

angel with the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and the two witnesses who "shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth," just upon the eve of judgment and the rising up of the man of sin, the beast from the bottomless pit, to preach the gospel unto all nations, and gather the church and separate the wicked, and ripen all for the judgment, then they must manifestly have the endowment of tongues; that is, the Spirit must use them to speak the languages of the people whom they are sent to warn. This view of the subject I have not room to enter into; I may return to it again, if the Lord calls me not to other work; making me to cease from the instruments of the scribe, with which I have sought to serve him in this and other works. I am at his bidding to do whatever in his church he appointeth me unto, so that I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

A JUDGMENT—AS TO WHAT COURSE THE MINISTERS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND SHOULD TAKE IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DECISIONS OF THE LAST GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

"For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart" (Judges vi. 16).
 "The children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32).

THE General Assembly, in May last, did depose the Rev. John Campbell, Minister of Row, from the office of the holy ministry; and deprive the Rev. Hugh Baillie Maclean, presentee to the parish of Dreghorn, of his licence to preach the Gospel. The former was declared unfit to be a minister of the Church of Christ, because he held that God loves all men, and out of this love gave his Son to die for all men, whereby all the sins of every man are freely and fully pardoned; and that the faith of this truth doth beget assurance in the soul of God's forgiveness and favour. The mouth of the other was shut from preaching, because he maintained that the Son of God took our nature in its fallen, and not in its unfallen, state; and that its holiness was not necessary and essential, and inherent in his creature part, but derived from his union to it; and the unction of it by the Holy Ghost. There was also a decision depriving Mr. Alexander Scott of his office as a preacher of the Gospel, because he disagreed with the Westminster Confession of Faith in three points—namely, (1) its view of

redemption, which he interpreted as limiting Christ's atonement to the elect only; (2) of the Sabbath, which he interpreted as confounding the Christian institution of the Lord's-day with the Jewish ordinance of the Sabbath; and (3) of the powers given into the hands of church officers, which he thought larger than God had given into man's hands; and which, in point of fact, he argued that no Presbytery did believe they did by ordination confer. On these points he asked a trial of his opinions by the Holy Scriptures, which was refused to him, and his licence to preach was taken from him upon the simple ground that he could not renew his subscription to the said Westminster Confession of faith. And, finally, there was a decision, finding my book, entitled "The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of our Lord's Humanity," chargeable with Bourignonism, upon the mere report of a committee, without any propositions exhibited or argued, or any hearing of the author, delay, or dealing of any kind whatsoever; and branding me the author of that book, as a broacher of heresies; and warning all the ministers of the church against me accordingly.

Ever since these decisions of the General Assembly in May last, I have been solicited, from divers quarters of the Church of Scotland, by parties acting independently the one of the other, to draw up a judgment upon the subject: and after several months' consideration, I have resolved to comply with the wishes of God's people; and with all prayer for the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, I do now undertake this service for the sake of thy church, O thou my Saviour, and Redeemer, and Holy One!

And because the decisions of the General Assembly have given occasion to the heart-searchings, stumblings, and offences of the godly people for the resolution of whose conscience this labour of love is undertaken, it will be necessary to consider the amount of these decisions in the eye of truth; and, the authority of them in the eye of the great Head of the church. In respect of the truth, then, they involve nothing less than the denial of the WHOLE TRUTH, as it is in Jesus Christ, the truth of the Father's name, of the Son's incarnation, and of the work of the Holy Ghost. The name of the Father standeth in his love to all the creatures whom he hath made; and the proof of it is in his sending his Son to redeem all mankind. Love is the abiding and unchangeable principle; the gift of his Son for the world, is the manifestation of the greatness and strength thereof. His love to every man is of such a magnitude and fervour, that he spared not the Son of his bosom, but gave him up to the death to redeem that man from sin and death, and the wrath to come, and the Gospel is nothing but the publishing abroad of

this standing instance of an abiding and unchangeable love in God's heart to all men, and to every man. This the General Assembly unanimously denied, and judged it an error of such magnitude as to cast their brother out for having preached, and still professing it. And therewith they denied the great name of the eternal Father, which is Love. *GOD IS LOVE.*—Next, they denied the name and work of the Son of God; which standeth in this, that being very God of very God, He became poor as we are, left all his glory in his Father's hand, and was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone; one with the brethren in every thing, save sin, and tried with all our temptations of devil, world, and flesh; all which he overcame through his faith in his Father, who supplied his faith with the Holy Ghost, which he used to resist the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to present himself at all times, and in all ways, holiness unto the Lord. This the General Assembly unanimously denied, maintaining that he did not take our nature in the fallen state; and that his flesh was essentially holy in itself; and that he was not tempted in all points like as we are; and that, except in sinless infirmities, he was in all points different from us; and that his righteousness was not righteousness of the same kind with the righteousness of his members, together with many other grievous absurdities and heresies, which were neither checked nor gainsaid, but hailed and applauded as the truth of God, while the very truth of God, with him who held it, was cast out, and the preaching of it perverted, so far as their decision goes. Now, because there is no other work of the Son in flesh but this, that he took our nature in its fallen, mortal, and corruptible state, and redeemed it into the immortal, incorruptible, and glorious state in which it is in the heavens; the General Assembly have with one voice made void Christ's name as the Son of Man, and denied his coming in flesh, and his work therein.—Thirdly, they denied the name and work of the Holy Ghost in two ways: first, in that they ascribed the spotless holiness of Christ's flesh, not to Him, but to itself; not to the third Person of the blessed Trinity, but to the innate power of the creature. And though they might seem to themselves to escape this conclusion, by alleging that they give the work of purifying the flesh of the virgin to the Holy Ghost in the act of generation, they do the same thing by another method, forasmuch as they make the creature-part of Christ, ever afterwards a self-supporter, self-sufficient to uphold itself; while they destroy the subordination of the Spirit to Christ, as the Son of Man; and make God to repair his own work as God by a Divine operation, instead of making God to do it as man, by an operation in the human will itself; so preserving human responsibility, justifying God's crea-

tion of man, and making man the redeemer of man.—But because we are now performing the function of the judge, and not the advocate, we go on to observe, that they annihilated the work of the Holy Ghost in denying that he invariably brings the assurance of God's love to the soul; maintaining that there might be faith which is a work of the Holy Ghost, without the knowledge in the soul that God hath forgiven us. Now, if the Holy Ghost work faith in God and Christ, without bringing the knowledge that God and Christ do love us, and have brought us deliverance from sin and guilt, then he worketh faith in a false God, and a false Christ; for the true God and the true Christ do love us. They do either, therefore, affirm the Holy Ghost to work faith of a falsehood, or deny that he worketh the faith of the truth; and in either case they blaspheme him: ignorantly it may be, but still openly and verily they blaspheme him. Now, because assurance of God's love and favour is the fountain head of all graces and gifts of the Spirit, which cannot come till this have first come, their doctrine of a doubtful faith, doth in very deed sist, prevent, and annihilate the work of the Holy Ghost, and they are found fighting against the very principle, and consequently against all the fruits of holiness. Their decisions in the cases of the Rev. John Campbell, and the Rev. Hugh B. Maclean, do therefore subvert the whole truth of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and being unanimous are of a very fearful, of a very terrible, of a very horrible amount; which man may palliate, which God will reckon for, if not confessed and repented of in dust and ashes.

With respect to the case of Mr. Alexander Scott, it involves all for which the church contended against the Papacy; the right of appeal to the law and to the testimony, without stopping short at the word of man. He had certain scruples, or convictions against three out of the many heads of doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith. On this account a Presbytery of the church chose to take away his licence. From this sentence he appealed on the ground that they had no power to do this unless they should first grant him a trial by the Scriptures. The General Assembly overruled this objection, and confirmed the sentence of the Presbytery; and so he was deprived of his office as a preacher, because he could not in every point accord with the Westminster Confession of Faith. Whereby that book, the work of man, is made the decider of all questions which arise in the church, and accordance with it, the condition upon which ministers and preachers and elders and deacons hold their offices. Now what is this but to make that book to be instead of the holy Scriptures, and the office-bearers of the church to be administrators to that book, instead of being the ministers of the great Head of the church. The Papists asked no more for the decisions of

the Council of Trent, or for the pope himself, yea and no more can be desired by the God of truth, than that he should be the arbitrator of all disputes which arise. The Scriptures are effectually superseded as the only test of opinions; and the Church of Scotland, instead of being a pillar of the truth therein contained, is a pillar of the opinions contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. On the other hand, it is argued, that a preacher having subscribed the said Confession is bound in honour and consistency to preach nothing contrary thereto. But the truth is, no man doth subscribe it as *absolute* truth, but as *relative* truth—truth relative to, and checked by the holy Scriptures. At the time he subscribes it he gives his solemn declaration, that he believes it to be in all things agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. But he doth not commit himself to one day, or week, or month, or year, thereafter, but is expected to be in continual consultation of the word of God, for more and yet more light; which, as he discovereth, he is to bring not to the confession, but the confession unto it. And if, as he grows in the knowledge of truth Divine, he divergeth from the confession, what is he to do? To make it known by all means; first, by preaching in the congregation where his necessary daily duty lies; next, in the assemblies of the church, when occasion occurreth. This is exactly what Mr. Scott did. And when this is done with all seriousness and decency, what is the duty of the church? To hear their brother's views; and try them by the Scriptures. If they are right to adopt them, and alter the confession accordingly; if they are wrong, to deal with him, and endeavour to recover him to the footsteps of truth. But in this case, the General Assembly said the Westminster Confession is enough: doth he differ from it? then let him be dismissed from the number of our preachers; who are thereby declared to be responsible to a book of uninspired divines, not to the word of the Eternal and unchangeable God.

