

principles of these Resolutions were submitted to our Congregations to be subscribed by those who approved of them; but, notwithstanding the efforts that were made to communicate information, the number of signatures obtained was quite insignificant; and at the time of the disruption, whatever might have been the conjectures as to the way in which the people might act in particular quarters, the ministers and elders had to act upon their own responsibility, and, under a strong sense of duty, to leave the Establishment without knowing whether the people in the great majority of cases, would follow them or not. The people did follow them in numbers, far beyond the most sanguine expectations; but still the fact is incontestable, the step had been previously taken by the ministers, and taken by them when they could not know, except in a very few cases, to what extent they would be supported by their people.

In so far as the modes of raising funds for the support of the ministry, and for meeting the general wants of the Church are concerned, we speak of the different schemes as the mere device of human wisdom; and we invite the utmost freedom in criticising them. Highly as I am disposed to think of the Scheme adopted by the Free Church, in the outline even of its details, I would still say, try it upon its own merits, and its applicability to your own particular circumstances; and reject it where it is found unsuitable. There is, however, connected with this the enquiry as to the most suitable machinery for working the Scheme, and here I cannot admit that the question is equally open to discussion. In reference to what may be the intricacy of such questions, you tell us, and, I regret to say, you tell us with a sneer, that "a small number of Canadian divines had no difficulty in dealing with such questions;" you venture to assert that the Deacons Court was unknown in the history of Presbyterianism till the year 1843, and you still further say that while the Free Church was, as an experiment established such an institution, it is not imperative nor universal. "The great and good men who have guided that movement," you say, "know better what is due to the rights of the congregations." If, when you speak of the "Deacon's Court," and the "Canadian Deacon's Court," you merely refer to the names by which particular Courts may have been called, then I have nothing to say in the matter. I neither affirm nor deny anything about mere names. But if you speak of the thing itself, if you refer to Courts consisting of ordained men who were officially entrusted with the management of the pecuniary affairs of the congregation, then I have just to say there was no occasion for the Canadian divines referred to, feeling any difficulty in dealing with such questions to that extent to which they went, for they had committed themselves to this principle when they received ordination. I have to say still farther, that so far as such Courts being unknown in the history of Presbyterianism till the year 1843, they have been known in the Church of Scotland ever since the days of John Knox and Andrew Melville. The General Assembly containing the great and good men whom you speak of as guiding the mighty movement of the Free Church, those men who have shewn not only that they know what is due to the rights of congregations, but that they will maintain these rights, the General Assembly, with the full concurrence of these men, issued instructions, not as an experiment, but as following out the Scriptural Constitution of the Church to have such Courts put into efficient operation throughout the various congregations with all convenient speed.

We are far from saying that the temporalities of the Church can only be administered by a Deacon's Court. We can understand a variety of cases in which they may be managed, and with some degree of expediency, in a different way. In some cases congregations may not be able very speedily to get such Courts established. In other cases their pecuniary affairs may be already under such obligations as that it may not be easy or expe-

dient to transfer them into the hands of a Deacon's Court. With respect to the buildings, the Free Church, in consideration of some specialities in the civil law affecting such property, has recommended that they should be committed to Trustees chosen from the congregation and distinct from the Deacon's Court. But whatever expedients may be admitted in particular emergencies, and to whatever extent expediency may recommend a special mode of securing real property, it is still held that the mode pointed out in Scripture, and therefore the mode to be aimed at, for managing the pecuniary affairs of the Church, is through the instrumentality of those very Courts, the formation of which you so earnestly deprecate.

