

controverted at all. If a Church occupy herself settling her ancient boundaries, she may yet proceed to unsettle them. Better leave them as they were. These demarkations have been fixed for centuries, and there is no good reason why they should be disturbed now. Truths established for ages have a presumption in their favor which modern innovation may not lightly disturb. It was not without reason or upon hasty grounds that an Assembly of able and devout men fixed these Standards, and for one or two individuals, and upon mere points of human science, to question them, is ridiculous. They contain the talent and piety of as grave and large a body of Divines as ever sat and prayed and deliberated; and, until their unscripturality shall be demonstrated, we will not admit of their being called in question. As well question the British Constitution or the oath of supremacy, as the Westminster Confession. It is Scripture embodiment, the truth of God delineated, and no doubtful matter of opinion or of a past age, and therefore by modern thinkers not to be called in question; but, like the Word of Truth from which it is taken, of every age and for every one's acceptance; and such as have accepted it as their Confession, are precluded from challenging it.

Secondly. Any innovations attempted thereon, or weakening of its bonds, must prove injurious to the Church's unity, peace, and progress. For it breaks the covenant and dissolves the test of orthodoxy—and how great must be the evils that result. Instead of members growing in knowledge and grace, they must decline in both, for as food nourishes the body, so "sound words" the mind, and truth promotes holiness; and the Church having no visible bond of agreement, suspicion and distrust will take the place of confidence and love. And then how can such a Church fulfil her duty as a witness and pillar of the truth, when she no longer professes aught by which her testimony can be known? and what a fall would that be for the elder sister of the Reformation!

For us in these Colonies to weaken attachment to the scriptural and venerable standards, is suicidal to our very existence as a Church, for our people will not stand it, for one thing, nor will our ministers who have fought her battles and labored to maintain her on her proper basis, for another. This is no chimera or matter of doubtful disputation, but a point on which our very existence is staked. We can stand as a body only so long as we stand upon our known and acknowledged principles. We see the other Presbyterian body moving along in admirable wisdom, order, and efficiency; why? because she maintains unflinchingly her standards, and walks by her rules. We would soon be a body broken and dispersed to the winds of heaven, if we were to do differently—*if we attempt any of those innovations that*

*now trouble the Parent Church, and if we call in question the Formulas that we have subscribed, and promised to advocate as well as to adhere to.* But I am no alarmist though I thus write, but desire to divert attention from those questions that now vainly agitate the Mother Church, to matters that edify and make for peace. And I take for granted, after what was written last year, not on the part of clergymen only, but of laymen and heads of families, that no one will trouble us with any discussion as to the relative merits of harmonium, melodeon, or organ, for we want neither in the worship of God; and, after all that has passed, he is no friend to peace or order who revives the discussion. Let it get its quietus for ever, and the dead bury their dead; but we have more important work to do—and what is that? Have we forgotten our mission as a branch of Christ's Church? Is it to change forms and rules established and long in wont—to alter modes of thought and practices not unsound or unsanctioned, and introduce novelties that will disturb devotion and drive off the worshipper? Is it to prefer the sensuous to the spiritual, and to absorb attention with the ritual, rather than excite to devotional feelings and to praise? Vain task! But supposing that, at the risk of disrupting our young Church, we were even partially successful (which, with the elements we possess, we can never be), what benefit? Are our people better? or more spiritual worshippers, or devout?

But we have a mission, and let us not forget it—to "teach every man, and warn every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," and to build up our people in such habits as will be for the good of the body to which they belong—such as constancy in attendance upon ordinances, generosity in contributing to benevolent schemes (in which many of us are yet far behind), brotherly affection to the members of Christ, to whatever party or opinion they belong (an apostolic grace), and zeal for the cause of missions (yet in its infancy with us). And oh! shall we, with these weightier matters demanding our care, for a moment trouble ourselves or our people with the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal? If we do, wonder not that, sowing vanity, we reap vexation, and that with the winner of souls at last we shall have no reward. Meanwhile, let me recommend to the readers of the *Record* Dr. Muir's sermon on "holding fast the form of sound words," a discourse published by desire, suitable to the times, simple and instructive. With such Fathers as Dr. Muir the Church of Scotland is in no danger. He has done good service in stemming Sabbath desecration in Edinburgh, and, though advanced in years, yet speaks, to the admonition of the young and the comfort of the old. Let such be honored for consistence, attachment to truth, and spirituality of mind; and