With respect to my own case, it is so novel and unparalleled in the history not only of ecclesiastical courts of conscience and charity, but of civil courts of justice, that I know not how to take an estimate of it. In all former instances in the Church of Scotland, as of Dr. Gairdner, the Marrow of Modern Divinity, &c.; and even in the Church of Rome, as in the famous Bulls against Jansenius and Quesnel; certain propositions were drawn out of the book, which being made the subject of consideration were pronounced heretical, and so the book was condemned. But, in this case, there were no propositions exhibited, there was no time for deliberation allowed; a committee brought up a report, and the members of the court began to pronounce sentence, one after another, in the most violent and bitter strain; some of them with raillery and mockery. Then

they proceeded without serving me with any notice, or citing me, or hearing me, or taking any measure to reclaim me, to warn the church against me as an heretic, and to set a watch upon me, if I should venture within their jurisdiction. If, instead of being a grave, religious, and pious work of an unblemished Christian Minister, whom God had honoured in no slight degree, it had been some work issued from the shop of the infidels and scorners; if, instead of being brought before the venerable the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, it had been brought before the Court of King's Bench or the Old Bailey; if, instead of being charged with blasphemy against the Holiness of the Son of God, it had been charged merely with a libel against the character of some one of his Majesty's lieges, it would have had a fair and candid trial. Counsel would have been heard on the one side and the other, the author would have had all the privileges of a British subject and an innocent man, till he should be found guilty: but in this case I do find in one hour my character destroyed (so far as they can do it), my book condemned, the liberty and dignity of my office taken away, myself branded, without either indictment, knowledge of my accuser, power of answering for myself, trial, or any thing which pertaineth to honour, justice, conscience, or charity.

In the eye of truth, therefore, the actings of the last General Assembly have a threefold aspect; one against God, another against the church, and a third against the dignities and rights of men. Against God they have decreed that he doth not love every man, and that his Son hath not died for every man; that he was not manifested in flesh of our flesh, and doth not assuredly work in the believer confidence towards himself. Against the church they have decreed that its offices are not constituted under Christ, but under the Westminster synod of divines, and that its office-bearers are to be tried not by the Holy Scriptures, but by the Westminster Confession of Faith; and against the dignities and rights of man, they have decreed that they may be violently taken away, without libel or probation, or sisting of the person, or sight of his accusers, or answer for himself, in one rapturous and riotous sederunt of his judges; if men, following such a procedure, may be called by that sacred name. Such I conceive to be the account of that Assembly's doings in their threefold aspect, divine, ecclesiastical, and personal. And as it is the part of a judge to censure what is wicked, I do solemnly declare, that in the annals of the church I do not know such a combination of unprincipled acts done by any Assembly within the short period of one week, and I am convinced that if the same hardihood which now prevails in Scotland, to justify or palliate these things continue, it will bring down upon that land and church some of the most

fearful judgments of God which have ever been seen upon the earth.

But what is the authority of that Assembly which hath done the deed? How doth it implicate the Church of Scotland? This is the next point of inquiry, to which we now address ourselves with all carefulness.

The General Assembly is the supreme council of the church, composed of somewhat more than one-fourth part of all the ministers, and about half as many elders. In all causes of doctrine or discipline, it is the court of ultimate resort, from whose decision there is no appeal. It hath no power to change laws or ordinances, but must first transmit any overture to that effect to the Presbyteries, where the matter is deliberated upon, and by the majority of their returns it is determined. Every thing therefore continues as it is constituted in the law-books or canons of the church, until a majority of the Presbyteries have decided that it shall be altered. Now, because the General Assembly is only *judicial*, and not *legislative*, and because the church hath made no alteration in her laws, many are disposed to look upon their decisions as but of slight consequence, affecting only the persons concerned, and no-wise affecting the Church of Scotland as a whole, in the sight of God and of his people. This conclusion would be just, if man could constitute the church as he pleaseth, and then ask God to judge accordingly. If God will be content to adopt our distinction of *judicial* and *legislative*, if he will be pleased to consider the Church of Scotland as innocent of the deed, until a majority of Presbyteries have approved it, we would acquiesce in this conclusion. But because we have God and not man to deal with, it is necessary, in order to ascertain the authority of that body by which the deed hath been done, to consider what is his view of a church, and of the councils of a church.

The church, in God's sense, which is the only true one, consisteth of the true members of Christ Jesus, united to him by living faith, the gift of the Father, and the operation of the Holy Ghost. And this church is one and indivisible, through the oneness of the Head and Spirit, though of many members, in many places subsisting. It hath no division proper to itself, but is intended to heal all the divisions of mankind, by teaching them that they are made of one blood, for the one end of glorifying God who created, and Christ who redeemed them. And in order to counteract the diversity of speech and nation and kindred, and bring about peace and unity amongst all the tribes and tongues upon the earth, the church ever laboureth. But because the members of Christ are not a company of invisible spirits, but of living men, who are expected to meet together, and edify one another with their several gifts, and all of them

to stand forth like a city upon a hill in the sight of the world, and to testify upon the house tops for Christ, against all wickedness; it is absolutely necessary, that in every place where Christians are found, there should be a provision for their congregating and communing together, in order to fulfil the high and holy purposes of worship and of witness, of piety and of charity, for which they are set in the world. And accordingly without dividing the body of Christ, or weakening the unity of the church, the Apostles of the Lord did in every city, town, and place, yea sometimes in single houses constitute churches which they addressed as "the churches of Galatia," "the churches of Achaia," "the churches of Thessalonica," &c. And the Great Head of the church himself in the Apocalypse, doth in like manner address the seven churches in Asia; comprehending them in one vision, and yet distinguishing them as to their condition. And thus did the Reformers of the church in Scotland look upon the churches in their land*. These churches were each constituted under one responsible person, called "the angel of the church," who was helped in his care by "the elders and the deacons," and other office-bearers, to whom he communicated a delegated authority, without thereby parting with his own sole responsibility as the pastor of the people. Churches were thus constituted in every place, and were left to labour there in the work of the Lord, edifying themselves in love, and converting sinners unto the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Every parish in Scotland is constituted into such a church, and the large towns are divided into several portions, each with a church of the like kind established for the same ends.

This now is the aspect in which the Lord looketh upon the church within the realm of Scotland; not as one great body constituted of Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, with divers powers and functions judicial and legislative, but as so many churches as there are pastors with flocks, and ordinances of preaching, discipline, and sacraments. And for each of these churches he taketh the pastor as responsible; and according to his doings, the flock will be visited. There is another aspect of the subject derived from the relation of the church to the state: but that the question may not become too intricate upon our hands, let us keep this out of view at present; the more as it is not essential but accidental to the church to be established, and therefore only a particular case of the general question; and the church hath always most solemnly protested against being changed in any thing thereby. This, then, is the simple state

* See "Scottish Confession," Art. XVIII., and Preface to the Original Documents of our Church, now republished by the author of this paper; who counts it a matter of so much importance, that he permits—yea, will thank—any one to republish this paper, in whole or in part, in the form of a tract.

of the question before us for judgment. Of these pastors, somewhere between a third or a fourth part being assembled together, have unanimously denied the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and advanced a modern book to the level, and, for all ecclesiastical uses, above the level of the word of God; and not only so but have cast out those ministers of Christ who stood for the truth of his name and the honour of his word. Taking as the ground of our judgment, then, Christ's dealings with the seven churches of Asia, we give it as our deliverance that the act of the General Assembly is the act of all and each of the pastors who were members thereof, and that Christ looks upon every one of the hundreds of ministers who took part in, or did not oppose, the doings of that Assembly as guilty of all the deeds thereof; and because the churches are always looked upon as represented in their angels, he is angry with all those churches, and, if they repent not, will visit every one of them according to their deeds. The guilt is not divided share and share alike over the churches whose ministers sat in that assembly, and were art and part in their monstrous deeds; but it lies in all its weight upon each one of them, and will come with its proper retribution upon each of them, if they repent not. The people think little of this, the ministers still less. One common sleep beguiles them to perdition. The more fervently, O Lord, do I beseech thee to carry these truths into every corner of my miserable sin-hardened native land.

