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"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—*Ps.* 137, v. 6.

LECTURE

On the cause of the Secession of 1843, by the Rev. John McRae, minister of Stornaway, late of East River, Pictou.—"That they may be one," John xvii, 11.

My stated hearers will do me the justice to allow that a controversial subject of this nature is not often obtruded on their notice from this place, and never on the Lord's-day. Not but that there are occasions on which, even on that sacred day, we are bound to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints,—to assign a reason for the hope which is in us,—and to explain the grounds of the distinction on which we differ from our Fellow-Christians. A temperate discussion of such points, conducted with a Christian spirit, may be profitable, through the Divine blessing, "for doctrine," &c. But in the language of a celebrated living preacher, whose sermon is one of those which has suggested my subject of this evening, "we have more vital doctrines to unfold to dying sinners, and to hold forth to living saints," than anything which distinguishes one Presbyterian body from another, in our day and in our country. Yes, doubtless, to "convert a sinner from the error of his way," and to help on the believer in his journey Zionwards is unspeakably more important than to argue

however convincingly, on mere party distinctions.

Wherefore, then, it may be asked, touch upon a delicate subject,—one sure to excite keen remark and irritated feeling? This may, for aught I know, be a question, with my usual hearers. It has been tauntingly asked by those who certainly have no right to interfere, if I expect to make an impression upon them? My reply to such is just another question:—Have I invited their attendance; or, Athenian-fashion, do they hanker after some new thing; or, though they think it beneath them to come hither to hear the gospel on ordinary occasions, do they think it worthy of them to listen to a mere party topic; and, listening to such, think it no desecration to appear within the walls of their parish church?

With regard to my own friends who may have misgivings on the occasion, if any such there are, who feel some undefined concern as if it were something wrong to meddle with what once set the whole country in a flame; with regard to such, if such there be, there are two questions which I purpose this evening to discuss; and if, as I venture to affirm, there is not one in five in all my congregation who can give an intelligent answer to them, then, I think, such ignorance is creditable neither to them nor to me: then I think it is

We have taken the liberty of republishing this lecture in the "Record," as a favorable specimen of sound, logical reasoning, by a gentleman who once ministered among us, and who is widely known and highly respected by the members of the Church of Scotland in this Province. It will be interesting also at the present moment as showing in a peculiarly clear and convincing manner, that even supposing reasons did exist in '43 for a Secession from the Church, these by the confessions of the most distinguished Free Churchmen, have now been swept away, and there exists no barrier whatever to the Free Church returning to its first love—to the two Churches becoming one body in Christ.—[Ed. M. R.]