

History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland

Part I (1893-1933)

[Extracted from History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland
1893 - 1970]

Compiled by a Committee
Appointed by the Synod of the
Free Presbyterian Church

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CHAPTER I

The church's origin from God - Its form and character likewise from God - Steps by which the New Testament Church became corrupted - Scottish Church reformed according to God's Word.

THE CHURCH'S ORIGIN FROM GOD

Church history should take into serious consideration that the origin of the Church in the world has been from God directly, and that He commanded Moses to do all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount; which Moses did. The pattern of the Tabernacle with all its furniture, those who were to serve in it, and the order of its service were all to the minutest details prescribed by God. After all this was finished the people bound themselves to adhere to all that God had ordered and set up among them, and the Lord on His part promised that -while they would adhere to Him as their God, and to the order of worship which He instituted, they would prosper both in spiritual and temporal concerns. This promise was faithfully kept on God's part.

But the leaders of the people, both in temporal and spiritual matters, departed from God's prescribed worship by uniting it with the idolatrous mode of worship observed by the heathen around them. This they did repeatedly and persistently. Every time they had, by their own policy, departed from the worship God set up among them they were plunged into wars, famines, and pestilences, and were brought into untold miseries by one nation after another of the surrounding heathen. God heard their groans and beheld their miseries and raised up men, one after another, by whom they were delivered from their enemies and had the true worship of God restored among them - again. But they could not be kept from idolatry until God at last disinherited them, and sent them to Babylon for seventy years. This cured them of idolatry, but it did not cure them of mixing their own policy, wisdom, and inventions with the Word and worship of God. At last He gave them up to their own inventions and thrust them out of their own land.

Let anyone read carefully the book of Judges, the two books of Kings and Chronicles, and the Psalms and Prophets for corroboration of the above statements, and he will be fully persuaded that all the miseries through which the children of Israel passed were the result of their own folly and unfaithfulness as regards the covenant God made with their fathers at Mount Sinai. For they were commanded to add nothing to God's Word or worship, and to take nothing from them. But they would not obey God's voice in the

awful delivery of the Moral Law, nor the words of Moses and all their prophets notwithstanding it was proved to them over and over again that their forsaking God's Word and worship was the root cause of all their misery. Yea, they were told before they came up from the wilderness to the land of Canaan all that would come upon them should they depart from God and the order of doctrine and worship He set up among them. Their history shows that all the evils threatened, should they disobey God and forsake His instituted worship, came upon them even to this day. These things were surely written for our admonition upon whom the end of the world has come.

ITS FORM AND CHARACTER LIKEWISE FROM GOD

The Church of God as we have it delineated in the New Testament leaves nothing to man's inventions. Those who are to hold offices in it are set forth as elders (ruling and preaching) and deacons. The character of such office-bearers is explicitly given, and also their respective duties. The order of worship is set forth as reading God's Word, preaching, praying and singing with the lips the praises of God. The doctrines to be taught are given with great clearness and fullness. The mode of government is also set forth defining the duties of elders in their own place and deacons in theirs. The discipline by which order should be kept among office-bearers and people is given in as many instances as are required for the guidance of the Church. As men were warned under the Old Testament dispensation to adhere strictly to the order of the worship and doctrine which God set up among them without adding to it or taking anything from it, so it is under the New Testament. A warning is given in the following words: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Did we adhere to God's Word and worship under the New Testament dispensation more faithfully and steadfastly than the Israelites did under the Old Testament? Let our history bear witness.

STEPS BY WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BECAME CORRUPTED

The history of the Church reveals that, even during the life-time of the Apostles, heresies began to appear. The letters to the seven Churches of Asia recorded in the book of Revelation show how far some of those Churches had

departed from the faith and purity of worship and especially in their practice. Six of them were seriously warned by our Lord of their dangers, and tenderly admonished to repent of their departures from the doctrines and order of worship and discipline set up among them by the apostles and their assistants. Whatever temporary effects these epistles from the Lord of glory had upon those Churches and others, it is evident that the drifting away from the Scriptural simplicity of the New Testament Church set up by our Lord and His Apostles continued step by step until nothing remained but the name. Let some of these steps be considered.