And how is it with respect to those churches whose ministers did not personate them in that ungodly assembly? Here again if we could get God to adopt our ideas, and act according to them, it would be easy to say, they were represented therein (for the members go from the several presbyteries by election, although, to prevent contention and partiality, they have generally sacrificed this principle to the convenience of rotation); but because God will judge by his own rule of judgment we must weigh this also in the balances of the sanctuary. Those ministers who had no part in the transaction, and whose churches therefore are not implicated in the guilt of it, must either approve or disapprove of the thing which hath been done; that is, of the casting out of these men from the preacher's and the pastor's office for maintaining the fundamental truths of the Gospel. They will shew their disapproval by preaching the more zealously the repudiated truths, and, on all occasions public and private, protesting against the wickedness. But words are not enough in a case of this kind, or indeed in any case: acts are what God looks to; personal acts, with all their consequences. If Campbell and M'Lean, were ministers of Christ before this sentence, they are not less ministers of Christ because they have singly contended against a host of the enemies of the truth; and received the honourable distinction of being evil spoken of and cast out for the name of

the Son of Man. And, being so, they ought to have the right hand of fellowship from all true ministers only the more heartily stretched out; and with right hand of fellowship, they ought to have all the privileges of Christian ministers and preachers of the Gospel. They are the only ostensible witnesses at this moment in Scotland for the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. By apparently a unanimous voice, they have been cast out, carrying the truth along with them. Every one therefore who rallies round the truth should rally round them. For truly the Church of Scotland without the truth is but the synagogue of Satan. And if we have a huge majority against the truth and a very small remnant for the truth, there can be no doubt where the true church is, and with this all ministers and all people should associate themselves. My opinion is, therefore, that as in the time of Athanasius, every orthodox bishop received and supported him, so now every orthodox minister in the Church of Scotland ought to receive into their pulpits, and into their most sacred communions, these faithful men of God. Acting upon this principle, I have invited Mr. M'Lean to preach in my pulpit; and, in the face of all consequences, would in all ways honour him and Campbell as true and tried ministers of God.

In this judgment I am contemplating the Church of Scotland not in a national character, but according to the essential character which cannot be changed of many churches with each its bishop and his council of elders and deacons. I lay it down as an axiom in all ecclesiastical questions, that these several churches have each a several responsibility directly unto Christ, and I am now considering what that responsibility is. Some will think that it is enough they preach the truth which hath been rejected, without receiving the persons into their pulpits. I think not; because the church of Christ standeth not in truths, but in persons. "When He ascended up on high, He gave," not truths, but persons, "some apostles, some evangelists, some prophets, some pastors and teachers." These persons are what we are responsible for, not abstract truths. It is an entire mistake to suppose the church standeth in books to which we are administrators, or that it standeth in a confederacy of sessions, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies. Both the book and the courts are accidental, arising out of controversies of doctrine and cases of discipline; persons are the essentials of the church, and of all persons, official and gifted persons are the most essential, being as it were the ganglionic system through the body for communicating with the Head, and imparting the spirit of life to the several parts where they are stationed. If so, then the offence unto Christ is done when offence is done to one of his little ones, to persons; and then it is we are called to stand in with our succour. This would no doubt lead to a prosecution for divisive courses, and unless God inter-

posed it would end in deposition and deprivation. But to this we must make up our minds when the Lord requires us to do so. It is a mistake to think that the responsibility of a person to Christ the Head-person can be covered or cloaked by any other person or assembly of persons. But that the responsibility of the pastor or angel of a church should be so interrupted is beyond all bearing, seeing he is the person in whom the whole church is looked upon as represented. And wherein, then, it may be asked, consisteth the authority of an ecclesiastical assembly? The answer is, In the personal authority of the men therein assembled. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," Christ gave not Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies, but persons, gifted persons, Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Pastors and Teachers; who have their authority from the gifts of the Holy Ghost in them invested, and from nothing else whatever. And when two of these or two hundred of them meet together, they have the promise of the Holy Ghost to be with them, and what they decree they decree in the name of the Holy Ghost: "It seemed good unto us and unto the Holy Ghost." It is not blasphemy for an assembly of office-bearers in the church thus to speak. Thus they **MUST** speak; and whether they express it or not, God holdeth them to this their gifts and calling, which is without repentance. What an awful predicament! but it is the predicament of every Eldership, Presbytery, Synod and Assembly in the land. And when we call to mind what sort of meetings these are, and how utterly incongruous their proceedings with this their Divine constitution, can we wonder that at length, wearied and worn out, the Holy Ghost should have left the Presbyteries of Dumbarton and of Irvine, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, and the General Assembly of 1831, to do the things which they have done?

But if such be the very august and venerable, yea and divine character of an assembly, or council of gifted persons, doth this not modify the former judgment as to the duty of ministers to receive into their pulpits, and every other fellowship, those faithful men who have been ejected by a sentence of the supreme court? The answer is, That because an ecclesiastical court is constituted in the Holy Ghost, we may not from this conclude, that it hath in any case acted by the Holy Ghost. It may have quenched, resisted, and even blasphemed the Holy Ghost. When they give their decrees to be kept by the churches, it belongs to me as a minister and angel of a church to judge whether they be according to the mind of the Spirit; and if I deem them so to be, then I sanction them, and issue them with authority to my church, who again are required personally to consult the Holy Ghost, and exercise their individual respon-

sibility as to the observance thereof. Nothing in heaven or earth, or under the earth, can set aside the responsibility of a living man; still more of a gifted office-bearer; still more of the head ruler or angel of a church. He cannot be covered but by Christ. Yet behoveth he to give most reverend heed to the decision of any council, but not implicitly to observe it, unless the Holy Ghost in his heart approve it. And if he do otherwise, he is guilty both for himself, and has brought guilt on all his church which he representeth. In approving the decree, he saith it is of the Holy Ghost; in disapproving it, he saith it is not of the Holy Ghost; and then, forasmuch as the court is constituted in the Holy Ghost, his so saying doth directly accuse them of having resisted the Holy Ghost in that their action. Now, whosoever of the ministers of the Church of Scotland are not prepared to say that it is of the Holy Ghost, to deny God's love to, and Christ's death for, every man, Christ's consubstantiality with us in the flesh, his fellowship in all our temptations, being sinless, and that faith is the assurance of God's forgiveness, are bound unto Christ to reject the decrees, come what will, and to take by the hand the men who have been thus ignominiously deprived. Such is my judgment with respect to the ministers of the Church of Scotland. And now with respect to the people:

Practically the people of Scotland have often decided this question before now, by the simple rule of Christ for judging false prophets and teachers from true ones; namely, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Upon which rule proceeding, the laity of Scotland have never hesitated when men of faithful doctrine and holy lives were cast out of the church, to hear them in preference to the lazy and worthless shepherds whom the courts of the church and the laws of the land forced in upon them. And if in doing this, they had been careful against contracting schismatical feelings and principles, they exercised an indefeasible right, and did a most commendable thing. But all that hath happened in Scotland heretofore, is but a small matter compared with that which hath now fallen out. The question between the Culdees and the Romanists, between the Romanists and the Protestants, between the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians, between the Churchmen and the Seceders, were insignificant compared with the questions which are now at issue. For never till now were the three persons of the Godhead struck at in the very heart of their being and offices. And the marvel is, that all denominations are of one mind in detesting the truth; Churchmen, Seceders, Episcopalians also, so far as I am informed, Independents, Baptists, and all other sects. Some might say, And why not then at once give them the credit of knowing better than you, and yield up the controversy? The answer is, "There

is a Spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty hath given him life; we have an unction from the Holy One, and we know all things, and we need not that any man teach us, but as the same anointing teacheth us of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as he hath taught us, we shall abide in him."

