

tioners and ministers of all Presbyterian Churches on the same footing in the Synod—as has been expressed in this second canon. The independence of the Church sounds well, and may seem a most conclusive and satisfactory thing to point to this Act and say we have declared ourselves a free and independent Synod. What more would you have? The Jews could, on occasion, utter the vain and empty boast—“We were never in bondage to any man,”—and yet the Roman yoke was nothing the lighter upon them for all that. Here is a Synod in like manner proclaiming its independence for a particular purpose, and yet confessing having no liberty to determine or regulate its intercourse with another Church. It is independent, forsooth, of the Scottish Establishment, and yet it dare not, for its life, modify or alter in the slightest particular its relations with that Establishment, whatever state of corruption and degradation in the eyes of Christendom it may fall into. While truth and error are contending within the Establishment, the Synod may venture upon a declaration in favor of truth; but should truth and right be overborne, and error and iniquity prevail—no matter to what extent—the Synod must be mute, according to some of the framers of this act, who think it altogether unsuitable and unbecoming to censure or expose or reprove her under any circumstances; while, by the admission of all of them, the Synod must still keep its place by the side of the Establishment, and maintain its previous relations with her unchanged. The principles and practice of the Establishment may be at variance in the most essential matters with the mind of Christ, they may be utterly condemned by the members of the Synod in their own hearts—the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and the consolation and encouragement of his witnessing and suffering servants, may imperatively require of the Synod to mark its censure of that Establishment by withdrawing from connexion with it; yet, on the shewing of its own leaders, it cannot take any such step. This is the independence of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connexion with the Church of Scotland: and all this is understood and held by the parties who push forward the Act of Independence, and would have it pass current as some great thing. But farther, let it be observed by our readers that this Act only declares the spiritual independence of the Synod, and the actual state of the case, according to the framers of the Act is, that the Synod is independent in spiritual things, but not so in temporal things. We have seen what this spiritual independence amounts to, and we now find that the Synod is wholly dependent on the Scottish Establishment for the possession and enjoyment of her public endowments—she holds these at the good pleasure of the Established Church of Scotland. Is it possible to suppose a more degrading species of dependence than this?—Yet this is the condition of the aforesaid Synod, in the opinion of those who framed this Act of Independence, and seek to invest it with so much importance.

Before pressing from this point we cannot but advert to the use which is attempted to be made of a certain “letter of sympathy” from the Colonial Committee of the establishment, which is represented as conveying a full and distinct recognition of the Synod's independence,—as having come most opportunely, and as being quite sufficient to disabuse the minds of the people from many false impressions which they had taken up as to the subordinate position of the Synod in regard to the Church of Scotland. This letter of sympathy, let it be observed, is signed by Thomas Clark, vice-convenor of the committee, and expresses itself in this wise on the point in question: “The Church of Scotland has never claimed any authority nor exercised any control over your Synod, neither has she ever possessed nor desired to possess the right of any such interference.” Thus speaks the vice-convenor of a committee whose sayings and doings have yet to be reported. Compare this with the language of the two convenors of the same committee, in a report which was

approved and confirmed by the General Assembly in May last, and see how they tally—keeping in mind that we have the word of Dr. Duncan McFarlan and Dr. James Grant in the one case, and that of Thomas Clark in the other; and that the former are at least as likely to be able and willing to keep their word, and carry out their views, as the latter.

“An effort, “say the convenors,” it is understood, is to be made, or rather is now being made, in the Colonial Legislature of Canada, to procure the incorporation of the Presbyterian ministers—heretofore connected with the Scottish establishment—as a separate Presbyterian Church, adhering simply to the Westminster standards, and to the Presbyterian form of worship, and the vesting in them of the property endowments, and interest in the Clergy Reserve's Fund, now secured by law to the recognized branch of the Church of Scotland there. Such a measure the Committee will, with the approbation of the General Assembly, steadily resist as a gross invasion of our Church's Rights, and of those of her faithful and adhering brethren and children in that colony: and if such an act should pass the local legislature, they contemplate using every means in their power to have it disallowed by the Government at home. At the same time, the Committee cannot recommend to the Assembly to comply with the request of some of their transatlantic brethren, by assuming a direct appellate jurisdiction over the Colonial Churches. The Assembly has formerly distinctly declined this, and the Committee are satisfied that they have done so, on good and sufficient grounds. And though the relation between the Parent and Colonial Churches, as regards those members of the latter especially who have not received either ordination or license from the parent Church, may be some what anomalous, they conceive that the marks of a Colonial Church, in bona fide communion with the Scottish Establishment, admit of being defined with sufficient precision, would not be exhibited by a church constituted, as it is proposed, the new Presbyterian Church of Canada should be.