(1) It is quite evident that Christ and the Apostles meant that there was to be equality among the ministers of the Church as to their position as ministers. Two terms meaning the same thing are made use of in the New Testament to designate elders or ministers. One of these terms - episkopos - (which means an overseer) was made use of to set up a new, unscriptural order of men denominated bishops. These men ambitiously claimed superiority over their brethren in the office of the ministry. Notwithstanding their claim was at first opposed and even repudiated, yet by persisting to make it, and by compromises on the part of their opponents, this unscriptural order of men was foisted on the Christian Church. What fruit this alien and pernicious growth bore in the Church and in the world the history of the papacy shows. The setting up in the Church of this order contrary to the inspired Word of God was entirely from human, carnal wisdom and policy.

(2) Arianism caused great contentions in the Church. Arius (315) taught that Christ was a created being, and that the Holy Ghost was not God, but that He was created by the power of the Son. Arians owned that the Son was the Word, but denied that He was eternal. They held that Christ had nothing of man in Him but the flesh, to which the Word was joined, which was the same as the soul is to us. This was a most flagrant and daring departure from the clear and explicit teaching of the Scriptures concerning the person of Christ; and also of the Holy Ghost. It shows that the spirit, which led astray from God and His truth in the Old Testament Church the Israelites, was still at the same work. If Christ is not God equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, but is a creature, then to worship Him would be idolatry. This was evidently setting up idolatry of a different appearance from that of the heathen, but still idolatry.

(3) Pelagianism. Pelagius maintained (i) That Adam was by nature mortal; and, therefore, would have died whether he sinned or not; (ii) That the

consequences of Adam's sin were confined to his own person; (iii) That new-born infants are in the same condition in which Adam was before he fell; (iv) That the law qualifies men for the kingdom of heaven, and was founded upon equal promises with the gospel; (v) That the general resurrection of the dead does not follow in virtue of our Saviour's resurrection; (vi) That the grace of God is given according to merits; (vii) That this grace is not granted for the performance of every moral act - the liberty of the will and information in points of duty being sufficient. These heretical tenets of Pelagius and his adherents were strenuously opposed by Augustine and were condemned by the Church; but the leaven of them continued in the Church working secretly but persistently.

(4) The removal of the Emperor Constantine from Rome to Constantinople gave the bishop of Rome a position of which he took all the advantage possible. After a long struggle for the ascendancy for which the heart of man yearns, the bishop of Rome was acknowledged Pope. So Anti-Christ was set up, and the Church became largely an idolatrous organisation by these three steps:

(i) The appointment of bishops contrary to the order of servants which God appointed in his Church, (ii) By fatal errors in doctrine, two of which have been stated, (iii) By the Bishop of Rome gaining the ascendancy. This was the Babylon into which the Church was banished for her infidelity and idolatry, and in which she lay under persecution and in bondage till the Reformation; This period of the history, not only of the Church, but of the world also, is called the Dark Ages, and dark ages they were indeed and in truth. The nations of Europe were sunk in immorality, ignorance, idolatry, and superstition till God raised up and thrust forth labourers to work in this great harvest.

SCOTTISH CHURCH REFORMED ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD

The Reformers went to God's Word as their guide as to how the Church should be ruled, and the Reformers of Scotland at least, set up the two offices of elders and deacons as they found them prescribed in the New Testament. They would not tolerate bishops. Sooner than allow the Church in Scotland to drift back into the error into which the Church fell at the beginning of her backsliding from God's Word, they suffered a bloody persecution for twenty-eight years.