The question, in respect of the people, is very simple: "If these men were true ministers of Christ, and preachers of his Gospel before, seeing they have done nothing to degrade themselves, but on the contrary have been honoured of God to suffer for his truth's sake, they are ministers and preachers still." This is the simple answer to every one who hath discernment enough to see the total desertion of the Holy Ghost, the eclipse of all light, and the power of the prince of darkness which rested upon the General Assembly that condemned the truth, and cast out the ministers of the truth. But those (alas! that they should be so many) who have no life of Christ in them, or so small a measure of it as not to be able to discern the grievous heresies which that Assembly acted upon, ought to follow the Lord's rule and judge by the fruits. If the ejected ministers should take up the spirit of retaliation, if they should be set upon making a party; if they should be more anxious to justify themselves than the truth of Christ in them; if, instead of bearing strong, stedfast, and holy witness for God against the false doctrine, ungodly spirit, unrighteous ways, and wicked lives of the clergy, they should run astray into sarcasm, scorn, railery, mockery, contempt, and the like evil dispositions of the mind; then, let them be forsaken of the people of God: but if they carry themselves with meekness, yet with severity, and bear the reproach of Christ patiently, and labour without weariness in his service; then for any of the people to turn their back upon them, is to turn the back on Christ; for any one to withdraw from hearing them, is to withdraw from hearing God, whose ambassadors they are.

But this is not all. The people of God have still another duty to perform. It is written, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not unto your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10). What doctrine is this which should make us so separative from him that holdeth it? The doctrine that "Jesus Christ is not come in flesh" [not "*in the flesh*," but "*in flesh*"]. Now this is the very doctrine which was rejected by the assembled ministers with unspeakable loathing. That Christ came in flesh, such as flesh is, and hath been since the fall of man, they utterly denied; that he came in flesh, having the law of the flesh in it, they stormed at and scouted as the most hideous blasphemy. I do say, therefore, that, if we are to obey the apostolical commandment, we should

in no wise encourage any preacher who bringeth such doctrine. Surely a curse of God is upon him, and those that cleave to him shall share of it. The duty which the Christian people owe to those ministers who in the General Assembly did give their condemnation of this doctrine by which we hold the Head, is, in their several parishes to go boldly in and ask them to their face, if they believe that Christ came in flesh, and had the law of the flesh, and the temptations of flesh to struggle with and overcome: and if they confess not to this doctrine, to denounce them as denying the Lord that bought them, as wolves in sheep's clothing, and by no means to hear them, or honour them any more as ministers of Christ, but as ministers of antichrist, which verily they are, every one of them who hath not this doctrine; however smooth, sleek, and fair their carriage may be.

And because from all appearance, the great body, almost the unanimity, of the ministers of Scotland, both of the church and of the sects, are set against this truth, through the spirit of ignorance and error which is in them, what are the godly people of the land, the very small remnant which God hath left us, to do? If there had been an orthodox and godly Liturgy, as in the Church of England, and a written service pertaining to each sacrament and ordinance of religion, I should at once have said, Join in the service, but countenance not the preaching of the man who denies the flesh of Christ; but, because the prayers of such ministers are as bad, if not worse than their preaching, I am of opinion, that it is not dutiful to be present at or to take part in any worship of which such a minister of antichrist is the leader and the mouth. These men are to be avoided, and not in any way countenanced, according to the Apostle's injunctions: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. xvi. 17, 18). Let the people of God, therefore, who are thus conditioned, see if they can find any minister in their town or neighbourhood, who holdeth this doctrine, and to him let them cleave. But if none such be at hand, let them do what the Waldenses did, and the Albigenses, and our fathers, at the beginning of the Reformation; let them meet together, and worship amongst themselves, crying to the Lord to raise them up Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Pastors and Teachers, and Elders and Deacons, and the other office-bearers in his house. And when they are thus faithfully waiting upon the Lord, let them be assured that the Lord will soon answer them according to his mind. My judgment is, that while they give reverence and obedience unto those perverters of the way of godliness, they

can expect and will receive no help at the hand of the Lord. So long as it was a question of liking and disliking, of style and manner, of reading or not reading from a written manuscript, of Calvinistic or Arminian doctrine, I always gave it as my judgment that people should abide under the ministry where God had cast their lot. But now that it is a question concerning Christ's coming in the flesh, God's love to sinners, and the Spirit's work of assured faith, I give quite the opposite judgment, and call upon every one, upon his faithfulness to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to separate from the ministers of antichrist.

There is a way of viewing this matter, so as to bring out a different conclusion, which I desire to open a little; the more, as for some time it held my own judgment in its fastnesses, and was by myself advocated, till I was delivered by the much study and discourse of the vision of the seven churches in the Apocalypse. It is this: The Church of Scotland is one body into which you are baptized, and of which you enjoy the communion. Your parish, and your parish minister, are but as it were a finger in this body, which may be weak while the body is in health. Therefore be assured, through the communion of saints, of having a part of the life brought into you, though sitting under the most lifeless ministry. Besides, you may not separate yourself from your parish church, without contracting the sin of schism, unless you can say that the Church of Scotland is become apostate. Now this is what you cannot say, because her standards remain unaltered, though those who administer to them be found most miserably changed, and removed far from that foundation on which they profess to rest. And besides, your obedience to the laws of the land requires it of you.

In this argument there is a great deal to agree with. First, the doctrine of the communion of saints, in virtue of which a member of Christ any where, and any how, conditioned, may be assured of sufficient strength and nourishment, is most true and cannot be carried too far. If one be by Providence, or the obligations of duty, as in the case of a wife, child, or servant, placed under the sound of continual error; or if one be separated from the ordinances in journeying, by sea or land, or sojourning in heathen or antichristian parts, or in sickness and imprisonment, or in any other way prevented, then, by firm faith in the communion of saints, he will surely experience the fellowship of their common joy and common suffering, and they of his, through the all-pervading and equalizing power of the one Head and the one Spirit. But if any one being at liberty do, without cause and knowingly, and in express prohibition of God, put himself under false teaching, and the pastorship of a minister of antichrist, hath he any reason to expect either the furthering or preventient grace of God? Surely not. Now this is the case we are treating of.

Multitudes of the ministers of Scotland have been revealed to be antichrist in denying that Jesus is come in the flesh, and the question is, What are the people to do? Hear them? Surely not.

What is said also of schism in the above argument is true. One may not separate from a church until it become apostate. But the application to the Church of Scotland and her standards is not true. For, as we have shewn above, the view which God takes of a church is a body of Christians gathered under the ministry and government of their pastor, with his council of elders and deacons; not a confederation of churches gathered under a Confession of Faith. And the act of apostasy is not the legislative alteration of a sound confession of faith to an unsound one; but it is the pastor or angel of a church turning from being a preacher of Christ to become a preacher of antichrist. When this is the case, that man is become apostate, with the church represented in him; from which, if we come not out, we shall be visited with their plagues. It is not that I would have these men to be rashly judged of; they have had a year and more to deliberate upon it. They have been addressed in all forms of truth and patience; they have seen the advocates and abettors of falsehood carry themselves more like Mohawk Indians, than civil and civilized men arguing upon a Christian subject; and yet such is the fierceness of spirit with which they are carried against the truth, that their violence hath only gathered more and more force. I am grieved to write these things, but I hold the pen not for man but for God; and I cannot go a hair's breadth beyond the truth of my conviction upon the one side or upon the other. The argument fails in applying that to the national confederacy, and its charter of confederation, which is true of every church and its pastor under whom it is gathered, and by whom it is represented. It is true also of the national church, in such circumstances as are supposed, but not on that account less true of the individual churches in such circumstances as are now in actual existence. I make no hesitation in affirming, that all those churches are in a state of apostasy, whose ministers are not preaching that Christ came in flesh, but maintaining with the General Assembly some other doctrine.

As to that part of the argument which derives its strength from the authority of the king, it is of no weight to a true churchman, who holds that the king can make no innovations in the church; that he can and ought to interfere *apud sacra*, but not *inter sacra*; that is to say, do what in him lies to promote the church of Christ, her true doctrines and wholesome discipline, throughout the land, but at no rate to make or to meddle in things proper and interior to the church. Therefore whatever duties we owe to the church anterior to its establish-

ment, we owe to it posterior thereto, and no more. Our duty to the king is happily by the circumstance and condition of his establishing the church, brought into sweet accordancy with our duty to the church. And he doth thereby purchase to himself infinite prayers, blessings, and thanksgivings, which mightily redound to the good of his person and his kingdom; but the king, no, nor a father can exact any thing of us contrary to the mind of the King of kings; or if he do, we may not obey, whose condition of taking service under Christ is, that we should have forsaken all, yea, and hated all. And to honour a minister of antichrist, as if he were a minister of Christ, not to separate from him; and in all lawful ways denounce him, and endeavour his subversion, is contrary to the mind of Christ, and therefore may not for any sake of life or death, of principalities, or powers, be done. But this is a question which hath been put to rest by the Act of Toleration. It is not against the mind of the king, or the laws of the kingdom, to worship God where and in what manner we please.

