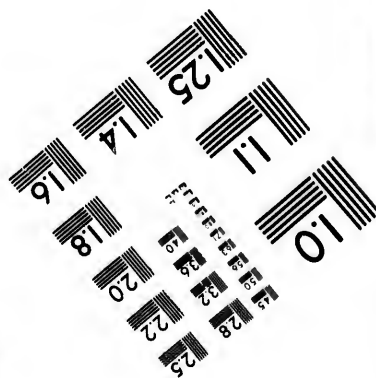
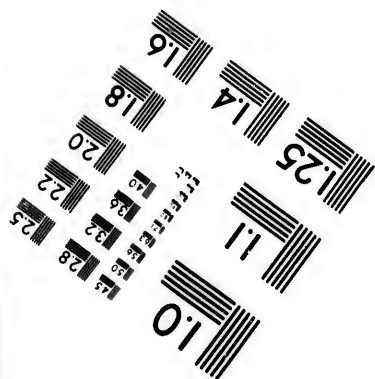
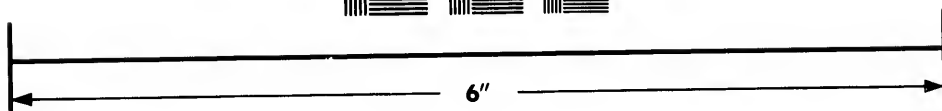
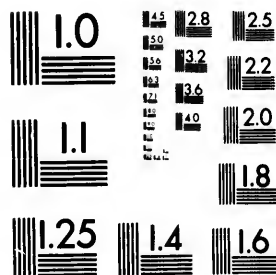


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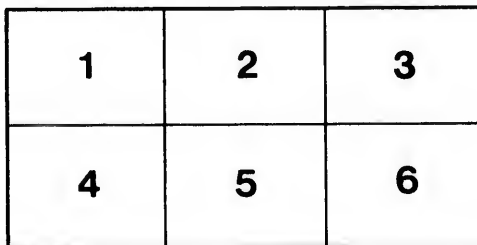
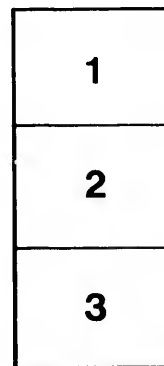
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SUBSTANCE OF

AN ADDRESS

EXPLANATORY AND APOLOGETIC,

IN REFERENCE TO

THE LATE DISRUPTION

OF THE

SYNOD OF CANADA,

IN CONNEXION WITH THE

ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

DELIVERED TO THE

CONGREGATION OF SAINT GABRIEL STREET CHURCH,

ON TUESDAY, THE 30th OF JULY, 1844.,

BY THE REV. HENRY ESSON.

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MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY J. C. BECKET, SAINT PAUL STREET.

1844.

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SUBSTANCE OF

# AN ADDRESS EXPLANATORY AND APOLOGETIC.

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MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS, HEARERS, AND  
BRETHREN.

The very important and decisive step which I have recently taken, in conjunction with a number of my brethren in the ministry of the Gospel in this land, in separating ourselves from the Synod of Canada in connection with the Established Church of Scotland; imposes upon me the duty, which I am desirous now to discharge with all frankness and honesty, of submitting to your judgment and conscience, a statement of the proceedings, in this case, as they stand recorded in the minutes of the Synod, published by their own authority. I am happy to embrace the opportunity now afforded me of explaining, and vindicating for your satisfaction, the course of action which we felt ourselves constrained to pursue. While I have abstained, as much as possible, from bringing the question into the pulpit, it was due both to you and to myself, not to leave you in ignorance of my own mature and decided conviction as to the part which I should be called to act; and you will do me the justice to own, that I freely communicated to you my determination to hold fast the principles of which I had made before you a public and unreserved profession;

and as I had apprized you all, that the question was to be determined at the yearly meeting of our supreme Ecclesiastical Judicatory, you must have been prepared to receive the intelligence of my part in the eventful proceedings, without any surprise. If I am asked why I did not call a public meeting of the congregation previously to the meeting of Synod, in order to ascertain what might be the views of the majority in regard to the question, my prompt answer is, that I was deterred from taking this step, by the fact that I had given offence by introducing the subject into the pulpit, though nothing could have been less offensive or exceptionable, I confidently aver, than the spirit and matter of the very few discourses in which I ventured to touch upon this exciting topic. It was indeed my own secret and anxious desire to have got up a public meeting, as some of my brethren in Canada West had done, and it is well known to several of my confidential friends, that I had the matter under my serious deliberation. But from what I knew and had actually experienced of the sensitiveness and jealousy with which the least movement or action on my part was regarded, I relinquished the design, assured that I should have been denounced as an agitator, as a troubler of Israel; and that there was less hope of serving any good end, than fear of prejudicing the cause, and bringing odium upon myself. I earnestly aver, before God and all the world, that my brethren and I have left nothing undone which it was possible, with a good conscience, for us to do or devise, for the preservation of the unity of our church; and if we have failed, we do believe that the failure is to be ascribed to the over-ruling will and wisdom of that Divine Providence which did not permit the attainment of the issue which we so earnestly sought. I hope soon to be able to publish a detailed and

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impartial narrative of the proceedings of the Synod, with a summary of the arguments on both sides, which will afford all of you the means of judging for yourselves, as to the spirit of the parties, and the merits of their respective views, and principles, in the clear knowledge of what was said and done. In the meantime, I am called to the immediate fulfillment of a more pressing duty to you, my beloved hearers and brethren, and I should be unmindful of the highly responsible situation which I hold to you as your pastor, as well as guilty of disrespect, were I not to render you, in such a crisis, an account of what, as a member of the Supreme Judicatory of our Church in this land, I have done, and the reasons which have influenced me, and the ends which I contemplated, as likely to be promoted, for the advancement of the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the well-being of our church, temporal and spiritual.

I trust to be able, without wearying your patience, to put you in possession, in a brief and plain statement, of all the information that is necessary to form a right conclusion, and I have only now to crave of you, a candid and impartial audience.

The first, and perhaps not the least arduous part of the task which I have undertaken in justice to you, to myself, and to the cause of truth, is to disabuse those who have been blinded by prejudice and party spirit—misguided by ignorance of the question, whether in regard to facts or principles, or who have been misled by partial and erroneous, views or wilful misrepresentations. I shall endeavour to shew you all before I have done, that much misconception is now prevailing in the minds of even intelligent men in regard to the facts, and that, therefore, there is great need for extreme caution, and even jealousy, in regard to opinions and statements, which are, as usual in such

cases, urged with a presumption and violence, the natural accompaniment of ignorance, prejudice and party-passion.

I think that it will tend not a little to dispel in the very outset, a mass of prejudice and error, which envelopes the question, if we begin by ascertaining with precision the facts. What is the real amount of all that has been done by the party with which I am identified? Have we wrought any violent or perilous revolution? Have we been guilty of forcing upon the church some bold or hazardous innovation? Have we repealed or abolished, have we mutilated or altered in any wise the Constitution of the Canadian Church? Not in the least—we have changed nothing—touched nothing! There is not one of us who sought with daring profanity, like Uzzah, to touch the Ark! There is not one of us that so much as conceived or meditated to put a finger to one pin or nail of the Tabernacle!

Nothing can be imagined more harmless or inoffensive than the action which we have taken in this matter. The head and front of our offending is neither more nor less than the simple declaration of the fact, that we humbly think and conscientiously believe our church in this land has been, and now is absolutely and unqualifiedly free, and independent, owing no fealty or submission to any church in Christendom, subject to no jurisdiction or controul from without, sovereign and absolute, having no Head but Christ, and no earthly supremacy, save that of our highest ecclesiastical consistory, the Synod. This simple declaration, which we believe to be the truth, to be the matter of fact, with the expression of our determination to assert and maintain unimpaired, the independence of which we have actual and rightful possession, is the head and front of our offending. If we are wrong, let them who arraign us come and bring the evidence—the proof. If we are

right, how foolish, and worse than foolish, is the part which they are acting, not only towards us but towards the church.