The doctrines to be taught were diligently gathered from God's Word, also the order in which God should be worshipped, and the discipline that should be

carried out. All these were placed on permanent record in the Westminster Confession of Faith; the Form of Church Government; the Form of Worship, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. It did not satisfy the leaders of the Church at the Second Reformation to have these symbols of the faith acknowledged and accepted by the Church in her General Assembly for they were not at rest till the Parliament of Scotland enacted that these symbols of the Faith were to be accepted by the whole nation as represented in Parliament.

The Free Church of Scotland at her separation in 1843 claimed that she adhered to the Creed and Constitution of the Established Church of Scotland in their entirety, and that she had to separate, on account of the intrusion of the Civil Courts into the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church's Courts, in order to maintain the lawful rights of the Established Church of Scotland. In one word, that she was the Church of Scotland *Free*.

CHAPTER 2

Claim, Declaration and Protest of 1842 - Free Church position in - 1843 Resolution for union at 1863 General Assembly - Rise of two parties – Dr Smeaton quoted - Rev. Walter C. Smith case - Introduction of hymns.

CLAIM, DECLARATION AND PROTEST OF 1842

When the Disruption took place in the year 1843, the party who contended for the spiritual independence of the Church of Scotland - or the non-interference by the civil courts in matters which belonged to the spiritual jurisdiction of the courts of the Church - took great precaution to make their position so clear and unambiguous that no one could be at a loss as to what that position meant. The Claim, Declaration and Protest of 1842 regarding the encroachment of the Court of Session leaves no doubt that the Disruption Father contended for the rights of the Church of Scotland as established by law. The two main claims put forth in these documents were (1) that “there is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ”, and (2) that “The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath appointed therein a government in the hand of church officers distinct from the civil magistrate, which government is ministerial, not lordly, and to be exercised in consonance with the laws of Christ, and with the liberties of His people” They at the same time declared that “this jurisdiction and government, since it regards only spiritual conditions, rights, and privileges, doth not interfere with the jurisdiction of the secular tribunals”. This means that in the law of Scotland, the spiritual courts of the Church and secular courts were coordinate, not subordinate the one to the other, in their own spheres of action. All the members of the Church, high or low, were answerable to the courts of the Church in the spiritual sphere; the same thing was true as regards the whole nation in the secular courts as to their sphere. This was the true position of the relation existing betwixt the secular and spiritual jurisdictions in Scotland; especially since the Subordinate Standards of the Church received the sanction of the General Assembly in 1647, and of the Scottish Parliament in 1649, and this position was re-asserted by the Scottish Parliament at the Revolution Settlement in 1690.

FREE CHURCH POSITION IN 1843

The Free Church held this position unimpaired when she had in 1843, for truth and conscience' sake, to give up all the churches, manses, glebes, and salaries, and all the remuneration which accrued to her from State connection in order to maintain Christ's right to rule in His own Church by His Word in the hands of

her own office-bearers. These men did not change their mind in the least as regards the creed and constitution of the Established Church of Scotland set forth in her Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, and Form of Worship. To these they adhered firmly. They recorded explicitly that they were compelled to relinquish State connection on account of the intrusion of the Civil Courts into the spiritual province of the Church, by forcing ministers on congregations contrary to the wishes of the people and in defiance of the Church's Courts, and not because they ceased to hold the doctrine of the Establishment of Religion by the State to be a Scriptural doctrine and highly valued by them. This was the position of the Free Church at the Disruption. We shall notice as we proceed in giving a brief outline of her history how she acted as regards her avowed creed and constitution.

Let it be considered here that all office-bearers in the Free Church had, when ordained to their respective offices, as ministers and elders, to bind themselves to ordination vows and solemn declarations which have been held always as being equivalent to an oath. The following is an abridgement of the questions which must be answered in the affirmative, and of the Formula which is the individual's declaration with his signature attached to it: - "That you believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith. . . to be founded on the Word of God . . . and that you do acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith; and that you will firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and to the utmost of your power assert, maintain, and defend the same ... and that according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this Church against error and schism, notwithstanding of whatsoever trouble or persecution may arise, and that you shall follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church ... and not endeavour directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same . . . renouncing all doctrines, tenets and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said doctrine, worship, discipline, government and jurisdiction of the same."