With respect to that part of the argument which applies to the Church of Scotland, properly so called; that is to say, the members of Christ, who have now, for sixteen centuries and more, by the singular grace of our God, been found in that land worshipping the one God and Father; I observe that to these men I cleave with firm continuity, because I know that since the first beginnings of religion, among our Caledonian fathers, there have been innumerable prayers, whose record is on high, offered for the people of that land; which prayers I regard as the precious portion of the name of Scotchmen, and from which I would never cut myself off by any act of expatriation or of schism. But as the Church of Scotland out of Culdee purity once changed into Papal whoredom, and out of that passed into Protestant faithfulness; so now, out of Protestant apostasy, she is passing again into a new form which hath not yet received any name, and had better receive none. That the General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries, and Kirk Sessions, with all the other furniture of the church, are about, like the veil of the temple, to be rent in twain, or to be left like the withered fig-tree, fruitless and barren, I firmly believe, and yet would do all I could to retard it. But that the Church of Scotland will survive till Christ come, I never doubt, and am now shewing the method in which it is to be preserved. By separating the precious from the vile, by abstaining from the honour and reverence of antichristian preachers, by gathering the church under the wing of the faithful ministers, by these ministers willing to be cast out for his name's sake; and when there are no faithful ministers, by gathering the church into this man's house and that man's barn, and waiting upon the Lord till he shew gifts for rule and govern-

ment; and then by seeking of the faithful ministers to come and set these men over them, which was the order followed at the Reformation;—in this way, and not by mixing yourselves up with these enemies of the truth, who did roar in the sanctuary of God, and hew down the carved work thereof. It is thus, oh ye faithful and true men in the realm of Scotland, that you are to preserve the name and the testimony of Jesus in the midst of you, and revive the church, and shake off her oppressors, and become strong again. For these men, called your ministers, are for the most part mockers, hard-hearted, blinded mockers of the truth, without modesty, without learning, without patience to hear, or capacity to understand any point of true faith.

If any one think I judge these men harshly, let him reflect upon the language which the true prophets of the Lord use to, and of, the false ones: for example, Jeremiah's language to Pashur the son of Immer (Jer. xx.), Christ's to the scribes and doctors, Paul and Peter and John in all their Epistles to the false teachers who went about denying the truth, and decrying the faithful preachers of it. And never, since Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, have men withstood the ministers of truth, and stricken them with more restless barbarity, than did the ministers, especially those of the Evangelical sect, in the last General Assembly. Would I give up these men as undone and lost for ever? No; but I would testify against them, and the evil that is in them, to the saving of my own soul, and to the deliverance of the souls of the people. If the greater part of the crew have got drunk in a perilous passage, what do those who are sober but take counsel with one another how they may best save the ship, and the drunkards also? So would I, in order to save these ministers from the guilt of their own terrible deeds; and in order to save their flocks, and in order to save the whole church and the land, testify against their abominable doctrines, by refusing to listen to them. And would I cease, therefore, to be less a member of the church of God in that parish, town, or city where I resided? Verily no. Or less willing to sit under a pastor who had the word of life on his lips, when such a one was sent? Verily no. It is one chief part of a Christian's calling, to testify to the truth, and to make a distinction between the preachers of truth and the preachers of error; but if he is bound in duty to God, or to Christ the Head of the church, to abide under the ministry of one who does not hold the Head, how shall he be able to testify to the truth? It is clear to me, that these things cannot co-exist; namely, an obligation to witness against error, and an obligation to take a preacher of error for your minister. The Church of England, or of Scotland, may license and ordain men who deny God's love to all men, Christ's coming in the flesh, and the Holy Ghost's work of

assured faith. And they may have the king's sanction to teach and to preach in the parish where you reside : but neither king nor church can bind me to acknowledge such a one as a herald of Christ, and an ambassador of God. I am called upon at once to gainsay and gainstand such a false teacher ; to beware of him myself, and to warn others against him. I may not give him my countenance, I may not sit silent and hear him ; and because it is contrary both to law and good order to testify against him by interruption, I am bound not to bring myself into the peril of hearing the counsel that causeth to err. So long as it is a question of imperfect knowledge, of ignorance and unacquaintance with the truths, of manner and of degree, I must and ought to forbear, and to separate were schism : but when it becomes a matter of momentous truth and error, as in the case before us, the hoisting of Antichrist's standard, I must separate from such a one ; and not to separate is to allow him in his evil deeds, and to help the people into the snare. Things are now come to a crisis ; the church is in the condition in which Jerusalem was in the days of Jeremiah, and the word of the Lord is to us as it was unto him : " If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me : and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth : let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee : for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible " (Jer. xv. 19—21). Till this grand act of apostasy on the part of the ministers, I have steadily advocated the other and the opposite course of each man abiding constant to his church, and under his pastor, praying for better times, and contented to suffer. But I can do so no longer. I give it as my deliberate judgment, that it is sin to abide under the teaching of men, be they Churchmen or Dissenters, who bring with them their doctrines of devils, which had the sanction of the late General Assembly.

And yet I would have the step to be taken with all Christian wisdom and patience and long-suffering, in faith and love, not in haste and anger. The Christian people throughout the land who feel themselves thus conditioned ought to enter into friendly converse and loving communion with the pastors, and with one another ; and talk over these matters gravely, man to man. They should see whether there is any hope of amendment, and not rashly make a man an offender for one word, or even an apostate for one act. For even him that is an heretic we may not reject till after one or two admonitions ; much less may we on slight grounds, or any but the gravest considerations, separate

ourselves from the pastors under whom the Head of the church hath placed us. It is not till we perceive the wound to be incurable, till they take a distinct position against Christ, and by public acts declare it, and refuse to repent, and harden themselves in their wickedness, that we are called upon to disallow their office and authority over us; and take measures for the common weal of the church against her apostate ministers. Thus the Reformation from Popery commenced, and in some countries the bishops went with it, and the church continued under her former heads; in other cases the bishops declared against it, and the church reconstituted others under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. This work in Scotland hath begun with the ejection of bishops; and in that way it will proceed, until the salt being all cast forth the mixture shall corrupt. I for one can with a clear conscience say, "We would have healed Babylon, but she would not be healed."

The whole of this judgment I rest upon the fact, that these ministers have declared themselves apostate from the faith in what they did in the last General Assembly; whereof if they repent not, nor give public confession of the same, they are to be concluded apostate; and therefore must be separated from, upon the same principle that the Reformers separated from the Roman-Catholic system, when by the Council of Trent it had so constituted itself apostate. All sound-minded men would agree with me in thinking, that if the Church of Scotland, considered as a whole, were to substitute the Creed of Pope Pius IV. for the Westminster Confession, it would be the duty of every true man to come out of her. In thinking thus, the principle is allowed. But then the church is considered to be national, constituted in a human document, which is man's view of the matter, whereas God's view of a church, is a body of believers in some one town or neighbourhood, gathered together and constituted under their angel. The apostasy of that angel is the apostasy of that church, and the signal for removing his candlestick out of its place, except he repent; and, being so, each man according to the principle of apostasy ought to come out from under his administration.

If these two cases of the Rev. John Campbell and the Rev. Hugh Baillie Maclean have dragged into light such fearful heresies in the doctrine of the church, as to amount to the entire apostasy of denying the Father and the Son, (for what is the Father when his love is denied, and what the Son when his flesh is denied?) then the two remaining cases adjudged by that Assembly, of Mr. Alexander Scott, preacher of the Gospel, and myself, do shew the utter ignorance of the church of her own constitution, and her departure from every sound principle of ecclesiastical polity and righteous judgment. Mr.