I have said, and would again repeat it, that I fear nothing in this cause—in this crisis, but ignorance, prejudice, and precipitation. I would ask those who blame us, are you cognizant of the fact, the astounding fact, that within a few weeks of the time of the late meeting of Synod, not fewer than twenty congregations of our Church, in Canada West, had many of them, in opposition to the opinion or example of their pastors, met publicly, and proclaimed their determination not to suffer even the name or the appearance of a connection with the Established Church of Scotland, so far as they were concerned, to be retained one day longer, declaring at the same time, that if the Synod, at its first meeting, did not repudiate the words “in connection with the Church of Scotland,” being a part of its well-known designation, they would certainly separate themselves from its communion, and utterly renounce its jurisdiction. And you will be pleased to bear in mind, that these twenty congregations, forming about one fourth of the whole church, were not a moiety of the Presbyterian population, who held the same views, and were prepared to act the same bold and decided part. We hear a great deal of very grave and solemn declamation against schism in the Synod, and among the ministers who constitute nearly the whole of that very reverend judicatory. But in my mind, the worst of all disruptions is, when the church is deserted by the flock, when the minister is left, indeed with the Parsonage House or Manse, his Government salary or Residuary pension, but with empty benches and bare walls, to waste his preaching on the desert air. In a word, I do not so much fear the disruption of ministers from one another, and from their temporalities, though this be a

more evil—a bitter and painful dispensation—as I do the frightful and portentous disruption of a church, where the people, as if summoned by a voice from heaven, go out with one consent. When all the living stones of the Temple depart,—it is a miserable consolation to gaze at silent and empty edifices,—a goodly heritage of temporalities, glebes, manses, and endowments, with ministers whose occupation, like Othello's, is gone, who are sinecurists, drones, and idlers, who have nothing to do—because the people will have nothing to do with them. Be not deceived, it was not the Synod that made the disruption. The ministers did not set the example, call it, as you think or please, a good or a bad one. They were mere imitators, not originals. They followed the flock, and not the flock them. Like faithful shepherds, they followed their flocks, who, would no longer abide in their old sheep-folds, or expatiate in their wented pastures.

Will—can, any of you—keeping in view this astounding fact of the disruption, already wrought before the Synod met—between the people and their pastors, those at least who adhered to the connection with the Establishment—between the Synod, *as the head, and the body* of the members of our church, blame us for instantly applying the only effectual remedy or preventive of threatened disruption, a remedy so easy in its nature, so simple, harmless, and unexceptionable, as that of declaring the fact of our independence, and thereby, at this cheap price, preserving and perpetuating the unity of our church? Does any man complain of the sin of schism, and of the mighty mischiefs of disruption and breach of unity? Let that man think, that we are the men, not sinning, but sinned against, for those opposed to us would not suffer us to administer the only possible remedy, neither did they provide or prescribe, on their part, any

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other. The most fatal and certainly irreparable, disruption, that of the flock from their pastors, that of the people from the fold of our church, they altogether overlooked, recked not, and seemed only bent upon preventing their own disruption from the temporalities, from the connection with the State, and with the Parent Establishment. The disruption of the ministers from the Synod, and from one another, was a matter of the least possible consequence, after the desertion and revolt of the Christian people. But our opponents cared not, it would seem for this, sought no remedy for it, and when we offered one, and pressed upon them, the only effectual one—they would not hear. Who are the schismatics? Who are chargeable with the guilt of the disruption? On whose head should the responsibility lie?

I put the case, that if it were certain that we were ecclesiastically dependent on the Church of Scotland, would not such a crisis have more than justified, by the first law of nature, the law of self-preservation, our proceeding with a high hand, and with the fearless confidence, of an irresistible call of providence, dissolving an external union, which could not be longer maintained without the destruction of the internal vital union of the whole body? Would it not have been a suicidal act to seek to maintain a connection with a church, at the distance of three thousand miles, when it could only be done by tearing our own frame-work in pieces, by shattering it into fragments, by dividing the church, like a house against itself? But what in the name of reason and common sense, shall be said in extenuation of the folly and madness, of the judicial blindness which would set up against that necessity which has no law, against the resistless claims of the natural instinct, of self-preservation, the miserable argument or pretence of a merely nominal connection, for, marvellous

to tell, this is all that our opponents are, upon their own shewing able to make of it. It is an empty, worthless shadow, a word without meaning, a metaphysical quiddity or nonentity, worthy only of the age, worthy only of the dreams and delirations of the Schoolmen. Yes, verily, will you believe it, we are required to look on coolly and see our whole church heaved from its foundations, and not one stone left upon another, in order to preserve, as flies in amber, the precious, superstitiously venerated relic of a merely verbal and meaningless connection, which neither implies jurisdiction in the parent church, nor dependence or subordination in this anomalous specimen of ecclesiastical vassalage—the Colonial church! It is the fact, that our Synod has been from the first day it was formed, practically free, altogether and substantially independent, both in its legislative and judicial capacity, making its own laws, acting as a Supreme Court or Judicatory, in all causes arising in our church that were brought before it. We have never had any misgiving of our clear and perfect right to legislate, to judge, to govern with absolute sway. No one ever dreamt of appealing from our decisions. No one in Canada, in Scotland, has ever called in question any acts that we have done, or laws that we have passed during the twelve years of our ecclesiastical existence. Nay more, we have, in the official correspondence of the General Assembly with our Synod, the most express unequivocal, unqualified, disclaimer of all jurisdiction or controul. The Parent church, have told us once and again, what ought for ever to have silenced the unmeaning cry of connection—that our relation to her is that of an emancipated son, who has come to the age of majority is now his own master, and is freed from all legal obligation or subjection to his parents' will, the natural and moral ties alone remaining. All this is not

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denied, nor attempted to be denied, by our opponents, who, on the other hand, very absurdly and inconsistently urge it as a reason for our conniving at the continuance of a designation purely verbal and distinctive. This *they say*, and would have us believe them *in earnest*, while they are as pertinacious in holding fast *the shadow* as if it were *substance*. Are they honest—earnest in saying that the connection, which they advocate is only nominal, implies no jurisdiction in itself, when they would not sacrifice it, to prevent the separation of twenty congregations in Canada West, and the certainty of the determination of as many more over all the land to follow their example, and ultimately involve in ruin the whole church?

What, I ask, must you have thought of us, how could we have met you, or looked you in the face, had we, the law-givers, rulers, and guardians of the church returned to inform you, that we had, for the sake of a name a nothing, set at defiance the first law of nature, and committed a suicidal act, in declining to arrest the progress of disruption and ruin, when means so simple and obvious were offered to us? The Synod in doing so, in lawyer's phrase, has become *felo-de-se*. It has sold the jewel of the church for an empty bubble. I might here close my apology or defence, and challenge any of my hearers to gainsay this statement, or to meet the reasoning founded upon it. The course which we have adopted was forced upon us by the most irresistible necessity, by the first law of nature—both as respects individuals and communities—*self-preservation*. It is entitled to the commendation of being moderate, simple, conciliatory, of being the one only effectual remedy of the evil, a remedy which would have satisfied the Christian people, would have been acceptable to all parties, would have given the least possible offence to the *Established Church*, while it had the sanction of the *Free*. What, I demand, has

such a cause as I now plead to fear? Nothing, save from the heat of passion, and the blindness of ignorance and prejudice.

Before I enter upon an exposition of the proceedings of the Synod in regard to the question, it is proper that I should first deal with a challenge which you have no doubt all heard again and again, urged home upon us, with an air of confidence and triumph. What have we to do with this controversy? Why throw it into this land, like another apple of discord? Are we not free to the uttermost of our largest desires? Why introduce disunion where no greivances exist? This sounds very plausibly, but it is sound without sense—words without knowledge. Did the twenty congregations, who revolted from the Synod, and dissolved with their own hand, in the bold and manly spirit of their forefathers, the odious connection which involved them, as they believed, in the guilt and dishonour and degradation of the Established Church of Scotland, act by the suggestion of the Synod, or the counsel of their clergy, severally or collectively? Would they not have thought and acted for themselves, even had the question never been mooted in the Synod; nay, even had the office-bearers of the church, all conspired to stifle it, to bury it in the deepest silence? Verily you might as well bid us shut out the light of the sun, or stop the mighty cataract of Niagara, as prevent those great movements, which are propagated, like the electric or volcanic phenomena of the earth and the atmosphere? Stop the press, stop the power of steam navigation, by sea and land, stop the free intercourse of trade and intelligence, from continent to continent, from pole to pole, and you may arrest such a revolution as that now passing over us, and shut out such questions as that, of which the agitation is now causing commotion and convulsion in the church and in society.



I go further, and affirm that the Church of Canada and her Synod were not at liberty to keep out the question, to suppress their sympathy with the Free Church and her cause, or withhold that testimony which it is the peculiar and supreme duty, and I may add, the honour and privilege of every Christian church to bear, when called, in the Providence of God, to testify in behalf of great truths, vital and essential principles, involving the glory of God, the honour of the Redeemer, and the interest of his church and kingdom. Was it not the duty of the Synod to do what it actually did in 1841, namely:—sympathise with the Parent Church in the great and glorious struggle, in which she was then engaged, or would it have been wiser and better to have looked on coldly, and passed by on the other side, like the Priest and the Levite in the parable of the good Samaritan, while we beheld our mother church, our spiritual mother, oppressed and afflicted? Is there any man, is there any Christian, who now hears me, that will for a moment entertain such an unworthy, cold-blooded, unchristian sentiment? The Synod did sympathize, as it was right, and natural, and morally necessary that she should, with the Mother Church in the hour of her tribulation, persecution, and distress.

