

on the other hand guard against slothfulness and inactivity in its defence. We are especially called upon to be valiant for the truth, and both by profession and practice to hold forth the word of life. It becometh us to be jealous of any encroachment on the Province of Gospel truth, and at the same time to love and encourage all who hold the head and are contending for the faith once delivered unto the Saints. And we must ever bear in mind that we are not only to adhere to the Gospel in its purity, but to adorn its doctrines; that we are not only to defend the truth, but to walk in the truth; letting our light shine before men, discharging in the strength of divine grace every known duty, and abounding in every good word and work. Nor are we to shrink from our fidelity and steadfastness if sacrifices are required.— In other days the disciples of our Lord took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and counted not even their lives dear unto them. Our forefathers, too, amidst many dangers and perils, contended for a pure and free Gospel, and for the blood-bought rights of the Church of Christ, which some even in our own day have had to do at no small sacrifice. And if sufferings and trials await us, it becometh us not to shrink from duty, but to adhere to Christian principle whatever be the sacrifice.

3. Again it becometh us in our present circumstances to look to God with implicit confidence, and to be constant and fervent in our supplications for His Church and cause. It is the duty of Christians at all times to be earnest in prayer for the Church and cause of God, but more especially in seasons of danger and trial. Our adorable Redeemer is Head over all things to the Church. All power belongs to him in him heaven and in earth. He can control all events and make all things work together for his own glory and the good of his Church. And we have abundant encouragement to pour out our desires and prayers before Him for the welfare and advancement of his Church. He hath assured us of his unalterable love to his Church, and of his purposes in regard to her. We are assured that no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper, and that whosoever toucheth her toucheth the apple of his eye. We have great and precious promises to plead. And encouraged by these, it surely becometh us earnestly to pray that Jehovah would arise and plead his own cause; that he would revive his work in our hearts and throughout the Church; that he would give increasing power and efficacy to the means of grace; and that he would either chase away the lowering clouds that are gathering around the Church, or prepare his people by the richer communications of his grace for times of darkness and tribulation. There must thus be on the one hand active devotedness to the cause of God, zealous contending for the truth of the Gospel, and on the other constant fervent prayers to Jehovah in behalf of his Church. When Israel contended with Amalek, the people were fighting in the valley, while Moses was holding up his hands on the Mount. And so now, there must be a union of earnest striving in our several spheres, and deep earnest prayer in the closet. And if this prevailed more amongst us, if more of the Spirit of Grace and supplications were poured out upon us, if there were a genuine revival in our hearts and in our congregations, there would still be hope. Amidst all our dangers, there would yet be a token for good, and in such a revival we might read the declaration, "Destroy it not for a blessing is in it!"

We have thus endeavoured briefly to point at some duties that appeared to be peculiarly required of us in the present circumstances and times. Let us then, Fathers and Brethren, and Christian Friends, rise to our duty in the strength of Divine grace. Let us gird on the armour of God. Let us contemplate without shrinking from the dangers and perils that surround us, that we may be rightly impressed with a sense of the solemn duty required of us. But let us at the same time remem-

ber the gracious promises of our Divine King and Head, that we may not be overwhelmed at the prospect, but may be enabled to go forward to the conflict, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Let us feel that in one sense the cause of God depends much on us, and let us see to it, that it suffer not at our hands. Let us seek to recommend and adorn it by our own lives and conversations. And even when assembled together on this occasion, let us seek to order our conduct that others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him. Let us seek in all things to honour our King and Head. Those who honour Him, He will honour and will bless them with his presence and countenance. And what more do we need as a Church or as individuals. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If God be for us and with us, we will not fear "though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea!" For, however weak we may be, God is able to give us the victory, and to make us "more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." Amen.

To the Editor of the Record.

BARRIE, June 3, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I learn by the *Record* of the present month, that "an old friend," from Glasgow, and the writer of the article on the "Progress of the Church at Stratford," think that something should be done to enlighten the Irish Presbyterians in the Province, respecting the connexion which exists between the Irish Presbyterian Church and the Free Church of Scotland. As I am providentially prevented from meeting my fathers and brethren in Synod this week, I shall attempt to give the desired information, which I have no doubt will be interesting at least to some of your readers.

