, and only by such means as are competent for a Church of Christ to employ; it being also distinctly understood that we hold by the standards and constitution of the Church of Scotland, not only as these may have been explained in any Act or Acts of the Free Church, but also as they are stated and defended in our own Testimony. In fine, it is hereby moved, that a representation and appeal, embodying the above principles, be drawn out and signed by the Moderator and Clerk in the name of this Synod, and transmitted to the next meeting of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, intimating our readiness, on a favourable reception being given to its terms, forthwith to terminate our secession, according to the original design of our fathers.”

We have, on these grounds, agreed to propose, and we hereby most respectfully and affectionately would propose, union with our brethren of the Free Church. Our sentiments may be higher on these points than those judicially avowed by the Free Church, but they are not hostile to any of them; there may be a want of entire identity between us, but there is nothing like repugnance or incongruity; we are aiming at the same ends, guided by the same standards, and animated by the same spirit. While, therefore, we freely accede to all the principles of the Free Church as ours, we beg it to be understood that we desire to be received as adhering to the original standards and constitution of the Church of Scotland, not only as asserted and vindicated in any of the acts or declarations of the Free Church, but also as asserted and vindicated in our own Testimony, to all the principles of which we still adhere. These we have already stated in the fullest and frankest manner; and it remains now for the General Assembly of the Free Church to say, whether they are prepared to receive a body holding themselves bound by their ordination vows to these principles, and determined, through the grace of God, to maintain them in union with the Free Church, as they have hitherto done in a state of secession. We claim it as our right to be recognised as the representatives of the first Seceders, who now return to the Church of our fathers, on the understanding that she has returned to her adherence to the great cause of the Reformation, and that, in acceding to her communion, we shall continue, in our several congregations, to administer ordinances and discipline as we have hitherto done. We also request that this our Appeal may be inserted in the minutes of the General Assembly, signed by our names, in perpetual memory of the transaction.