

proceeded. No friend of patronage, and no friend of Erastianism could adopt the Second Book of Discipline. There were two or three statements in that book which might seem to countenance intolerant and persecuting principles. No candid man would deny this; and hence the desirableness in adopting either the Westminster Confession or the Second Book of Discipline to have some explanatory qualification or clause. No man can dispute that allegations have been made of the statements in the Westminster Confession and Second Book of Discipline to cover intolerant and persecuting principles, and no candid man can deny that there are plausible grounds for the allegation. It does require some careful examination and some elaborate explanation to show that that is not their true and fair construction. I believe no candid man can look at the 23d chapter of the Westminster Confession without being constrained to admit that there is some plausible ground for that allegation, although I believe that it can be shown that it is not a correct one. In these circumstances, I think any man who is called upon to subscribe to the Westminster Confession is fairly entitled to have some protection on it and the second Book of Discipline against his being supposed to hold that, in doing so, he intends to give any countenance either to persecution or intolerance. That has been long felt, and felt by all of us so much that we prefixed a declaration to our own formula just precisely to that effect, and exactly what we have done ourselves our brethren in Victoria have done viz. by declaring, in this second article in the basis, "That they are not to be held as countenancing any persecuting or intolerant principles" So that they have done nothing more and nothing else than what we ourselves have done. Principal Cunningham then read from the declaration prefixed to the formula of the Free Church, disclaiming persecuting and intolerant principles, and stating that the Confession of Faith, or any portion of it, when fairly interpreted, is not to be regarded as favouring intolerance or persecution, or that her office-bearers, by subscribing to the Confession, professes any principle inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment. He afterwards proceeded: I must refer here to the letter of Mr. Miller, which Professor Gibson has praised so highly, in which he says that the basis is a total abandonment of the articles of union referred to in the deliverance of last year, and substituted an entirely new basis, "from which every testimony of Free Church principle has been eliminated." Mr. Miller actually gives that as his description of the new basis. It is perfectly true—it is printed here—undeniable, incredible, impossible, but he actually says it. [Great laughter and applause.] He says that this basis which has the Westminster Confession of Faith and the second Book of Discipline, with a simple disclamation of any interpretation of these standards that may countenance intolerant or persecuting principles, has entirely eliminated from it Free Church principles. Is it possible for any man in this House to believe that Mr. Miller knows what he says? [Great laughter.] Can you place any reliance whatever in regard to the question of Free Church principles on a man who could make such a declaration as that upon such grounds. [Hear.] Intelligent and conscientious Free Churchmen? He then goes on to make what he calls a very simple remark, it is—"that there is as much expression of Free Church principles in it"—that is none at all—"as there is in the standards of the Established Church." The standards of the Established Church, as every one knows, are the standards of the Free Church. [Applause.] We desire no more for the Free Church of Scotland than we have there. What can the man mean by this? [Laughter.] It is impos-

