

“against the defections and corruptions of the said Established Church, were specially bound to do so because of their connection with said Church, and because also of reiterated testimonies solemnly and deliberately lifted up by the Synod in former years on behalf of the contendings of those who have been compelled to secede.”

To this it is answered—that the Church shall in all spiritual matters be independent,—that the voice of the communicants shall be fully heard in the choice of their Ministers. These are the avowed principles of the Synod. These principles it has all along held; and its practice has been in perfect conformity with them. All who hold these views, and, *in a Scriptural and orderly way*, endeavor to give them effect, shall ever have its approbation. It was on this ground,—it could be on no other,—that the Synod expressed its sympathy with those office bearers of the Church of Scotland who have now constituted themselves into what is called “the Free Church.” But this was on the part of the Synod *a testimony to principles, not an adherence to a party*, still less a pledge on its part to approve of or to follow the course which might be adopted by any party holding these principles. By not attending to this simple and important distinction there has arisen a confusion of ideas by which designing men have perplexed and misled the unthinking. In so far as “the Free Church” embraces sound principles, this Church, of course, accords to her its hearty approbation, and in so far as her members have, *from conscientious motives*, made sacrifices in support of them, they have its esteem and sympathy. But although the Synod cherish high respect for the distinguished talents of some of the Ministers, who have seceded from the Church of Scotland, yet it scarcely thinks that even they can communicate any new views to it on the principles in question, and sees not how they can desire its practice to be freer or more independent, in spiritual things, than it is. Nor can the Synod help thinking that, knowing, as “the Free Church” did, what the principles and practice of the Church in this Colony were, it would have been wise in her to have let it alone; or if she deemed it fit to extend her influence to Canada, to have employed that influence to repress agitation, and preserve peace and harmony among its people. Had such a course been pursued, it might have yielded fruits which would have been to herself and her friends not the least among “the unequivocal tokens of the presence of her great Head.” All know who has said—“Blessed are the peace-makers.”