If any man felt that he was not in full sympathy with the creed and constitution of the Free Church, he should not have bound himself in such a serious manner to do that which he was obliging himself to do; for it is written; "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Eccles. 5, v. 4, 5). If the above solemn vows and promises were not strong enough to bind the consciences of men

and to keep them steadfast in their adherence to the creed and principles of the Church of the Reformation in Scotland as held by the Free Church, they must have been as outrageous as the man in the country of the Gadarenes was, who could be not bound by the strongest chains and fetters his countrymen had at their disposal. We cannot imagine how these vows could have been made stronger and more obligatory than they were and are still.

However much a man should consider charitably his fellow-men, it is impossible to justify a man who openly and defiantly violates most serious and sacred vows entered into of his own free will. Such conduct would not be tolerated in any honestly conducted worldly business. If these men changed their mind after they had so bound themselves, why, when they ceased to believe the doctrines and principles which they had bound themselves to assert, maintain, and defend, did they not leave the Free Church? If they had acted so, they would deserve some respect. But no man of integrity could excuse them from the charge of being traitors while they publicly violated their vows made voluntarily to God and their solemn promises to men, and were supported by a Church the creed and constitution of which they were endeavouring to destroy.

RESOLUTION FOR UNION AT 1863 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At the General Assembly of the Free Church in 1863, a resolution was passed by which a large committee was appointed to consider whether obstacles which stood in the way of union between the United Presbyterian Church, etc., and the Free Church could be removed. It was then considered most desirable by all concerned in the Free Church that union should take place consistently with their Subordinate Standards; but not otherwise. It was well-known that the United Presbyterian Church held strongly that Establishment and Endowment of Religion by the State were wrong and that the Church should be maintained by the voluntary contributions of her people. They held this principle so strongly that they maintained that the government of the nation should hold every religion on an equality; that is, that the Papacy and Mohammedanism should have the same standing as the Protestant religion so far as the government was concerned.

Another serious obstacle that stood in the way of union was that the United Presbyterian Church held what was known as the Double Reference theory of

the Atonement. The supporters of this view assert that Jesus Christ died not only for the elect but in a certain sense for all men.¹

The direction given by the Assembly of the Free Church to their Committee was: "that absolute regard should be observed as to the principles of the Free Church of Scotland" in conferences with the Committee of the United Presbyterian Church. It was believed, to begin with, that all the ministers and elders on the Free Church Committee were absolutely trustworthy, and had no other intention but that of adhering faithfully to the instructions given them. They knew well the differences that existed between the two Churches, but they hoped that they would be successful in convincing the Committee of the United Presbyterian Church of the scriptural-ness of the doctrines and principles held by the Free Church. They earnestly desired union upon scriptural grounds; but not at the expense of abandoning any doctrine contained in God's Word, and bound now upon the Church of Christ. Reports were given in at each General Assembly concerning the progress made by the Committees, and the request made that the Committee should be re-appointed. At the Assembly of 1867 five members of the Free Church Committee resigned. They acted thus because they could not agree with the spirit of surrender and compromise which became manifest on the part of some of their brethren on the Committee.

RISE OF TWO PARTIES

The two opposing parties - the Unionist and the Anti-Unionists as they were known after this - were not opposed to each other as to the desirableness of union between the two Churches should it be reached without sacrificing any part of the Creed and Constitution of the Free Church; but they were irreconcilably opposed when it became known that those who were for union at any cost would abandon doctrines and principles by which the Free Church stood firmly, and which they considered scriptural, and for the holding of which their forefathers and even they had suffered much in many ways. The party who adhered tenaciously to the original position of the Free Church were led by Dr Begg, Edinburgh, and Dr Nixon, Montrose; and the party who were for compromising that position were led by Dr Candlish and Dr Rainy. Strife entered into the very heart of the Free Church. Instead of the union that was

¹ See Robertson's History of the Atonement Controversy in the Secession Church for an account of the controversy on this subject.

contemplated in 1863, and so much desired by all within the pale of the Free Church on scriptural and conservative grounds, an internal disunion and strife originated which at last broke up the Church into fragments.