Scott doubted the Confession of Faith on two or three points, and asked satisfaction from the Scriptures, before he could avow it as the confession of his faith. At this time he had been called by the Scotch Congregation of Woolwich to be their pastor, and was in the midst of his trials for ordination. But as soon as these scruples arose, he came forward and besought the Presbytery to take no further trouble in the matter, as he found it impossible to confess to the doctrine of particular redemption, and the transference of the Jewish laws of the Sabbath to the Lord's day of the Christian church, and also because no Presbytery believed themselves capable of conferring by the laying on of hands those gifts which the Confession taught him to expect. As a member of Presbytery I was grieved to think that a young man of such gifts and graces should be prevented from going forward, and moved that a committee should be appointed to deal with his conscience, and see whether those scruples might not be got over; and at the same time I declared my own conviction, that the Confession did not express particular redemption, still less gainsay universal redemption, and that I firmly believed the ordinance of laying on of hands was effectual through faith, to the communication of all gifts needful for the Christian ministry. My brethren thought differently, and Mr. Scott's own mind was made up; so the conference failed. There were then two lines of procedure for him to choose between; the one to ask the Presbytery to ordain him, notwithstanding his scruples, the other to withdraw his application for ordination of his own accord. He chose the latter, being a man of a very simple character and scrupulous honesty. Here I think he fell into a snare,—the snare of a candid and ingenuous man acting for himself, instead of discerning his place in the body of Christ. Because, as the responsibility of imposing an obligation upon the ministers and members of Christ, over and beyond the written word of God, belongeth to the church in the first instance, and not to the persons of whom it is required, who are at liberty to refuse or to comply with it as they see good, so in every case in which the test is administered, in all time coming, and in this particular case, a man is at liberty to say, I cannot take the test, nevertheless I am conscious to myself of the gift of a preacher abiding in me by the Holy Ghost; and especially when, as in this case, God in his providence, and Christ, as Head of the Church, had given testimony of the same, in that a flock had twice over almost unanimously called Mr. Scott to be their minister. Whereupon, if the Presbytery had refused, the responsibility lay with them, and he, with the flock which had fixed their heart upon him, might have gone elsewhere to seek for ordination. And if they could not have found any ministers of Christ willing to concur therein, it would have been righteous before God and man to have

joined their union without this venerable and sacred ordinance. It would have been the case in which the ordinance Head must assert his own superiority to the ordinance administrators, and the standing order of the eternal government must be enforced, namely, that the ordinance was made for the creature, and not the creature for the ordinance; the thing for the person, and not the person for the thing. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Thus things stood till a member of that busy and bustling Presbytery, the Presbytery of Paisley, contentious and ever contending, quarrelsome and ever quarrelling, came up to London; and because Mr. Scott had received his licence to preach from them, they deemed it their duty to meddle in the matter, and to call him before them. This was entirely beyond their powers, for he had done nothing within their jurisdiction, right or wrong, upon which there might have been even a pretence for proceeding against him. In this began a series of unconstitutional actings which went on unto the end, all springing from a most erroneous principle, that because a body hath some hand in conferring an office, it hath power at any time to revoke it. Can a father take the life from a child when it pleaseth him, or whenever the child offendeth him, because he hath been the author of its life? yet he may put the child forth from his home, because that is under his keeping. Can the church dissolve a marriage because one of the parties faileth in some part of the marriage contract? Or a king and a nation dissolve at will the covenant of government and obedience which is between them? It is not the presbytery which makes the preacher, they do but ascertain the gift of the Holy Ghost that is in him; and certify the same in the midst of the churches, which having confidence in their judgment receive such a one to exercise his gift amongst them. And every other presbytery, feeling itself to be the guardian of its own bounds, hath power to take a proof of his gifts, if they please, before admitting him to minister amongst them. But the Presbytery of Paisley, ever more heady than wise, must be guardian over the churches in London, and take away from Mr. Scott a gift which they did not give him. If the gift was in him when they proved him, then it is in him still; for "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." They might, if they had seen him unfaithful, unwise, or disorderly in the exercise of it, have put him under a temporary suspension if he had come within their bounds. And, in such a case, they must have proceeded upon certain overt acts of unfaithfulness, or disorder, in the matter of preaching, sufficient to justify such a measure. But there was no such case; he was exercising no privilege of preaching amongst them; he was troubling them in no way whatever. But those men, alike igno-

rant of all ecclesiastical principle and procedure, must hurry him down from his duties, a distance of 400 miles, to appear at their bar, for no transgression against them. But, say the Numberers of this day, for Reasoners are they not, Seest thou not that he could not have been licensed without subscribing the Confession? and if he cannot sign it over again, his licence is null and void. That is, the Westminster Confession makes the preacher, and not the Holy Ghost; the Westminster Confession tries the preacher, and not the Presbytery. And where, then, O Numberers, was the church and the order of preachers before the Westminster Confession was brought into existence? Any one of the circumstances connected with the ordering of a thing being wanting, the Numberers of this day say that the essence of the thing is wanting. I deny that either one confession or another hath any thing to do with the essence of a preacher, either in respect to the conferring of the gift, or to the ascertaining that the gift is there. The one belongs to the common unction of the Holy Ghost in the body of the church, thrusting forth one member into one ministry, and another member into another; the other belongs to the gift of the Holy Ghost, resident in the order of preachers, which recognizeth itself in the new member thus thrust forth. A confession is a mere testimony lifted up by the church against the heresies and errors of that particular time; it doth not stamp itself as a complete testimony, not to be added to or taken from; it doth not supersede the Holy Scriptures, nor present them in an improved form; much less is a man made a preacher by setting his name to it, nor is a preacher unmade by taking his name away from it. But more of this hereafter.

Mr. Scott obeyed the summons of the Presbytery of Paisley. I would not obey such a summons, nor think it right to do so; because, though there had been ground for justifying such a summons, the place of the fault was beyond their bounds of jurisdiction, yea, and even of the General Assembly itself, as was ruled in my own case. The Presbytery made very brief work of it: at one sederunt they took away his licence, upon no other ground but because, according to his own declaration, he could not assent to every jot and tittle in the Westminster Confession. They were at no pains to inquire as to the importance of the matters which were called into question; nor to put it to their own conscience if they themselves believed every jot or tittle of that book; nor to ascertain the proper place of a confession among the other qualifications of the preacher; nor to examine whether the preacher had been making a proper or improper use of that gift of preaching which they had declared to be in him; nor to give him satisfaction from the Scriptures upon the points at issue; nor to give him a trial for his preacher's office, by the statutes of the Holy Scriptures, which are the statutes of our

King. These questions are mere speculations and subtleties in our day of the Alphabet and the Multiplication Table; the question was as clear as any sum in Coker, or any word of two syllables in the Reading-made-easy. A preacher is not made without signing the Confession of Faith: but this man cannot sign the confession of Faith; therefore he is no preacher. He may be a very good man, and the son of a good man, learned in the Scriptures, and unrivalled in his gift of teaching them to others; he may have the gift of a Paul, or of a Luther, or of a Knox: but what is that to us? he cannot subscribe the book agreed upon by the divines who sat at Westminster in the year 1646; therefore he can be no preacher in the Church of Scotland, which is an integral portion of the church of Christ, the pillar and ground of the Truth. Ah me! how oft have I been thus reasoned with! Of all the precious and godly men I came in contact with, there was hardly one who did not reason thus. And they set me down as a man of dubious honesty, for taking any higher or other view of the subject. Oh! how this hath grieved me! But the scene had to be acted on a more conspicuous stage than the presbytery-house of Paisley.

Mr. Scott appealed to the General Assembly, to protect and preserve the sacred rights of a preacher invaded by that unthinking and unreflecting presbytery; little deeming what rougher handling awaited him there. To me the temper and composition of that court was so well known that I anticipated the result, not only in his case but in Mr. Maclean's; wherein, by every one, and by the Assembly itself, the very opposite verdict was anticipated. I said to that persecuted minister, at my own table, before he went down unto the conflict, "Brother, if thou be faithful to thy Master in thine appearance there, be prepared for their taking thy cause into their own hands, and deposing thee by an instant vote." But poor Scott could not even get a hearing. He was interrupted in one of the ablest, soundest, and most ecclesiastical speeches ever heard within their walls. Even the dignity and decency which become the judges of the supreme court of the church could not prevent the ill-instructed and unpractised man from interrupting him, and virtually preventing his pleading his own cause. For when he found that it was deemed derogatory to the dignity of the General Assembly to pursue his train of argument, he very wisely and meekly, like his Master, sat down and kept silence, and left his cause to the vindication of God and the Head of the church. The line of argument which he pursued was this: Our confession confesseth itself to be nothing save as it is sustained by the Scripture: the church commandeth every one who findeth any thing in her confession not consenting with Scripture to bring it forward, and promiseth him satisfaction from the Scriptures: therefore, though there were nothing at stake, I am entitled to have this issue between the