The following resolutions were passed unanimously, in the Synod, which met at Kingston, in 1841:—

The Synod called for the Report of the Committee appointed to prepare an Expression of Sympathy with the Parent Church, which was given in by Mr. M'Gill, and read. After reasoning, the following resolutions, drawn up by the Committee were unanimously adopted by the Synod:—

1. That this Synod, in view of the trials through which the Established Church of Scotland is passing, and the eventful crisis at which these have arrived, do record our most affectionate sympathy with her, and our earnest prayer for her success in her struggle against every encroachment of the civil power on her spiritual independence and jurisdiction, and that she may be a faithful

witness to all Christian nations of the true principles according to which the civil magistrate should support the visible kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. That the Synod, enjoying, as we do, peculiar opportunities for witnessing the great evils that befall a nation when the true religion is not duly countenanced and maintained by the civil authorities, evils which have long in the Divine goodness been averted from Scotland, regard it as a great calamity, that collision has occurred between the ecclesiastical and civil tribunals in Scotland, and record our fervent hope that such steps may be taken as shall restore the interrupted harmony, so that the Church may be supported in her labours in her own sphere, and the state, as heretofore may have increasing evidence that the Church is the best bulwark of order, improvement, and happiness among the people.

3. That this Synod experience the highest gratification in observing the enlightened and holy spirit that animates the Parent Church, her advancing internal purity and zeal, the removal of hindrances which stood in the way of the return of such of her children as had seceded from her communion; and we do sincerely trust that the Scottish National Church, adhering to her primitive and scriptural standards will ere long exhibit to Christendom such a spectacle of unity in the faith, and such an example of scriptural connexion with the state, as shall give assurance, that the Lord Jesus Christ for whose Crown and Sovereignty she is contending will make the land an heritage that the Lord has blessed.

4. That this Synod petition Her Majesty the Queen, and the Imperial Parliament, in support of all the just rights and claims of the Church of Scotland, and in particular that the wishes of the people be duly regarded in the settlement of their Ministers, and that the secular courts be prevented from all interference with the spiritual concerns of the Church.

By order of the Synod, a letter from the pen of the Moderator, Mr. George, was addressed to the General Assembly of the United States, from which the following paragraph, bearing upon these resolutions, is extracted. It is dated July, 1841:—

At a crisis like the present in the history of the Church of Scotland when we are looking with anxious solicitude for the development of the divine purposes regarding her, we cannot but be deeply affected with the expressions of your kind sympathy in her behalf. In her assertion of spiritual independence, in her struggles against injurious usurpations of secular power, she is once more revived to the spirit which actuated her in the best periods of her history. But when we consider the principles which govern those who desire to retain her in bondage, and the power which they can wield to accomplish their end; and when we look at the

Popish and semi-infidel liberalism so eagerly combining with the Erastianism of the State to work her overthrow, we cannot altogether suppress the apprehension that momentous changes will result in some of her external relations. But for her suffering in such a cause and its issue we give way, no not for a moment, either to fear or despondency!!! On the contrary, we cherish the hope that she will come out of the trial as gold purified by the fire, and that her martyr-testimony will awaken a reforming spirit in those lands where the domination of the civil power has long subverted the liberty and corrupted the purity of the Church of Christ.

These sentiments were confirmed by the Synod at Montreal, in 1842, in the words of the following resolution:—

That the Synod, continuing to cherish the sentiments recorded by them during last Session respecting the struggle which the Parent Church is at present maintaining against the encroachments of the Civil power, and cordially concurring in the great principles asserted in the resolutions passed by the Commission of the General Assembly, at their meeting held on the 25th of August, 1841, and communicated to this Synod, instruct the Committee of Correspondence to give unequivocal expression to the views of the Synod in this respect in the letter which is now to be transmitted to the Colonial Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Sympathizing, as you perceive we had so ardently and unanimously done with the cause of the majority of the General Assembly before the separation, when a separation was made, and two several churches stood forth in the father land, each claiming to be the true Church of Scotland, and of our fathers, another question was unavoidably raised, which of these churches shall we acknowledge? With which hold communion? or enter into connection? The new church, that issued out of the disruption, dis-established, cast off from state connection and patronage, despoiled of temporal endowments, was the undoubted successor and true representative of the pure faith and primitive order of the ancient constitutional scriptural church of our fathers.

This is not my statement, but the unanimous, unequivocal decision of the Synod of Canada, including the

very ministers, and elders, who are now acting in practical contradiction to their professions and pledges. Could we, as true men, faithful to our principles, to our God, and to our cause, feel one moment's hesitation in deciding between these two churches? Was not the choice already made, predetermined before the disruption by the resolutions of 1841 and 1842 which I have just read? If we are to hold any communion or connection with any church on earth, one would have supposed that there was no room for deliberation. Our purpose must be as fixed and immutable as our principles—not to admit even of a nominal and apparent connection with the church which we had distinctly denounced in our holy and generous indignation, as the antagonist of these principles and of *their martyr spirited champions*, as the betrayer of the prerogatives and crown rights of the Redeemer, of the constitutional privileges of the people, and the dear bought liberties of Scotland's church. In a word, how preposterous, how mean, how dishonest must it seem to all the world, that professing ourselves to be one in principle with the Free Church, as the Synod, without all question, has once and again done, we should suffer our church to be identified in name, and designation, and, as many think, in more than mere name, with a church whose actings and principles we have so solemnly and emphatically denounced and abjured?

Now, let me put it to you all to judge what was the simple and obvious course which the Synod ought to have pursued, in which they would have done all that truth and conscience required, without giving any great cause of offence to the Established Church. They had only to declare—what we have done since we came out—their independence. This, to all prac-

tial intents, our antagonists admit that we have enjoyed all along, yea and exercised. In taking this step, we have done only what was absolutely necessary to prevent our making shipwreck of character, principle, and good faith. Had the opposite party concurred in this view, and united in taking with us this course, as we besought them, I am well persuaded that we should not have had any collision with any authority, civil or ecclesiastical. Our church would not have been unsettled from her foundations, and driven violently from her moorings. To these principles the Synod again bore their testimony in 1843 by an overwhelming majority.

“It was also moved by Dr. Cook, and seconded by Mr. McGill, that the Paper on the Table of the Synod, submitted by Mr. Gale, be adopted; the tenor whereof follows:”—

The Synod having maturely considered the overture from the Presbytery of Hamilton, respecting a testimony by this Church concerning the great questions which have been recently agitating the Church and Kingdom of Scotland, and the rights and privileges of the Church of Christ involved therein, and the bearing which the recent determination of these questions in Scotland may have on the condition and relations of this Church, Resolved,—

1. That this Synod record their solemn testimony on behalf of the Supreme Headship of Christ over His Church—the rights which he has conferred on its duly-constituted office-bearers to rule and minister in it independently of all external control—and the privileges he has bestowed on his people of exercising a free concurrence in the appointment of such office-bearers; as these various principles have recently been contended for by the Church of Scotland;—The Synod having heretofore entertained an assured conviction that these rights and privileges were substantially recognized in the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, as well as in those Acts of the Civil Government by which she has enjoyed the advantages of an Establishment, and firmly believing that they have full warrant in the Word of God, and that the maintaining them in their integrity is essential to the well-being of the Church, and so far from being incompatible with, is indispensable to a right and salutary alliance between the Church and the State.

2. That this Synod regard with the utmost pain and alarm the conduct of the supreme authorities in the State, in rejecting the claims recently made by the Church of Scotland for a more distinct recognition of the spiritual independence of her Judicatories and the privileges of her members, and in refusing her the protection she has been constrained to demand against recent encroachments of the civil courts on that spiritual province so distinctly recognized in the Word of God, as belonging to His Church, and for the maintenance of which many of the Scottish Reformers and Confessors in different ages, and of all ranks have testified unto the death. And the Synod record their earnest prayer to Almighty God, that He would of His grace, and by His good Spirit so turn the hearts of all concerned, that the deep wound which, through these encroachments has been inflicted on the venerable and honoured Church of our Fathers, and the grievous breaches which have thereby been occasioned, may be healed and repaired, and that the full benefits of a National Establishment constituted and administered on Scriptural principles, may ever be enjoyed by the people of Scotland.

3. That holding the aforesaid principles and views,—feeling specially called in present circumstances to renew their former testimonies in regard to them,—and trusting that they shall ever be enabled at all hazards faithfully to maintain them, even if called to resist any actual encroachment on them, in their own ecclesiastical administration; this Synod have yet to record their gratitude to God that He in His good Providence does not call on them to enter on the discussion or decision for themselves of the practical bearings of those principles in respect either to any infringement of the spiritual independence of this Church, or of the privileges of its members, or to the connection which subsists between the Church of Scotland and this Synod,—that connection neither implying a spiritual jurisdiction on the part of the former over the latter, nor involving the latter in a responsibility for any acting of the former. And this Synod do now, as always, recognize the imperious obligations laid on them of seeking the peace and well-being of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, at the expense of any sacrifice, save that of consistency and principle.