As to the University of Queen's College, at Kingston, Upper Canada, in the establishment of which this Church took so lively an interest, and incurred so heavy an expense, the Committee have little to report in addition to the information communicated by them to former Assemblies. They regret to say, that they are without any information, directly and officially communicated to them, during the past year. They are unwilling to give expression to any discouraging views, though an impression may be gaining ground in their mind, that, as regards the scale on which it was established, the establishment of it may have been premature, as certainly its success hitherto has fallen short of the sanguine expectations that were entertained. But they are constrained to complain, that without either obtaining or asking their sanction, those in the immediate management of the institution have formally proposed, and endeavoured to procure an incorporation of it with the University of Toronto, and other measures regarding it, to say the least, very doubtful in their policy, and which would materially weaken if not altogether destroy, the influence of this Church in its management. In the present state of their views and information, the Committee are not prepared to recommend any particular measure, as proper to be adopted by the Assembly, with reference to this subject; but they hope, that if the Assembly shall renew the trust of the Committee, they will invest them with large and liberal powers to act according to circumstances, in regard to the College, and the allowances hitherto made for its support.”

But the point in which we find ourselves principally aggrieved by these brethren on this as on former occasions, has yet to be brought into view. We refer to the pertinacity with which they endeavour to evade and misrepresent the matter actually at issue between us. That matter, we beg once for all to say, was not and is not the in-

dependence of the Synod, but the connexion which the Synod seems resolved to maintain with an ecclesiastical institution which has practically denied the Headship of Christ, trampling on her own standards, and basely bartering for state endowments and favour her own freedom and the most precious privileges of the Christian people; knowingly and deliberately subjecting herself, in some of the most important and sacred functions, with which Christ has invested his Church, to the authoritative interference and controul of the civil authority, whereby her character is destroyed and her purity and efficiency rendered impossible,—whether we judge of her by the principles laid down in the word of God, or by the condition and example of similar Christian institutions elsewhere and in all ages. We need not at present consider what additional securities we might now deem necessary after the recent declarations of Drs. McFarlan and Grant, and in consequence of the views which we find our former brethren entertain in regard to the independence of the Synod. What we are concerned to state at present, in order to clear away the mist in which the cause of separation is so diligently sought to be involved, and which this act of independence is calculated, if not designed, to thicken,—is simply this, that the independence of the Synod is not at all the main point at issue, and never was so; and that if that independence were tenfold more clear and secure than it at present seems to be, the condition of the said Synod would not in our estimation be a whit more satisfactory in so far as re-union is concerned. What we asked of those brethren in July we ask still: what we said to them then we say still. The above are our views of the recent conduct and present condition of the Scottish Establishment: they are also the views of her which you joined with us in recording in your books. We can not with a good conscience remain in connexion with her: we cannot, without betraying the cause of Christ and the best interests of his Church in this dark and ungodly world, be the friends, the countenancers, the sanctioners, of such an institution,—of such principles,—of such practices: as ministers, elders, and members, who came forth to this land from the bosom of the Established Church of Scotland, and who, having been all along in close connexion with her, are justly said to be her representatives here, and a part of her very system—we must make it clear that we will no longer be identified with that system in its violated and degraded condition. We cannot even affect neutrality between the aiders and abettors of the errors at Marnoch, Auchterarder, and Culalmozie and Strathbogie,—and those men of God who strove to avert these evils and free the Church from our fathers, and the people of our fatherland, for the possibility of their recurrence; far less can we allow ourselves, directly or indirectly, to be regarded as the approvers and friends of the former and the disapprovers, the censurers, and opposers of the latter; and we hold that every man, whether minister, elder, or member, who remains in connexion with that establishment, is virtually placing himself in that sinful position, and is justly chargeable with being a partaker of these sins. In conclusion, we have only to add, that in the “letter of sympathy” from the Scottish Establishment which these brethren circulate so diligently, we refer to so complacently, we find the following acknowledgement, which forms an unanswerable and most melancholy confirmation of the truth and justice of the conclusion which we have stated the close of the preceding sentence.—“You have says Dr. Clark, “our best thanks for the manner in which you have pleaded the cause of the National Establishment.” We know not if these brethren may feel, but we can truly say ourselves that we would not be esteemed worthy of such a compliment, nor occupy a position which it could be offered to us, for any consideration that we can imagine.