Presbytery and me tried by the Scriptures; but when the royal ordinance of preaching, and the noble office of a preacher is at stake, of which I have been deprived, surely you will not hesitate to yield me that common right. They laughed him to scorn; they called it misplaced talent, a misleading of his cause in order to carry bye intents, an insult to the dignity of the venerable court. In this cause, as well as in the others, this was a common way of arguing,—If these men will broach their new and heretical doctrines, can they not hie them out of the church and preach them far and wide? nobody will meddle with them; why then will they be troubling us, and breaking their own vows? To this argument he addressed himself like a sound-minded and right-hearted churchman; teaching them, that the privilege of preaching other doctrine than that which the church held, came from the Act of Toleration, and pertained not to him as a member of the church, but as a subject of the king, with which they had nothing to do in their jurisdiction; that for him or any man voluntarily to go out of the church is an act of schism, which could only be justified by the apostasy of the whole church; and for them to suggest such a step was to give up the reins of discipline, and to cast the keys, and the power of the keys, behind their back; to invite divisive courses, to propagate dissent, and to court disunion, which above all things they ought to abhor. But considerations like these are all out of date. It is true they are in the Scriptures, and in the canons of all churches, and no where more strongly insisted on than in the Confession of Faith; but what of that? it is not the contents of the Confession, but the signing of the Confession, which is now in question. Oh! I wonder how God had patience with such awful hypocrisy. I question whether there were three men in that presence who did assent to every thing written in the Confession exactly as it is there written; I question whether one tenth, one fiftieth part of them have considered it from end to end. And yet they decreed that any man might be deprived of his preacher's office, and so also of his minister's office, who had any scruples upon any article of that book, or differed from any of its articles. That book, not the Bible, is then the written word to the Church of Scotland; that book, not the Holy Ghost, is the life of a preacher; the men who composed that book, not the God-man who purchased us with his blood, is the Head of the church. And most men hailed the decision as a sound and honest decision. Like rulers like people, blind leading the blind, babes ruling over babes, deceivers dealing treacherously with those who love to be deceived.

From this case it clearly appeared, that the doctrine and practice of the present race of churchmen goes upon this principle, that not the Scriptures, but the Westminster Confession, is the foundation and ultimate appeal of the church, by which all

controversies are to be tried. I had long suspected this; and as a minister I had felt it more than once to be present in the minds, and especially in the actings, of the office-bearers of the church. Their first question was always, What saith the Confession of Faith? And I had found that this was esteemed a high point of honesty; and that it was looked upon as an act of common and open dishonesty to doubt or gainsay any thing in the Confession of Faith, or even to try it by the word of God. But surely I was not prepared to find such a principle promulgated and acted upon in the supreme court of the church. Since that time I have talked over this subject and argued it with a great many persons, and have found them almost without exception eclipsing the word of God by these traditions of men. And if I advance any doctrine out of the Scripture I am straightway met by the question, What says the Confession of Faith? This hath led me to reflect much upon the subject of creeds and confessions, and to study their history in the church; and I have come to the conclusion, that, while it is the right and the duty of any minister with his church to put forth a confession of their faith unto the world, in the form of a testimony for the truth against the error, it is a wrong thing for them to impose it upon another church, or upon another generation, as a complete testimony for the truth against all error, seeing that new errors arise which require new antidotes. This I find to have been the way in the primitive church; and I think it ought to be the way still. The power of trying and proving all office-bearers should be vested in the living ministers and members of Christ, acting upon the word, and guided by the Spirit of God. To attempt to do this, or any part of it, by a dead book, is to resile from our responsibility and to surrender our privileges. The church standeth in persons, not in articles. The church is not supported by, but is the support of, the truth; is itself the pillar and ground of the truth. And the Holy Spirit in the church is the living witness of the truth, whose guardianship to add to is in fact to subvert it altogether. And I believe that by nothing hath the Spirit been so quenched as by this substitution of the wisdom and the rule of some synod, in the room of his living presence and uttered voice. This conclusion has been forced upon me by the desperate dishonour which I see done on all hands to the word and Spirit of the living God, which alone are able to sanctify and quicken the soul.

The only argument which can shew face against these plain conclusions is one which I have had to encounter in all shapes, since I took upon me to obey the commandment of the Lord, not forbidding to speak with tongues and prophesy in the church. The argument is, that we are bound by our duty to the church not to do any thing for which we have not warrant

in her constitution until we shall first have taken the sense of the whole church thereupon, and obtained their permission ; and also by our duty to the state which doth establish the church upon no other condition whatever, but that she shall abide constant to her articles of faith and canons of discipline. It is thought and believed to be a contravention of our ordination vows to do otherwise. If it really be intended by the ordination vows of a minister that he should be bound up after this manner, then are ordination vows the most awful confederacy, and direct high-treason against the rights of the Lord Jesus, the liberties of man, and the dignity of the priestly office. But I utterly deny and reject such horrible doctrine. The ordination vows laid upon a minister are intended to exhibit him at that time as free from the stain of heresy and the purpose of schism, and to impose upon him faithfulness to the flock of Christ. They are after the nature of the marriage vows, defining the relation in which he standeth to the people, and laying it upon him to fulfil that relation faithfully, as to the Lord Jesus, and not as to any presbytery or bishop, or combination of them. " Now go thy ways," say the Presbytery, after laying on their hands, " and fulfil thy office faithfully to God and the Head of the church, and let us not have any occasion to intermeddle with thee any more at all." The priest might as lief claim right to interpose between man and wife because he had married them, and insist on a weekly inspection, as the presbytery or bishop insist upon overlooking a minister who standeth or falleth to his own Master, both his and theirs. Whatever he seeth to be his duty Christward, he is bound with all speed to perform as unto the Lord and not unto man. He may suffer for it ; let him suffer as a Christian for well-doing, and not for evil-doing. But this they say is to break up all confederacy and communion, and to destroy the unity of the church. No such thing. It is the previous condition and necessary preliminary unto Christian communion, which is the unity not of slaves chained together, but of freemen, Christ's freemen, animated by one Spirit. Let the ministers of the churches be free to receive the one Spirit of Jesus, and they will come to act together in the harmony of Presbyteries and Synods : but let them be hindered and hampered in this, and they want the element of communion. It is a frame-work holding together a multitude of loose stones, not a building built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, cemented by the Spirit, and bound into one by Jesus Christ the Head of the corner. Slaves cannot understand this doctrine ; but those whom the Son hath made free know it well to be the truth, the only truth. What I am stating is not only the immutable law of the ministerial office, but it is the practical working of it in every church which is good for any thing. What parish minister in Scotland thinks that he should

go up to the Presbytery with any new matter which occurs ; and what Presbytery would endure it ? And in his daily words and actings is he to look to them, or to Jesus ; to church-law, or to the word of God ? And if, in looking to Jesus and the word of God, he hit against the church court and the church law, which ought to go to the wall ? Jesus, or the church court ; the word of God, or the laws of the church ? Out upon such effrontery. I am ashamed to argue with it any more : let it be turned out of doors.

The question of obligation to the state is still more easily disposed of, and hath in fact nothing to do with the matter. For if the church hath bartered away any of her liberties and immunities for the favour and countenance she hath of the king, she has done what she may never do, and can never do, because she is Christ's spouse, and not her own mistress. This is the fornication and adultery which constitutes her a harlot and the mother of them ; " Babylon the great, the mother of harlots." But, so far from retaining this noble freedom to serve Christ, and to bring him with her to the service and blessing of every thing which doth abide on earth, the Church of England first, and now last the Church of Scotland, have become the basest panders to the powers that be. And in the late issues some were not ashamed to lay their hands upon the Confession, and to say, By this we live. Shame befall them ! They are mounted on a throne of spiritual dignity before they know the duty of a serving-man.

The origin and principle of an establishment is the baptism of the king, who thereby becometh bound to serve the Lord in the Spirit, and to order all the house of his kingdom in the fear of the Lord, and according to the orders of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head of his church. And because God looks upon a king as answerable for all his people to the utmost of his power, he straightway addresseth himself to the work of teaching his people in the ways of the living and true God ; and to this end he calleth to his hand what ministers of the Gospel and men of God he can find in his dominions, to preach the Gospel, and openeth unto them every door of entrance into the hearts of his people. He erecteth houses wherein his people may assemble to hear the word, and giveth the preacher a portion of his meat, if need be ; he ordaineth rest from labour on the Lord's day, that there may be leisure to hear the preaching of the word, and to meditate in the law of the Lord : and all other things he doth for the bringing of the fear of God and the service of the Lord Jesus into his land, and amongst his people ; being thereto obliged by his baptismal covenant, for the salvation of his own soul, and for the blessing of his kingdom. In all this he obeyeth the great Head of the church, acknowledging Him in all his ways, just as the

father of a family in his household, or a pastor over his flock. He doth not usurp the place of a minister to rule in the church, nor of any father to meddle in his house; but simply doth his own part within the bounds of his proper habitation, and the limits of his royal prerogative. This is the true doctrine of an establishment of religion. It ought to be nothing more than the king's endeavour to exonerate his own conscience before God unto Jesus, whom God hath constituted the Prince of the kings of the earth. He meddleth not with any man's conscience to overrule it, as if he could make him believe this way or that way; only he is at charges that none of his people should be ignorant of the right way of faith. Whether the subject believes as the king believeth maketh no difference in their duties by one another. The duty of a king is the same to every free-born subject of his kingdom, and to every denizen thereof, be his faith what it may; only he must not delegate any part of his function, whether to judge or to execute judgment, to rule or to counsel, into any hands but such as are obedient unto the Lord Jesus. The whole corporation of the governors must be Christian, be the governed what they may; and every delegate of the king must shew himself no respecter of persons, but deal out impartial justice and protection to all the people.