4. That this Synod, while viewing with humble thankfulness the favourable circumstances in which the members, office-bearers, and Judicatories of this Church are placed in regard to their perfect exemption from secular interference with their spiritual privileges or functions, and the absence of the temptations which such interference might occasion to discord and disunion in the Church do yet regard with the deepest concern the present condition and prospects of the Church of Scotland; and do hereby record their deep and affectionate sympathy with those of her rulers and members, who, leaving the Establishment at the bidding of conscience, have thereby sacrificed temporal interests and personal feelings to an extent that must ever command the respect and admiration of the Christian Church.

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The Synod had long reasoning, and after having engaged in prayer for the Divine Blessing and direction, the vote was taken, First, on the Resolution of Mr. Gale and those of Professor Campbell;—and there voted for Mr. Gale's, 29; for Mr. Campbell's, 10; when Mr. Campbell's were declared lost.

The vote was next taken on the Resolutions of Mr. Gale and that of Dr. Liddell; when there voted for Mr. Gale's, 20; and for Dr. Liddell's 13. Dr. Liddell's was accordingly declared to be lost.

The vote was next taken on the resolution of Mr. Gale, and those of Mr. Stark; when there voted for Mr. Gale's, 24; and for Mr. Stark's 11; five not voting. Mr. Stark's were accordingly declared to be lost.

The vote was taken on Mr. Gale's Resolutions, Aye or No. when there voted Aye, 28; No. 11. Mr. Gale's Resolutions were accordingly adopted.

Against this decision Professor Campbell gave in his dissent, in his own name and for as many as might adhere to him, for reasons to be given in; when there adhered to this dissent Dr. Mathieson, Mr. Mann, Mr. Reid, Mr. M'Naughton, Mr. M'Murphy, and Mr. Lambie, ministers; and Mr. Archibald Brown, elder.

Those principles my brethren are I believe to be what the late united Synod unanimously held them, worthy of all acceptance, worthy to be sustained at all sacrifices, at all hazards, and we have no surer or better plea to urge in our defence, if we are to be the party that must stand arraigned at the bar of the public, than the testimony of our opponents, sent forth in deliberate, solemn, and reiterated utterance from the mouth of the Synod, as the oracle of our Church, and bearing all the weight and force of her most authoritative judgments. They have left us to act out practically, what they have strongly and unanimously professed. But in sanctioning the principles as cardinal and fundamental, as grounded on the word of God, and lying at the foundation of our Ecclesiastical polity, according to the soundest views, and the most approved practice of our church, they have put into our hands the most unexceptionable and triumphant answer to all who may presume to impugn our principles or our proceedings; for the latter are nothing more or less than the practical embodiment, and working out in action of

the principles which we were taught—of the lessons which we learnt in the school, and at the feet of the very Gamaliele<sup>s</sup>, of whom alas ! we must complain in the words of our Lord : “They say and do not ;” or, rather, “They say one thing to-day, and just do the contrary to-morrow.” And am I now before you to plead my cause as if I were the offending party ? Is it possible that I, and those who acted with me, are put upon our defence, because we have been honest, consistent, true to our pledges, principles, professions ; because we have not flinched nor faulted in the day of trial, though assailed by strong temptations, those subtle and insidious influences of the world, before which human weakness and frailty are so prone to fall ? Are we verily indicted as guilty, or even as suspected, for no other cause than sustaining *our lip and tongue profession, in deed, in truth, in practice* ? How should I have appeared before you at this moment, had I gone to the other side, had I given the lie to all my past professions in this pulpit, as well as in the Synod, had I perfidiously deserted the cause which I had proclaimed to be the cause of God, and of vital truth, after I had lauded its champions to the skies, and sworn unalterable sympathy and devotedness to both it and them—how, I demand, hearers and brethren, should I have found courage, or rather, to call it by its proper name, *audacity*, this day, to look you in the face, or by what sophistry, or Jesuitical casuistry, persuade you to applaud my base desertion of the friends of God, and of his truth, to whom I had vowed, in his name, and, as it were, at his altar, a holy and inviolable attachment, or the still baser desertion of that testimony for God’s truth, when it is imperilled by the powers of this present evil world, which it is the most supreme duty, as it is the most glorious privilege of the ministers of the Gospel and of the churches of Christ to exhibit



to the world, and to sustain even to the death, if the will of God be so? We are not only innocent of the guilt of schism, we are not only pure from all blame in regard to the recent disruption, but we boldly and confidently claim the credit of having done all that in us lay, all that our opponents would suffer us, to provide a remedy, yea, the only suitable and sufficient remedy for the fatal breach which had been made in the real vital unity of our church before the Synod met—the disruption of the great body of the laity from the Synod, and from their Pastors, who were known to be adhesionists. So far from being chargeable with the reproach of being schismatists, we have left nothing undone, which God put in our power, both to prevent and to heal to the uttermost, the rent.

If schism and disruption be words used in their proper and only legitimate sense, to signify a rent of the unity and integrity of the body of the church, an internal and vital breach, in which the living members and organs of the body of Christ are torn away from the communion and fellowship of the visible church and not merely a disseverance of the ministers and pastors from their congregations, the latter remaining entire and unbroken; or a disseverance of congregations and ministers from an ecclesiastical connexion with existing judicatories, whether Synods or Presbyteries, which by no means implies a necessary violation, or even a temporary interruption of the unity or integrity of the body of Christ—then are we entitled to all the commendation of the healers of the breach, of the true guardians and defenders of the vital unity of the Church.

To contend for connexion with the State, or with the State Church, as a unity necessary to maintain an external Establishment, and a temporal provision for the ministers, is a very improper and unscriptural definition

of unity religious or ecclesiastical. It is as far as the poles asunder from the true idea of scriptural unity—as far as heaven from earth, as God from Mammon. But this, as far as I can perceive, is the amount of all that forms the ground of their boasting, and the burden of the reproach which they throw upon us. If they glory thus in their shame, let us not be ashamed of our glory. Let us strive, and we cannot long strive in vain, to dispel the transient cloud which a shallow and contemptible sophistry, arising out of an abuse of words, has created. Let us disabuse the public mind of the false impressions which have been propagated to the disparagement of our cause, and of the character and spirit of our proceedings. Let us demonstrate, as it is most easy to do, that we are the faithful advocates and assertors of the only true and scriptural idea of unity—for the sake of which we have placed in jeopardy great temporal advantages, while those with whom we are at issue, it is to be feared, have been contending for a merely spurious unity, mistaking a bond of connection with the world, and with powers, and interests, that are of the earth, earthy, for that spiritual and heavenly bond, which unites the hearts of believers—in the communion of the visible church—to God, and to one another. What a striking example have we in this of the more than magic power with which words influence the judgments, and even pervert the moral and religious sentiments of the wisest and most learned men. No wonder then that the multitude, who are not conversant with ecclesiastical and theological questions, should have their minds bewildered and befooled, when *the most learned clerks* have been duped and stultified before them *by the magic of a name!*

The great Locke has said, and time and experience have been daily adding new evidence and illustration of

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the important truth, that most of our controversies are, when traced to their prime source, no better than disputes and blunderings about the meaning of words. On this, the main part of the question, I have no more that I think needful for me to advance. Indeed it would scarcely be possible to add anything to the force of what I have stated in the premises.

Just bear in view then these leading points of my plea ; first, that we have changed nothing, touched nothing, moved nothing out of its place or bearings as respects our legal, constitutional, civil, ecclesiastical status and relations, we have simply declared that our church is free, absolutely, and in all senses independant, and that we shall hold her so. in all future time, so help us God ; and then add to this, secondly, what I have now stated, and as I believe proved incontrovertibly, that we could not have acted otherwise without violating our conscience, and breaking our solemnly pledged faith, not only as Christian ministers, but what is more, as a church which is represented in, and by the Synod, as her supreme judicatory—and, thirdly, in conclusion—that we should have been chargeable with all the guilt of schism and disruption, in the most aggravated form, had we hesitated one moment even to dissolve the most strict and intimate connection with the Parent Church, had that been necessary ; how much more then a merely nominal, and shadowy one, implying no spiritual jurisdiction, as it is acknowledged by our opponents to be, or as we view it, one altogether ideal or illusory, having no real existence, save in the name, arbitrarily assumed, as a purely distinctive designation.