In so far as the working of that part of our system is concerned in the Established Church of Scotland, it is to be remembered that the State, a foreign body, and acting on its own responsibility in making over to the Church that amount of temporalities which it engaged for its support, appointed its own machinery for the administration of the funds which it wished to be thus applied. It made a certain amount of provision also for the support of the poor, and in like manner gave certain directions as to the agency by which it was to be administered. In looking to this agency, therefore, we shall go very far wrong if we suppose that it is that which the Church would have adopted in the management of funds absolutely at her own disposal. Kirk Sessions, when administering the poor's funds, and Presbyteries when adjudicating in reference to manse and glebe, and Churches, were sitting not as spiritual but as civil courts, and had their whole proceedings subject to the review of what in matters such as these, were confessedly their superior Courts—viz. the Court of Session and the House of Lords. Had the State so pleased, it might have made a provision so ample for the poor, and entrusted it to such an agency as would have left nothing for the Church to do in the matter, and in like manner with respect to the support more directly applied to the Church itself. In point of fact it did, although only to a certain extent, avail itself of the machinery actually provided in the Constitution of the Church, and we have, accordingly, had some portion of pecuniary matters all along managed by a Court, call it what you will, consisting of ministers, ruling elders, and in some cases, of deacons. So long as the Church received what was needed for her proper objects, she had no cause to decline acting according to these arrangements, although had the money been at her own absolute disposal, she might have made some alteration in the mode of administering it. But while in attending to these circumstances, we find what explains the limited extent to which these things were carried out by the machinery of the Church, the disruption which had its cause in questions which never could have been raised but in connection with such a mode of administering the funds intended for the use of the Church, may shew what is the danger of such a system.

You tell us that "in the Apostolic times the congregations were the supreme courts to whose decision all events of importance were submitted." So think the Congregationalists, and therefore they are not Presbyterians but Congregationalists. I could understand such a statement as you have made coming from my esteemed friend Mr. Roaf, and while I differ from him in opinion, I honour him in the consistency with which he follows out his views. But what am I to say to you? You say "we are not arguing in favour of Congregationalism, as some of our Presbyterian friends may suppose, but stating what appears to have been the practice of the infant church in the Apostolic age." Whether that was the practice or not, is just the question which divides Congregationalists and Presbyterians. I am not to be drawn into a discussion of that question at present,—you have expressed your opinion, and deny it as you may, you are arguing in favour of Congregationalism. I no longer wonder at the strong desire which you have manifested to exclude our

Presbyteries from any superintendence in those matters which we have been considering.

However ludicrous it may appear to you to be gravely told that the Canadian Deacon's Court has Scriptural authority, I have no hesitation in gravely maintaining that there is Scriptural authority for entrusting the pecuniary affairs of the Church to the management of ordained office-bearers. You may, if you please, call them the Canadian Deacon's Court. With regard to such a body, my first remark is that they seem in the times of the Apostles, to have been entrusted with the whole pecuniary affairs of the Church. In proof of this it may be enough to cite the following passages—viz. Acts i, 11. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common: 45. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. Chap. iv, 34, &c. "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joseph, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of Consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet." It was out of the money thus laid at the Apostles' feet, that "distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." The office-bearers of the Church were amongst those who had need. My second remark is that the sole business for which the seven of whom we read in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, were appointed, was the management of these pecuniary matters. You seem rather inclined to view them as commissioned also to preach. All that we are told of Stephen is that when certain persons arose to dispute with him, they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. He could give a reason of the hope that was in him, and every Christian ought to be prepared to do so also. I know no one who ever said that Stephen and his companions were prohibited from religious pursuits. Philip, another of the seven, did, as you mention, both preach and baptize; but we are told, Acts xxi, 8, that Philip was an evangelist. In so far as the transaction recorded in Acts, Chap. vi, is concerned, the language is express. Referring to the management of their pecuniary affairs, the Twelve say to the multitude "wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." We are not told of any one starting up to say to the Apostles, "with the people must remain the property, and the management of the Temporalities. That is their special department." On the contrary it is said the saying pleased the whole multitude. They proceeded to the election of seven persons whom they set before the Apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. In the third place while the persons thus appointed were appointed especially over this business, those who had been already in office did not denude themselves of their office. However strong the language employed in the sixth chapter of Acts may appear, a reference to other passages of Scripture will shew that the Apostles were speaking only comparatively when they say "it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and the ministry of the Word." For instance, we are told, Acts xi, 29, 30. "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Chap. xii, 25. "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." Here we find not only Barnabas and Saul taking part in these matters, but handing over the money with which they