Previously to the year 1839, the great body of the Orthodox Presbyterians in Ireland, were connected with the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod. In that year numerous petitions were presented to each of those Synods, urging the propriety of their uniting in one ecclesiastical body. In accordance with the prayer of these petitions, a Committee was appointed by each Synod, to meet with that appointed by the other, and, in their united capacity, they were instructed to consider the expediency and practicability of an ecclesiastical union and incorporation, and were authorised to call a special meeting of their respective Synods, to receive the report of the Committee. Those Committees afterwards agreed upon a basis of union, which was cordially adopted by the two Synods, at a special meeting held on the 10th April 1840, and on the 10th July, 1840, the Synods were formally united under the name of "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland." At its formation, the Assembly consisted of 430 ministers—297 of these formerly belonged to the Synod of Ulster, and 133 to the Secession Synod. In the basis of union, among other principles recognized and mutually agreed upon, the following are the most important.—1. The adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the standard of faith for all the office-bearers in the Church, as that Confession was received and approved by the Church of Scotland, in their Act of 1647.—2. The assertion of the rights of the people, being communicants and seat-holders in the election of office-bearers, and the requiring every call to be supported by at least two-thirds of the qualified members without regard to the amount of stipend paid by them. 3. The exercise of discipline over existing office-bearers, in all cases of irregularity of appointment, heresy of doctrine, and immorality of life. 4. The public administration of the Sacrament of Baptism. In addition the attention which these great principles demanded and received, the objects contemplated in the formation of the union, were, 1. The attain-

ment and preservation of increased strictness of discipline in the admission, oversight, and, when need be, the expulsion of members. 2. The attainment of a higher standard of spirituality and holiness of office-bearers and people. 3. The more efficient extension and exhibition of Presbyterian principles. 4. The more vigorous propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad.

At the first meeting of the Irish Assembly, a deputation from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, consisting of the Rev. P. Macfarlane of Greenock, the Rev. James Begg, the Rev. R. M. McCheyne, and D. M. M. Crichton, Esq., explained the position of the Church of Scotland, and especially the difficulties under which that Church had for some years past been labouring, in consequence of the collision of the civil and ecclesiastical courts. Having heard and considered this explanation, the Irish Assembly, among other things, agreed to petition Parliament to take the speediest and most efficient measures to deliver the Church of Scotland from the yoke of patronage, and secure her in the exercise of her ecclesiastical jurisdiction, in conformity with the principles of the Confession of Faith, and in possession of those uncontrolled rights, guaranteed in the Act of Secutivity, passed as the basis of Union between the kingdoms of England and Scotland. At the time the Irish Assembly took this high ground before Parliament, on behalf of the Church of Scotland, that Church herself was only seeking for the privileges of "Non-intrusion."

In the year 1841, another deputation, of which the Rev. Dr. Caird, and the Rev. Mr. Bonar, were members, attended the Irish Assembly, and explained the progress that had been made in Scotland, in opposing the "invasion of the Headship of Christ and the encroachments on the Christian liberties of the people. The Irish Assembly unanimously engaged, by the blessing of God, to assist the Church of Scotland in her noble struggle and contendings, by continued supplications on her behalf before the throne of grace—by petitions to both Houses of Parliament—by such influence as they collectively and individually may be able to exercise upon Her Majesty's Government and upon members of Parliament, and by directing their Moderator and "Government Committee" to co-operate with that Church, by every means in their power, for obtaining the full establishment of the religious liberties of the Scottish people, which, the Assembly stated, they believed, could never be accomplished without the total abolition of patronage.

In 1842, similar expressions of sympathy and assurances of co-operation were given. The deputation from Scotland specially acknowledged the sympathy and support which the Irish Assembly had given.

In the beginning of 1843, a special meeting of the Irish Assembly was called, for the purpose of receiving a deputation from the Church of Scotland, and of taking such action respecting the Church of Scotland, as her circumstances required. At this meeting, held in the February before "the Disruption," the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1. "That we are fully and firmly persuaded, from the Scriptural record of Apostolic practice, (see Acts i. 6.) as well as from the history of the primitive ages of the Church, that the Christian people are invested with the alienable right of choosing their own office-bearers.

2. "That when it pleased the Great Head of the Church to introduce the true Protestant religion into the Kingdom of Scotland, patronage formed no part of the reformed constitution of the Church, but was introduced and enforced by an undue exercise of the royal prerogative: that when it had been so introduced, it was limited by the Act 1592: and having, even when thus modified, been found a great national grievance, it was totally abrogated in 1649; and having been again introduced at the Revolution, the initiative, by the Revolution Settlement, was taken