There are a few who profess to hold a middle ground, disapproving of those who have felt it their duty to take immediately the decisive step of separation from the

Synod, and remaining in connection, with the hope that the great object for which we have been contending, namely : a full, decided, unequivocal testimony may yet be obtained from that body, in vindication of the great truths and principles to the support of which it stands solemnly pledged. This I conceive to be a position utterly untenable—worse almost than that of our extreme antagonists. It seems to me a real, though I am far from characterising it as a wilful or intentional betrayal of the cause. *After the practical denial and renunciation of the principles of the Resolutions, by the bona fide adherents,* it is passing strange that any enlightened and conscientious thinker should be so weak and inconsistent as to conclude that, while this violation of the resolutions, in defiance of all Presbyterial order, remains unchallenged, unrebuked by the ecclesiastical authorities, any other mode of action on their part, would be satisfactory, or entitled to the credit of truth and consistency. It is astonishing that able and upright minds, after the actings of the Presbyteries of Bathurst and Montreal, and especially with the certain knowledge that salaries had been received by no inconsiderable number of our ministers, on the express consideration of *bona fide adherence to the Establishment,* should for a moment give way to such a miserable delusion, to such a palpable sophistry, as that of putting mere professions, protestations, or even a verbal change of the designation of the Synod, as a sufficient counterbalance, as a trustworthy and unsuspecting testimony, which would absolve us, in the judgment of the world, of all further necessity or obligation of action in the matter. Let such of our brethren as are of this mind, just reflect on the reception and treatment of the Free Church deputation by some of our ministers and their congregations, and compare or rather

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contrast this practical action with the fervidness of our sympathizings, and the cordial welcome which these delegates must have confidently reckoned upon, *merely looking before hand at our resolutions*, and then ask themselves what less could be required to set the Canadian Church right with the world, and to redeem its character and its violated pledge than the immediate declaration of independence? After all this had happened, to procrastinate for a single day the adoption of this step, the most moderate that could possibly have been conceived to be at all sufficient for the vindication of truth and principle, and for the wiping off the injurious suspicions that had arisen in the public mind, affecting the character of the clergy, and of the church, would, in my mind, be a most egregious departure from the sound wisdom and high toned sense of integrity and honour, of which a church cannot be too scrupulously jealous.

After all that has been done during the past year, by Presbyteries and Ministers under the jurisdiction of the Synod, it is impossible for me to comprehend how any reflecting and upright minded man can permit himself even to deliberate on any measure or course of action, that is not most perfectly unambiguous, and such as to vindicate triumphantly our own character, and the principles for which we have so often testified, and *which we have pronounced to be fundamental and essential*. There can be no *neutrality*, there can be no compromise in this warfare. The action that is indecisive, and leaves even a shadow of doubt, whether we be sincere and consistent, is almost as much to be condemned as doing nothing at all. The idea of retaining any connection whatever—nominal or real—with the church, against whose practice and proceedings we have so solemnly protested, is utterly

inconsistent with what we owe, not only to the cause of truth, but to the church with which we sympathized, with which, if our professions may be trusted, we are one in principle and heart. It is, in my mind, an insult to the common sense of mankind, to say that we hold the principles of the Free Church, and are in true sympathy with her, so long as we allow the name of the adversary and betrayer of the cause for which she contended, and for which she suffers, to be named upon us; so long as we allow it to be said, or even suspected, that there is any ecclesiastical connection between us.

The least violation of a great principle or commandment is as real a wrong to the cause of truth and of God as the greatest—for in the breach of the least commandment the law, and the Lawgiver are dishonoured. When a great principle is not consistently supported, it is, in effect, renounced. A hollow and halting testimony to a great truth is like the sacrifice of the lame and blind, it is an abomination to the Lord. There is profound wisdom in the law of the great Athenian legislator, Solon, who made it a capital offence for any citizen of Athens, to remain neutral in those great popular contentions which divided the commonwealth. He felt the necessity of providing in this manner against the most imminent of all perils that cold-blooded, cautious, and fatal indecision, which will suffer all to be lost, rather than incur personal responsibility, and expose our own credit or interests to the hazard of damage or detraction. To how much danger and damage are great causes always obnoxious, from the vacillation and timidity of double-minded men, of unstable Reubens, whose wavering does more mischief to their friends, and more service to their enemies, than the most open and strenuous opposition!

In the facts and evidences now submitted, you have, my dearly beloved friends and hearers, a statement of all that I think necessary to enable you to form a decisive and righteous judgment of the case, and I only ask of you to be faithful to the cause of truth, of conscience, and of God, in forming your conclusion, and determining the part which you ought to act in the present crisis. I shall now close this apology with a few remarks on the manifold and invaluable benefits that may be expected to result to our church, and to the cause of religion generally, from the new order of things growing out of the disruption.

First then, I am persuaded that a powerful and salutary renovation will be wrought probably in both the branches into which the Presbyterian church is now divided. That such a revival was needed will not be questioned by any who are aware of the stagnation and lethargy which so generally prevailed before the late revolution. It is not easy to imagine a more effectual process for both quickening and purifying a church than that through which we have just passed. Temporal interests and influences have been placed before us, on the one hand, and truth and principle, and the spiritual good of our church, have been set over against them on the other. The separation has taken place in consequence of this sifting, of this two-fold and opposite attraction, and out of the decomposition of the constituent elements of the old Synod, two rival churches are now brought, not only into the same sphere of action, but are so bound up and incorporated, that in the conflict which must ensue, in the emulous contention of antagonistic elements, so near and so intimate, the most vigorous and universal activity cannot fail to be communicated to the whole and to every part, extending from the centre to the circumference,

from the heart to the extremities. Whatever may be the partial and transient evils of the recent disorganization of our ecclesiastical body, they will be much more than compensated by the ultimate good, which must result from drawing forth all the powers and energies of both, giving them their highest tone and their perfect work. Both in their parochial and missionary operations the one church will give a most powerful impulse to the other, and so long as both are rivals in the field, will that impulse be sustained and perpetuated. The new church will derive an immense accession of freedom and power from her new organization, and from the connections which she will be enabled to form with all the other evangelical denominations, within and without the colony. This will tend to correct that narrow, selfish, sectarian spirit which has been the great bane and reproach of the Christian world since the Reformation. By producing a Catholic spirit, and a comprehensive charity, it will serve to promote the great interests of our common Christianity. Evangelical union and missionary enterprise seem to be the great ends for which we are summoned in this our day, as it were by the call of Providence to strive together, and the great antagonist of this cause, the cause of God and of his church, is the spirit of sect. This lies as a rottenness in the bones of the church, it is a poison infecting *the body of Christ*, as His church is denominated in Scripture, dissolving the vital union, and disturbing the harmonious action and co-operative sympathy of the parts. Another happy result of the recent revolution is that we have formed an independent Colonial church, Catholic in its name and in its design, as I trust it will prove, in its spirit and action, representing not one race or nation, not one form or modification of Presbyterianism, but embracing all its sections



and varieties, and opening a common and equal home in her ample bosom, in which all will meet on equal terms, all will be one, Scotch, Irish, English, Americans, Swiss, German, Dutch, French. So long as we retained even a nominal connection exclusively with one sect of Presbyterians, the Church of Scotland, a wall of partition was felt to be interposed between us and other denominations, we thereby shut ourselves out, in some degree, from the equal confidence and communion of other sections of the same church, and this single impediment proved of no small prejudice to the usefulness of the ministry, and to the growth and prosperity of the church. The disruption in separating those who had no real vital unity, no heart sympathy, will bring together and unite those who are one in spirit and principle. There is every prospect of an immediate enlargement and extension of this branch of the church, by the accession of many ministers and congregations, differing from us in nothing save name and designation. She is thus, in a favourable position to become what her name implies, the church not of a part, but of the whole Presbyterian population of this country. And while she is called in the Providence of God to go in and possess the whole land, so far as her mission extends, like the Free Church of Scotland she has cast off all the trammels which embarrassed and hindered her freedom and progress—and is ready to adopt that organization, and to take that course and method of action, which the circumstances of the country, and the varying exigencies of time and place, and successive changes in the political and religious world may demand. By the necessity of this bold, free and adventurous action she will acquire courage, skill, strength and confidence.

It would be easy to enlarge on this interesting sub-

ject, of the results propitious to the interests of the church, and of religion generally, which may be expected as the ultimate fruit of the disruption—but having been obliged to trespass already so long upon your time and patience I shall conclude this general view of the question with the fervent prayer that Almighty God of his infinite mercy, may so overrule the present unhappy distractions, that they may finally issue in the advancement of his own glory and of the Redeemer's kingdom. Amen.

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Having now discussed the question in its general views and bearings, as it respects the whole church, I proceed next to consider the case of this particular congregation. How will St. Gabriel Street Church be affected by what has come to pass at the late Session of the Synod? If it be the fact, as I have stated, that no change has been wrought in the Constitution of the Colonial Presbyterian Church, or in the Civil and Ecclesiastical relations, then it follows that all things still are as they were. If it be objected that I, the Minister of the congregation, have made myself a party to the forming of a new Synod, and—separating myself from the old connection—have entered into a new one, my reply is, that in so doing, I have not gone beyond the just limits of my freedom and power, as a minister of the Church, or as a subject of the Civil Government. I have transgressed no law civil or ecclesiastical. For let me advise you all, that *the Title Deed of the Church, the rules and regulations* framed by the proprietors for its government in its temporal concerns, and more especially in the election of its pastors, and *my ordination vows*, are all that I know, as describing and determining my duties and obligations, and the conditions

on which I hold my rights and emoluments, my status and office. as pastor of St. Gabriel Street Church.