Least of all doth the king intermeddle with those who bear rule in the house of God, the pastors, elders, and deacons of the churches. He findeth the church in existence in his dominions when he is baptized into it, and straightway becometh bound to support it in all ways within his power. If he should discern that it hath departed from the faith once delivered to the saints, and hath come to be undisciplined in the pure ways of holiness, it is his part to seek after its reformation by all the means in his power. But in doing this he must himself be under subjection to Christ in all things, and keep his place as a dutiful servant of his, baptized into the obedience of all his commandments. So far, therefore, is the church, or the king, from being bound to abide by any covenant or agreement which, in times past, they may have entered into, but which now they have discovered to be opposed to the mind of Jesus, that they are called upon, the moment they discover this, to set about the removal of the let and hindrance. It is a vile attempt to thrust Jesus out of his supremacy, for either king or church to attempt to constitute a new obligation, resting upon the foundation of their own consent and covenant. I do not say but that covenants may be necessary; for what are all laws but covenants? but no covenant made between man and man can dissolve us from the eternal and indispensable obligation of loving and serving God and his Christ in all ways whatsoever. The doctrine, therefore, that any minister of Christ's church is bound by the acts establishing

the church of these lands, so as not to be at liberty to do that which he seeth to be his duty unto God and to his Christ, I hold to be the very essence of the Papal apostasy; and I perceive with great sorrow that it is as deeply rooted in the courts, yea, in most of the ministers, of the Church of Scotland, in the elders too (and deacons, alas! there are none, or almost none), as ever it was in the darkest times of the Roman hierarchy.

The path of duty, to every minister who feels himself hampered in his faith by the Confession, or in his practice by the Acts of Uniformity, or by any human law or ordinance, be it of General Assemblies or of the whole legislative church, is, therefore, simply to regard them as good reasons for well weighing and deliberating before he take up any conviction contradictory thereof; but, having become convinced by the word and Spirit of God, he must make no tarrying, but straightway (for the Lord is even at the door) set himself in his place to correct his errors, as a minister and as a Christian; and having done so, call upon all his brethren to do likewise: not to be restrained for a moment by the question, What will my brethren think of this? what will the church do to me for this? but, hating father and brother, and church also, and loving and serving Jesus only, to go forward, within the sphere of his own responsibility, and do the thing which is right, though the next moment the world should rush amain upon his head. If it do, it will not hurt him, because from that inrushing of the world he will be preserved safe under the wings of Him that is the Almighty. On this principle I have ever acted as a ruler of the church; I have taught it to others, most frequently without success; and I lay it down as the only way in which a man can deliver his own soul, and the souls of them that hear him. Therefore let a minister preach as of the ability of Christ, sitting loose unto the laws of any church or state, to the authority of any man or body of men. Yea, verily, let him hate all men, in order to love them with God's love, in order to be Christ's disciple, and receive from him those bowels of love which nature hath not, nor can procure, save by the baptism of the Spirit under the hands of the Man Christ Jesus, the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. So soon as the Lord taught me, in my much meditation of the seven epistles to the churches of Asia, this the dignity of an angel or pastor of the church, this his responsibility to Christ alone, direct and immediate, without regard to any intermediate authority whatsoever, I went up at once and preached it fully out in the hearing of the Presbytery, and discoursed privately of it to those of the brethren who, like myself, had been most under the bondage of the presbyterial confederacy; which is good for its uses, but not good for intervening between Christ and an ordained mi-

nister; which if it dare to do, then is it no better than the pope of Rome. I had taught the doctrine before to my whole church, where a minister's duty is first to be discharged: I have since had to act upon it in the face of those whom I love most dearly, and I believe that every faithful minister of Christ's church will now have to do the same. For, in respect of the Church of Scotland, it hath been proved, beyond all question, that her ministers and elders in the General Assembly convened (and they represent pretty fairly the feeling of the church, as was evidenced by the concurrence of the lower courts) do feel that the Westminster divines are the Head of the church, and the state of Great Britain their supreme Lord.

Now the proper way of protesting is, not by running the gauntlet of the church courts, but by doing in your own room what is right, and standing to the consequences. You need not stir up the enmity of your brethren, it will rise soon enough: they are in a mood to rise against the heavens. Yet be not afraid of their terror, but "sanctify the Lord God in your heart, and be ready to give unto every one a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and with fear."

With respect to my own case I would not say much, partly because I may be thought a partial judge, but chiefly because it is not yet come to an end: they have only judged my book, and not myself: but, so far as it went, it was the most notable instance of an unlearned, irreverent, and indecent judgment that is upon record. They condemned the doctrines upon which alone the personal manifestation of a God, the redemption of our fallen nature from sin, and its resurrection from the grave, do rest. They condemned as guilty of Bourignonism a book which had a section expressly directed against that abomination. They condemned it upon the loose report of a committee, at one angry sederunt. One declamatory speech followed another: there was not one spark of theological knowledge: the most barefaced heresies were rampantly proclaimed as orthodoxy. Invective, foolish jesting, falsehood, and all manner of ribaldry, were poured out upon the head of an absent and unoffending man, who never wished to think of them but with love, nor to speak of them but with reverence, and now grieveth over their flagrant acts worthy only of condemnation and rebuke. If the ensuing General Assemblies do not conduct themselves in another style, with due respect to justice, decency, and order, that venerable body will forego its character of a court altogether, and degenerate into a rabble; its judgments will lose the nature of grave decisions, and become angry and incoherent insults upon reverend men. I know too well the dignity of my office, and from whom I hold it, to be much moved on my own account by their most violent acts; but I am concerned for what little of dignity and authority is still left them, after

more than half a century of unholy debates and unspiritual decisions. Dignified as is its constitution, and great as its services were at the time of the Reformation, the General Assembly cannot bear the opprobrium of many more such actings as those which we have been considering. Already it is a grief to all pious and enlightened members of the Church of Scotland, and the astonishment of the learned and orthodox every where. The Church of Scotland is shooting fast a-head; already the rapids have a hold of her, and she is not far from the fatal plunge: the precipice and the yawning gulf are hard at hand. Brethren, there is a God who beholdeth! there is a God who revengeth! Let the righteous hold up their head, for their redemption draweth nigh. The end of all things is at hand. Watch, and be sober: He cometh, He cometh, He cometh quickly.

EDWARD IRVING.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM ON EARTH.

THE opponents of the doctrine of the personal presence of the Redeemer in the Millennial kingdom, endeavour to evade the *force* of the very plain, explicit, and numerous texts which speak of Him as a *King* sitting and ruling upon his throne and executing judgment and justice in the earth, by asserting that all this is figurative language; and that it means no more than that he shall be a spiritual King—*i. e.* that he shall rule by his Spirit in the hearts of his people; that, men at some future period being converted by the preaching of the Gospel, and universally becoming real Christians, *that state* of blessedness and felicity will take place in the earth which is to constitute what is denominated in Scripture Christ's kingdom, that kingdom whose arrival we pray for in the form which He himself taught us. According to their view, this *spiritual* reign is to constitute the fulfilment of all those prophecies just alluded to; whilst, all this time, Christ himself is to remain in heaven, and only at length to return to this earth for the purpose of finally destroying it, and carrying away his saints with him to some other abode.

How they reconcile this view with the declaration of St. Peter (Acts iii. 21), that the heaven will receive Jesus only till the *times of the restitution of all things* (*i. e.* not the *destruction*, but the *restoration* of all things to their original order and primeval perfection); and how they make out that simply this universal reception of the Gospel, which they look for, as constituting the Millennium, is to have the effect of lengthening out men's lives to many centuries (which the lxxth chapter of Isaiah proves will be the case at that period, as Bishop Lowth and other commentators admit), I shall not now stay to inquire;