sible he can have the fragment of an idea.] [Great laughter.] The Erastianism of the Establishment does not lie in its standards; the Erastianism of the Establishment lies in its submission to the actual interference of the civil power, which can be defended only upon Erastian grounds, and which involve the assertion of Erastian principles. There are no such principles in the standards, and Erastianism is ingrained into the practical constitution of the Church, it consists of what the State has done, and their submission to it. We have not a word to say against the standards of the Established Church. If this new basis contains as much Free Church principles as the standards of the Established Church, it is enough for us. And yet these men are held up as conscientious and intelligent Free Churchmen. [Laughter.] It is perfectly preposterous—[great laughter and cheers]—it is just a downright farce. [Renewed laughter.] Professor Gibson spoke of something as an insult to the judgment of the Assembly; but really, Sir, this is a gross insult to the intelligence and common sense of this House, that such men as these should claim to be regarded as conscientious Free Churchmen. [Applause.] Wherever there is a union of this kind, there must be a measure of accommodation, and some measure of adjustment. We cannot get it without that. There are in the basis of union, both of Canada and Nova Scotia, questions of forbearance as to the application of the great doctrine of duty to nations and rulers. If Mr. Gibson opposed, on the ground of the measure of forbearance, he could get up as formidable and strong a case against the honesty and trustworthiness of the Nova Scotia basis, and the Canada basis as against the Australian basis. [Hear, hear.] I really hope we will hear nothing more about the radical unsoundness of this basis. But, then, these parties say they ought, to some extent, to be recognized, and not to have their ecclesiastical status forfeited. Their statement implies that if any of our ministers or probationers should join them, they would forfeit their ecclesiastical status. They may go and join them at their own discretion. You cannot prevent them; but they won't forfeit their ecclesiastical status. If any of our ministers and probationers go and join this minority, I would certainly take an opportunity of entertaining and expressing a very unfavourable opinion of them. [Laughter.] This of course would not affect their ecclesiastical status. I am very much inclined to think that it would be a deliverance to us if some of those who sympathise with them were to go off and join with them. (Great laughter.) I don't wish that, Moderator. I don't propose it, because I think they would do more mischief there than they can do here. (Continued laughter.) Recognition so far, then, is fully provided for by this motion, and there is no right, I think, to call upon us for more. A trick has been tried by getting up a cry of persecution. There was never a cause which less justified such a cry. We have nothing to do with it, and the less we have to do with it the better. In the first place, we cannot receive them into ecclesiastical fellowship as a Church on equal terms with us, because this would be inconsistent with the fundamental position we have taken, and which we now maintain. Our resolution is just a judgment to the effect, that, on the whole, we think the majority have done right, and the minority wrong, and that, therefore, we should countenance and assist the one and not the other.—Secondly, we say in opposing this claim for ecclesiastical fellowship, every thing we may now do in regard to these men must be viewed in connection with their continued claim to be the Free Church, and their denunciation of the united body as having sacrificed Free Church principles. Thirdly, I object to giving more than

is now proposed, for this reason, that we have no reason to believe that any countenance we may give them would tend to the benefit of religion and the benefit of Protestantism in that country. (Hear, hear.) I believe, upon a fair, deliberate, and impartial survey of the whole features of the case, we are warranted in coming to the conclusion that any countenance or assistance we give to this dissenting minority will be to injure, not to benefit, the cause of true religion and Protestantism in that country. From all that I have been able to learn in regard to the men and their position, I expect no good from them,—I expect no good to religion,—I expect no good to Presbyterianism. As far as we can see at present, humanly speaking, on a survey of the whole actual condition of things there, the interests of true religion and of Presbyterianism are substantially identified with the prosperity and efficiency of the united Church of that country. I solemnly believe that, therefore, I can be no party to give any additional countenance to these men. I think the weaker they are the better—(hear, hear)—and the sooner they are out the better. I believe that would be a benefit to the community. Then, fourthly and lastly, one great reason why I think we cannot go further in the way of countenancing these men is this, that there is great reason to doubt whether they should be regarded as holding Free Church principles at all. (Hear, hear.) Their claim is based entirely upon this,—that they are Free Churchmen, that they hold our principles, and they hold them alone; that nobody else there holds them; that their grand distinguishing character is that they are Free Churchmen *par excellence*. I doubt this. I do not mean to say that we have full conclusive legal proof against them on this point, but we have quite enough to lead us to doubt them. What has recently been said in Mr. Miller's favour will show the utter fallacy of their being regarded as intelligent and conscientious Free Churchmen. They manifestly do not understand what the Free Church principles are.

After quoting and commenting on several passages from the *Standard*, the organ of the minority in Australia, Principal Cunningham concluded his powerful address in the following words:

"I appeal, Moderator, to the conscience of every man in this house, whether or not, these being their principles, these being their views, he is prepared to make a stand for extending to them any countenance or any assistance whatever. It is a miserable proceeding. Surely we have other work to do (Hear, hear.) They have other work to do. Surely there are more important matters fitted to occupy them and us. A great outcry has been made in regard to this basis which will not stand a moment's investigation, which cannot be put in plain and intelligible declarations, which not one man in a thousand is able to comprehend, which seem to be mere perversions, wire-drawn criticisms, and which involve the entire neglect and disregard of the united church. Surely there will be found many men, especially ministers, who will regard this in no other light than as a mere wretched clerical pretence. Surely we may expect the great mass of the intelligent eldership of the Church will come forth vigorously to put down this agitation, and stop this course of proceeding. Let us be very cautious and careful in regard to what we do, and constrain each other by our votes and by our influence to take the course which is manifestly best for the interests of peace, the interests of charity, the interests of religion, the interests of Presbyterians, and the interests of Christianity. (Loud applause.)"