There is nothing in any—or all of these put together—which prescribes to me any rule or condition, limiting my perfect liberty of will or action in regard to forming or dissolving, renewing or renouncing such connections. I am under no obligation in any wise to connect myself, as your minister, with any church or Ecclesiastical Court in or out of the colony. Neither am I hindered so to do, if I please. There is nothing in the bond between us to put any restraint on your perfect freedom, or mine, in regard to such connection. I was for more than twelve years a minister of St. Gabriel Street Church, when it was much more upon the footing of an Independent or Congregational, than of a Presbyterian Church. During all this time we had no connection whatever with any other Ecclesiastical body save what in the looseness of common speech is called such, namely a friendly and free-will interchange of counsel, sympathy and succour, all which we received from the Church of our Fathers, and especially from that section of it which is now dis-established. But this, as I have said, is a connection like that of a father with his son, who is come of age. It touches not the independence and free will, and free action of the latter, as defined by the civil law. This distinction it is extremely necessary to bear in mind, as ignorance or inadvertency in this point has, I fear, given rise to much mis-apprehension and blundering, both in and out of the Synod, and a due attention to it, may prove of some efficacy to preserve peace and unity.

That this church was not in connection, or even in communion with the Established Church of Scotland

before I became one of its pastors, is demonstrated by the fact, that *then, for the first time*, an application was made, by the resolution of a general meeting of the proprietors, to have such connection recognized by the Parent Church. To secure, if possible, the success of this application, I went up, after my ordination by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, to the meeting of the General Assembly in 1817. The application gave rise to a short discussion, in which, I remember well, the late Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff, with his characteristic penetration and sagacity, put some questions to those who supported the petition, and finding that the late Mr. Somerville, my predecessor, was a Licentiate of the Relief Church, he declared his opinion, in which the Assembly appeared to acquiesce, that the Church could scarcely be received into communion, much less into connection, so that it was rather a stretch of their authority, and an act of courtesy and indulgence, on the part of the Assembly, when they passed a declaration, of which I myself was the bearer to Canada, that St. Gabriel Street Church, having now a regularly ordained minister of the Establishment, would be held to be *in full communion* with the Mother Church. They are quite mistaken, therefore, as can easily be proved by reference to *the Title Deed and Rules* of the Church—who contend that the Minister is required to be in connection, or even in communion with the Church of Scotland.—We have more than negative proof of this—the positive fact of the failure of the application in 1817, and nothing has taken place since that date to alter in any way our position. Looking to the 7th Rule, which describes and determines the qualifications of those who are eligible to the *pastoral cure*, according to the present laws, or until they are amended or repealed by the proprietors at a general

meeting; it is evident that a minister of the Church of Scotland, or even in communion with it, is not designated in this regulation. This will be manifest from the following extract, including the 1st 6th and 7th Regulations:—

1. Every person having purchased a Pew or Pews in the said Church, and paid for the same, and who shall produce a deed deemed sufficient by the Committee of the Church, is a Proprietor, and shall be qualified to vote for and be chosen a Member of the Committee, or appointed to any other office relative to the direction or government of the Church.

6. In case of a vacancy in the Church by the death of a Minister or otherwise, in the election of a person to supply the said vacancy, the Proprietors shall vote in conformity to the regulations specified in the fifth article.

7. To prevent anything like mistake respecting the electing of a Minister, it is hereby provided and always to be understood, that no Proprietor, as is pointed out in the fifth article, upon any pretence whatever, shall give his vote to any person, but to one who shall have been regularly bred to the Ministry, and who shall have been licensed by some regular Presbytery in the British Dominions, he producing credentials to ascertain the same, and who shall profess to be of the persuasion, and who shall adhere to the laws, government, and mode of worship of the Established Church of Scotland, properly so called and denominated and known to be such, and also a natural born subject of His Majesty.

Here it is stated as a condition, a qualification of the candidate or nominee, that *he must be regularly bred to the ministry*, a clause altogether superfluous and absurd, as you well know, had it been the mind of the framers to shut out from the pulpit, all but licentiates of the Established Church. But the next clause puts this altogether beyond doubt, for it expressly states that he shall be licensed *by some regular Presbytery in the British dominions*, and be a natural born subject of the British Crown, so that any probationer of any Presbyterian Church, not being an alien, and having received license from some regular Presbytery in the British dominions is eligible to fill the pulpit of St. Gabriel Street Church. He may be of the Relief, as was the late Mr. Somerville, or

he may be a Burgher or Anti-burgher, or of the Synod of Ulster, or in communion with any section of the Presbyterian Church, not only in the British Empire, but throughout Christendom, provided only that he be a British born subject, and licensed by some regular Presbytery in the British dominions.

The description, in this regulation, of the qualifications and conditions required to constitute the *eligibility* of a candidate or nominee for the pastoral charge of St. Gabriel Street Church, would indeed be strange, unaccountable, yea ridiculous, had the object been to exclude all, who were not licensed by the Established Church of Scotland, and such only are capable by the Ecclesiastical law, *as it then was, or as it now is*, to be received into connection or even into communion with her; but it becomes perfectly intelligible and reasonable, if you bear in mind, that, in those days, there was scarcely a possibility of obtaining a minister of the Establishment, and they thought themselves happy, when, as on occasion of the framing of this law, they could obtain the services of any Presbyterian clergyman, producing sufficient testimonials of character, education, and loyalty to the British Crown.

There is all manner of evidence, not only direct and positive, but also circumstantial and presumptive, that this is the true interpretation of the Rule, for it was framed to obviate the difficulties in which this church was then involved. At the time when the late incumbent, Mr. Somerville, was a candidate for the vacant pulpit there were two candidates, and, as usual, two parties in the congregation. Mr. Somerville's rival was a Mr. Forrest, who had come in from the United States, and was not, therefore, a British Presbyterian, or a natural born subject of the British Crown. This will set the design and meaning of

the regulation in the clearest light, and unfold at once the reason and the extent of the restrictions and conditions therein specified.

It is, therefore, indubitably ascertained by these facts and circumstances, that all that is required by the rule is that the minister adhere to the same Ecclesiastical law and order, which are recognized by the Established Church of Scotland, and by which criterion she is contradistinguished from all the numerous and diversified forms and modes of Presbyterianism in the Parent Land, in the colonies, or on the Continent of Europe or America. This is equally the standard of the Free Protestant Church of Scotland; and were St. Gabriel Street Church and her minister to become connected with that body, it would be no departure from the constitution on which I am commenting. So long as the ministers of the Free Church adhere to their ordination vows, they fulfil and answer to all the conditions and qualifications rightly understood of the seventh Rule, so that had I, as many erroneously conceived, entered into connexion with the Free Church, it would not have invalidated, or at all affected my rights as pastor of this church. It is very important here to understand and bear in mind the undoubted fact that the difference between the Established and the Free Church is a difference, not in faith or principle, but in practice; not in regard to the standards Theological or Ecclesiastical, but in regard to a law of the Civil or Municipal code of Scotland, and its interpretation and application, as it affects the constitution and polity of the Church. The law of Patronage is not an ecclesiastical law, on the other hand, the Established Church has again and again condemned and protested against it, as an infringement of her spiritual independence, and of her constitutional rights

and liberties as they have been guaranteed by the Union, and as a palpable and violent encroachment and usurpation of the Civil power upon the Ecclesiastical. Now the law and government referred to in the Seventh Regulation, can, it is manifest, be no other than the law of the Church, the Ecclesiastical law. Any other view is quite absurd, and untenable. Nay, the law of Patronage, and indeed all the laws which have created the disruption in Scotland, have not, and cannot have any application to the Church of Canada, which is not connected with the State in any wise, and has obtained no legal establishment. All this trouble, therefore, and confusion of ideas have grown out of sheer ignorance and blundering; have been occasioned by the absurd transference to Canada of a Civil law (i. e. the Scottish Law of Patronage) which could not by possibility have any application.

Whatever may be the difference between the Free and Established Churches in Scotland, they utterly vanish in Canada. As an independant church, connected ecclesiastically neither with the Established nor with the Free, we hold the same standards of faith, worship and government with both; but we are not called to look to their interpretation, much less to adopt or approve of their practice, or that of any other Presbyterian Church. We interpret and apply the law for ourselves, according to our own judgment and conscience, and are accountable to no tribunal or judicatory on earth for our interpretation or practice. It is easy to conceive that two countries like England and the United States, may adopt one and the same code of civil jurisprudence, as most nations of Europe have adopted the Roman law. But these nations interpret and apply the law for

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themselves ; and, as we all know, the interpretation and the practical administration of the law vary, with the various courts and judges which are authorised to interpret and dispense it.

