

are there. What does that show? It is this, that the movement has originated with the laity.

Mr. DONALDSON, Kirkconnel, said he did not think it was fair and honorable that imputations against individuals should be allowed to come up from the inferior courts of the Church in this way, especially in a matter of so vital importance. He moved that it is unnecessary for the General Assembly to take any action on these matters, and that they therefore dismiss the case.

Dr. PIRIE said he entirely agreed with the remarks of the gentleman who had just spoken. These loose charges should not be brought, but there should be a specific statement made on the record, and the document should be laid before the General Assembly. It will not do to bring forward charges on mere loose rumour. I am not prepared to say that every doctrine of the Confession of Faith is of equal importance, or that every doctrine rests on equal evidence. There are portions resting on evidence altogether irresistible; there are portions resting on evidence of an inferior character; but I believe the weight of evidence in every case is in favour of the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. Dr. Pirie was about to read a few passages from Principal Tulloch's pamphlet, which he offered to lay on the table, when he was interrupted.

Mr. DONALDSON—Are you going to make a motion?

Dr. PIRIE—Most undoubtedly. After some further interruption, Dr. Pirie said—There is here an overture saying that ministers and influential members of the Church have made certain representations. I am connected with one of these overtures, and I am prepared to show that such is the case; but I repeat that if you put me down on the point of form, I can assure you you will do me a most singular favour. But as to bringing charges against an individual of which he was unaware, does any man believe that that is the case? Does any man suppose that these overtures would have passed through the Committee of Overtures if they were irregular?

The MODERATOR.—This is a question of great difficulty; but it seems to me that the Court to which Principal Tulloch is immediately responsible is the Presbytery of St. Andrews, and I think we ought to leave the Presbytery of St. Andrews, in the first instance, to consider whether they have any ground to proceed. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. PIRIE—If it be the opinion of the Moderator that the matter should be brought forward in a different way, I shall be delighted to withdraw my motion.

Dr. LEE—I am delighted that what I wished to say has been substantially expressed by yourself, Moderator, with the authority that belongs not only to your present office, but to your well-known qualifications to give an

opinion on the subject. (Hear, hear.) I cannot conceive anything more unjust and unreasonable than on the ground of a general statement of the kind to produce a charge against an individual.

Dr. MUIR—I have felt very great satisfaction in the statement made by the rev. Professor (Dr. Pirie), and I must say that if this General Assembly enter in the spirit manifested in the speech of the rev. Professor in this important subject, and pursue it to its end, I shall, under all the manifold depressions I experience with regard to the predicament our poor Church is at present placed in, still entertain some good hope that, under God's guidance, the Church of Scotland may still survive. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. COOK, Bathgate, supported the overture from the Presbytery of Linlithgow, and expressed concurrence in the views of Dr. Pirie.

Dr. CRAIK also supported Mr. Phin's motion.

Dr. LEE said—I have no objection to the motion which has been made by Mr. Phin. I think it is perfectly innocent and legitimate. (A laugh.) The General Assembly is quite entitled, if it sees danger likely to arise to the Church in any respect, to give an instruction and warning to Presbyteries to perform their duty. Therefore, I have nothing to say against the motion. I am quite satisfied with it. At the same time, I think gentlemen are apt to run away a little in their zeal in speaking on this subject. I am not aware of any person in this Church—at least I can say I know no person—who wishes the Confession of Faith to be set aside. I believe all the good that has been said of it; but, at the same time, we are not to forget that the doctrine of our Church and the Confession of Faith is that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule of faith. (Hear, and applause.) And we are not, however excellent that Confession may be, to employ these exaggerated terms in speaking of it—terms which imply, or seem to imply, that we put it virtually in the same position, and assert for it the same authority, as the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. (Hear, hear.) Very much of what I have heard on this subject seems to be a virtual denial of the Protestant religion and principles—(hear, hear)—by putting down the Word of God—(no, no)—and exalting something else instead. (“Hear,” and “No.”) I do not say you mean to do so, but a great deal of what I have heard and read on the subject seems to me to imply that; and of this I am certain, that our earliest reformers—the reformers of the Church in general—would not have expressed themselves in the manner in which many persons now do on this subject. (“Hear,” and “No.”) I say nothing can be more obvious than that that is the case. We never find them speaking in these terms of those symbols which for very