Again the rule in question has reference to the law of the Church of Scotland, as it stood, at the date of the meeting, when it was passed, before the present unhappy differences had arisen. It does not by any means follow, according to my understanding of the rule, that we are thereby obliged to go along with all the subsequent changes of the law, or as it may be, with all the errors, defections, and corruptions which, in progress of time, may grow up and prevail in the Established Church ; for then our constitution would impose upon us things that are self-contradictory, impossible to be done, which is absurd. The obligation of an independent church to obey the same law, to conform to the same standards, does not involve any necessity to imitate the practice, right or wrong, or to adopt the varying interpretations of the law and standards, as understood by any other church. Were the Church of Scotland to become Socinian, Prelatic, Popish, should we be bound constitutionally and legally, as in such a case, it must be, to receive at her mouth a law contradictory to that which was originally meant and intended. I humbly conceive we should not. And if we are not obliged to follow her in such extreme changes, by what consistent plea or principle of reasoning can it be made out, that we are not at perfect liberty, to protest against her Erastianism, Arminianism, or Puseyism, should she become infected with any of these heresies ?

It is quite certain that St. Gabriel Street Church is not in connection with the Established Church of Scotland. We are, therefore, the interpreters and adminis-

trators of the ecclesiastical law and constitution which we have chosen for ourselves. There is no appeal but to the Civil Courts of the country, and—until it is proved before them, that we have by some overt act, renounced in principle, or transgressed in practice, our constitution, as defined by our rules and regulations—we cannot, I am persuaded, be deprived of any Civil right or temporality which we possess on the condition of adherence to the laws of the Church of Scotland. In like manner, until it is proved that the ministers who have seceded from the Synod of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, have been in error in asserting their belief of the independence of the Colonial Church, they cannot be condemned, or adjudged to have forfeited any rights or property whatever. This is just the cause to be tried, and a fair trial must precede a righteous decision.

If we are, and all along have been, as we believe, independent, civilly and ecclesiastically, our declaration of that independence can infer no offence, involve no change, no consequences good or bad.

If in any wise we have made ourselves obnoxious to the displeasure of the Established Church, it must assuredly be in the unanimous resolutions of 1841 and 1842, and the all but unanimous resolutions of 1843, in which her proceedings and practice have been solemnly and most decisively condemned, and which still stand upon our published minutes uncanceled and unrevoked. These are the original and only source and cause of all the offence and trouble. But this original sin lies as heavy upon the heads of those, from whom we have separated as on ours, and it does not yet appear that they have expiated the offence by any shew of penitence, or by any offer of apology. On the other hand it is understood

that it was proposed after the disruption, in the Synod of adhesionists, to write a letter of rebuke, or remonstrance, to the Parent Church, anent her defections and backslidings. Now this mode of dealing with her, while it certainly does honour, in some degree to the sincerity and consistency of principle in those who advocate it, seems to me far more ungraceful and ungracious, while it is far less unambiguous and decisive than that which we have embraced, namely:—*a simple declaration of independence.*

I have entered at greater length than may appear reasonable upon the case of St. Gabriel Street Church, because, though to any competent judge, nothing can be clearer or more simple, it is very generally misunderstood or misrepresented, partly in consequence of the heat and excitement, and still more from the total unacquaintance with ecclesiastical matters under which the parties labour. I feel not the least shadow of a doubt, far less of fear, as to my right to be still the pastor thereof. In expounding my views so much at length, I have been actuated by an earnest desire to promote the peace and unity of the congregation, by setting right all those who are honest and unprejudiced, and to do justice to myself, and still more to a righteous cause, which needs no other defence than a fair and full exposition of the facts and principles. I solemnly declare that I, for my part, would desire no more than a jury of twelve sensible and honest men to be the judges in this cause, and would with the utmost confidence of a triumphant issue commit the final decision of it to their judgment and conscience. I have no doubt that time, by gradually allaying passion, and giving the light of truth free entrance into the minds of men, will soon bring out a unanimous and unqualified verdict of

public opinion in our favour. Till this not far distant day, I shall wait with patient hope, having a good conscience, and a full persuasion that truth and right are on our side.

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## APPENDIX.

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Since I wrote this address I have been much pleased to find my views expounded and enforced with his characteristic eloquence, and power of reasoning by the Rev. Alexander Duff, D. D. in the following extracts, which I have copied from the *Edinburgh Witness* of 6th July last, from his "Explanatory statement to the friends of the Indian Mission of, the Church of Scotland, as it existed previous to the Disruption in May 1843."

The Editor introduces the Extracts from this publication with the following remarks:—

Dr. Duff, displays an acquaintance with the leading features of the controversy so accurate, a judgement so enlightened, and a spirit so evidently candid and fair, as must very thoroughly expose the futility and hollowness of the attempts made to explain the conduct of our missionaries in so unanimously abandoning the Establishment, on the ground of ignorance, or prejudice, or distance from the scene of conflict. Dr Duff made no formal avowal or communication of his sentiments on the question till after the disruption. He states that, "not regarding himself as the missionary agent of the Moderate section, or the missionary agent of the Evangelical section of the Church, but the missionary agent of the yet undivided, and, as regarded him, the unanimous Church of Scotland, he would have felt it to be incongruous and incompatible on his part, by any overt act whatsoever, publicly or officially to identify himself either with the Moderate or Evangelical section as such." But when necessitated by the disruption to make his choice between the two bodies, he did so without the slightest hesitancy. He says:—

"Was there any hesitation when the hour of trial came? No, whatsoever. So far as concerned my own mind, the simple truth is, that *as regards the great principles contended for by the friends and champions of the Free Church, I never was troubled with the crossing of a doubt, or the shadow of a suspicion.* In

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earliest youth these principles were imbibed from the 'Cloud of Witness,' and other kindred works. And time and mature reflection, wholly undisturbed by the heats and collisions of party warfare, only tended to strengthen my conviction of their scriptural character, and to rivet the persuasion of their paramount importance to the spiritual interests of man."

And again :—

"Doubtless, had I yielded to those alluring worldly temptations, which were chiefly on one side ; or had I allowed carnal considerations of any kind to prevail against the sense of duty, and the clear dictates of conscience, there were many plausible, ready-made, pretexts on which I might fall back,—many open-gated refuges into which I might retire, in order to palliate my tergiversation, screen my inconsistency from public view, conceal from others, and perhaps from myself, the secret actuating motives, and operate as a soporific on the troublesome mementoes of the inward monitor. But however convenient such a course might be for a season,—however soothing and flattering to the cravings of the natural man, how could it elude the piercing scrutiny of the all-seeing eye, or stand in arrest of judgment at the bar of the Great Assize ?"

The following pointed passage I recommend to those among our adhesionist brethren who seem to think that connexion with the Established Church does not involve the guilt of conformity and compromise of principle. It seems as if the passage had been written with the express intention of being applied to the case, and to the consciences of these brethren.

One of the grounds, it may be remembered, on which the Residuary Committee endeavoured to convince them that they ought to remain in connection with the Establishment was, that their post being a peculiar one—one in which they were not practically called on to engage in perpetrating acts of intrusion, or in submitting to decrees and decisions of the Civil Courts in spiritual matters, their consciences could not be violated in remaining. On this Dr Duff remarks :—

"What is this but a wretched evasion, worthy of being forged in the mint of self-interest or carnal expediency. Not *practically* implicated in such acts of perpetration and submission ! What of that,—if, as corporate members we are and must be *potentially* implicated,—is it not morally the same thing ? Take an extreme case, merely for the sake of illustration. In India there is a terrible association of professional murderers called Thugs, affiliated by the religious and social relations which constitute the atrocious system of Thuggee. Now, suppose a conscience-smitten Thug to declare that he now utterly recoils from the principles and the

practices of the fraternity, of which he is a sworn constituent member, and that he must consequently sever his connection therewith. Suppose his associates, unwilling that he should forsake them, to reply, 'Very good; do you continue to retain your own individual convictions; we shall not disturb you in the maintenance of them; only remain silent; stay where you are; still adhere to us; and we shall assign you a special post, connected with a department in our scheme of operations, in which you shall not be *actually* called on to engage in perpetrating acts of Thuggee.' Now, suppose the reclaiming Thug quietly to consent to such an arrangement, would he not be regarded by all men as virtually and constructively a partaker of the crimes of his felonious confederates, and morally a partaker of their guilt, as much as if actually engaged in their deeds of blood? The application is obvious. A peculiar post may be assigned to us in a heathen land, in which we are not directly summoned to commit Erastian acts; but by remaining corporate members of a body that has become Erastian to the very core, would we not be virtually and constructively partakers of their Erastianism, and morally partakers of their guilt, as much as if actually engaged along with them in directly perpetrating Erastian deeds?

Nor is the application less obvious or striking of the following passage:—

“What has been adduced may suffice to open up a glimpse of the predicament in which *conformity* would place us, in relation to the Church at home, to the heathen around us, and to our own consciences. Strongly maintaining Free Church principles, as alone consistent with the tenor of Scripture, and the original constitution and standards of the Church of Scotland, we must either proclaim these or be silent. If we proclaim them, might not the Church at home justly charge us with treachery and unfaithfulness towards her; might not the heathen upbraid us on account of the dishonour and dishonesty of the procedure; and would not our own consciences be sure to second and envenom the united sentence of disapprobation, and would not the frown of heaven rest upon us, in our career of inconsistency? If, on the other hand we remained silent, would not conscience secretly sting us, would not the heathen penetrate through our mercenary selfishness, would not the Church at home be additionally discredited, by supporting a set of dumb hirelings that bartered away their own convictions of truth and duty for a morsel of bread, and would not the God of heaven effectually mark His displeasure, through the rebukes of His providence, the blighting of our hopes, and the leanness and barrenness of our labours?”

I give also the following extract from the last Report of the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scot-

land, for promoting the Religious Interests of the Scottish Presbyterians in the British Colonies.

"Unable, from circumstances, to supply the Colonies with additional ministers, the Committee have not only fulfilled to existing ministers the heavy engagements they had formerly come under to them, but have made various grants of from £20 to £50 each, to deserving and laborious pastors, chiefly in the North American Colonies, who were in necessitous circumstances, and whose flocks, some of them at any period, and others from the recent pressure of the times, are unable fully, or at all, to provide for their comfort. These grants have been confined to those ministers who have declared their firm purpose of maintaining their connection with the parent Church, and have been most thankfully received by them, and the Committee are devising more liberal things in their behalf.

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The General Assembly could not have failed to anticipate that the divisions, which have recently rent the Church at home, would more or less extend to the Colonial Churches, and the anticipation has been realized. The seeds of discord and division have been industriously sown there, and their bitter fruits are now being reaped. The Committee have used every legitimate means in their power to counteract the influence employed to induce ministers and people to forsake the Church of their fathers, and they are thankful to say, with a large measure of success insomuch that the great body, both of the ministers and their flocks, are, they are persuaded, prepared to adhere to the Establishment. Not a few, however, they have reason to believe are preparing to renounce their connection with it, especially in the North American Colonies. An extraordinary meeting of the Synod of Canada is to be held this month, at which a division is likely to take place. This is, in many views, to be lamented, but the Committee wait the issue with perfect calmness. They regret that the affections and the confidence of any should have been alienated from the Established Church, but it is well that such if, any there be, should leave her pale. They have shunned even the appearance of *bribing* any to remain, but they will not fail to support and encourage all who on principle do so, and to them they must of necessity confine that support and encouragement, from the very terms of trust committed to them.

There are several topics here referred to, which it is impossible to pass over without the severest animadversion, and indeed without real astonishment at the coolness and seeming self complacency with which Dr. MacFarlane and Dr. Grant, who subscribe the Report, have introduced matter too perilous, one would have



thought, for their hands to touch, which they should have been the last men to have stirred. These are the identical writers of the circular letter which was addressed, not to the Moderator of the Synod, as that of Dr. Welsh on behalf of the Free Church, but to our Ministers individually, holding forth the inducement of salaries to such as would give the pledge of bona fide adherence to the establishment. Let it be borne in mind that this was done with the full knowledge and certainty of the unanimous expression of the mind of our Synod, and, thereby, if any regard is to be had to Presbyterian order, of the whole Canadian Church, in reference to the questions that had caused the Disruption of the Parent Church. The Report states "that they have shunned even the appearance of *bribing* any to remain—but they will not fail to support and encourage all who in principle do so" and it is added very significantly "to those they must of necessity confine that support and encouragement from the very terms of the trust committed to them!" I would just ask, was it or was it not, tampering with principle and integrity when such a circular was addressed to men, known very well by the writers to be solemnly pledged by their own spontaneous act, long before the disruption of the Parent Church to the cause of the Free Church? Was it or was it not an act, bearing the strongest likeness of bribery and corruption, when very needy Ministers in the backwoods of Canada were honoured with a letter, containing such an alluring promise, with a condition of which, if the fulfilment had only been as innocent and honorable, as it was easy, would have left all the credit of a pious and generous and well applied liberality to the Established Church? As it is we hesitate not to brand this deed, as most cri-

minal in its character and most mischievous in its effects. It has been the source of all the evil that has since befallen the Churches in British North America. This is the apple of discord thrown into the midst of a united Church by paternal hands! And from the ill-omened hour when this circular was brought to our shores, the work of disruption began and advanced with rapid strides, until it has been consummated in Canada and Nova-Scotia. It is a fact, unquestionable, that not one shilling of money has been received, or, so far as I know, promised on the part of the Free Church to any of our Ministers. Indeed it is only very recently that there was any considerable fund at her disposal for the benefit of the Colonial Churches.

The Report states that "The seeds of discord and division have been industriously sown there and their bitter fruits are now being reaped." And by whom have they been sown if not by the authors of the circular letter? It is impossible to fasten even the shadow of suspicion on the colonial agents or official correspondents of the Free Church, whose letters hold out no promise of salaries, nothing but a general assurance of aid and patronage. Indeed most of their letters are anything but flattering or complimentary to the Colonial Clergy. They are remarkable for plain-dealing and speak the language of admonition and rebuke. I wish that those who are always liberal in vague and general accusations against the violence and uncharitableness of the Free Church would look a little more into the facts and proceedings of the two parties. It would soon sing the requiem of their reckless and ill advised objurgations against the unoffending and point their erring shafts at the really guilty heads. The following extract from the same Report is extremely val-

uable and has just come in good season to set the most authentic and surest of all seals to the wisdom of those who have contended for the Independence of our Colonial Church, and have resolved to achieve it at any price. There is no unambiguous intimation here, no uncertain sound, in *the warning or almost threat* held out, that the connexion with the Parent Church shall no longer be suffered to be purely nominal. Let the Canadian Church once bow her neck to the yoke, now for the first time sought to be imposed upon her, let her suffer herself to be saddled, bridled, and mounted, she will soon prove to her cost, like the steed in the Fable of Esop, that the rider will laugh to scorn all her claims of liberty, and will mock at all her remonstrances.

The most wise and liberal measure that was ever brought before the Legislature of Canada, namely the Reformation of our Universities, which together with the Temporalities Bill were *pet measures* of the adhesionist party, are here coupled together, and both most pitilessly condemned and anathmatized as Rebellion and insult to the Majesty of the Paramount Church!

An effort, it is understood, is to be made, or rather is now being made, in the Colonial Legislature of Canada, to procure the incorporation of the Presbyterian ministers—heretofore connected with the Scottish establishment—as a separate Presbyterian Church, adhering simply to Westminster standards, and to the Presbyterian form of worship, and the vesting in them of the property endowments, and interest in the Clergy Reserve's Fund, now secured by law to the recognized branch of the Church of Scotland there. Such a measure the Committee will, with the approbation of the General Assembly, steadily resist as a gross invasion of our Church Rights, and of those of her faithful and adhering brethren and children in that colony; and if such an act should pass the local legislature, they contemplate using every means in their power to have it disallowed by the Government at home. At the same time, the Committee cannot recommend to the Assembly to comply with the request of some of their transatlantic brethren, by assuming a direct appellate jurisdiction over the Colonial Churches. The Assembly has formerly distinctly declined this, and the Com-

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mittee are satisfied that they have done so, on good and sufficient grounds. And though the relation between the Parent and Colonial Churches, as regards those members of the latter especially who have not received either ordination or license from the parent Church, may be some what anomalous, they conceive that the marks of a Colonial Church, *in bona fide* communion with the Scottish Establishment, admit of being defined with sufficient precision, and would not be exhibited by a church constituted, as it is proposed, the new Presbyterian Church of Canada should be.

As to the University of Queen's College, at Kingston, Upper Canada, in the establishment of which this Church took so lively an interest, and incurred so heavy an expense, the Committee have little to report in addition to the information communicated by them to former Assemblies. They regret to say, that they are without any information, directly and officially communicated to them, during the past year. They are unwilling to give expression to any discouraging views, though an impression may be gaining ground in their mind, that, as regards the scale on which it was established the establishment of it may have been premature, as certainly its success hitherto has fallen short of the sanguine expectations that were entertained. But they are constrained to complain, that without either obtaining or asking their sanction, those in the immediate management of the institution have formally proposed, and endeavoured to procure an incorporation of it with the University of Toronto, and other measures regarding it, to say the least, very doubtful in their policy, and which would materially weaken if not altogether destroy, the influence of this Church in its management. In the present state of their views and information, the Committee are not prepared to recommend any particular measure, as proper to be adopted by the Assembly, with reference to this subject; but they hope, that if the Assembly shall renew the trust of the Committee, they will invest them with large and liberal powers to act according to circumstances, in regard to the College, and the allowances hitherto made for its support.