The divergent position held now by the two parties began to unfold itself. Dr Begg moved in the Assembly of 1867 that the proposal for union with the United Presbyterian Church and the report of the Committee on Union should be sent down to Presbyteries for their serious consideration in accordance with the law of the Church. Dr Rainy in opposing this said, "that the Assembly adopted our existing standards without sending them to the Presbyteries." This statement was opposed by the Constitutional (Dr Begg's) party and shown to be incorrect. Again, Dr Rainy wrote in a pamphlet on "The Present Position of the Union Question", "that confessions which embody the statements of Scripture doctrine in which men are prepared explicitly to agree, never were intended to be used as a fountain of inferences with the same freedom as Scripture itself. And this the more that the Author of Scripture foresaw all that its statement could carry by way of inference, while the authors of confessions never laid claim to the same power." This old appeal from the confessions of the Churches to the Bible itself was applauded by the Rainy party on the ground that confessions of faith were only human documents. To this it may be answered that confessions of faith (for instance, the Westminster Confession of Faith) are human documents; but the doctrines and principles set forth therein are those of the Scriptures. Let men state these principles and doctrines in better language than they are stated in the Confession, and let them be accepted if their statements will set forth these doctrines and principles better; but till they do that their contention is only a subterfuge in order to discredit the Confession of Faith. Dr Candlish declared: "I will not allow any man under the sun to bind me by what may seem inferentially implied in it" (i.e., the Confession of Faith). To this the opposing party answered "an inference from the Confession is an inference from two propositions affirmed in the Confession; and if the propositions be divine truths, does the good and necessary inference from these become a mere human truth, because the Confession in its form is human, though divine in its substance or contents. Will Dr Candlish venture to maintain this thesis: That whereas, on the one hand, a good and necessary inference from two propositions, which, because affirmed in Scripture, are divine truths both in form and substance, is itself a divine truth; on the other hand, an equally good and necessary inference from two propositions, which, because affirmed in the

Confession of Faith, are divine in substance but not in form, is not a divine truth? "This shows how learned and able men when they allow themselves to be guided by sentiments instead of reason and conscience based upon God's Word, land themselves in confusion and absurdities. Truth, conscience, and consistency were clearly on the side of Dr Begg and his followers, but a large majority in the Assembly, and the sympathy of all who desired union at any price, was with Dr Rainy. A large minority deplored exceedingly the baneful effects of the union controversy on the peace and spiritual prosperity of the Free Church. They realised that the Church had been under a delusion regarding the faithfulness of a large number of her office-bearers to the Confession of Faith and the Bible.

But seeing we are not giving a detailed history of this controversy with its deplorable results upon the future of the Free Church, and that our aim is to review this period, we will conclude by stating that so near did the Free Church come to split, that legal advice was taken by Dr Begg and his party; and in accordance with that advice a hall was taken in Edinburgh before the meeting of the Assembly in May, 1873, with the intention, if Dr Rainy's party should pass the resolution to proceed to unite with the United Presbyterian Church, of separating from them and of holding a General Assembly of the Free Church in accordance with her original creed and constitution.

This was averted by Dr Rainy's party calling a halt at the last moment.

DR SMEATON QUOTED

Several pamphlets were published at the time some for and others against union. To show the urgency with which those who were bent on union at any cost pressed their case, we quote the following from a pamphlet by the late Rev. Professor George Smeaton, D.D., New College, Edinburgh: "The duty and advantages of union have been greatly exaggerated. No one, indeed, at the commencement of these negotiations put the matter on any transcendental grounds. No one for a time had any idea that outward ecclesiastical union was such an imperative obligation that we must have it at any cost and with any amount of concession. The necessity of such a thing can in no way be deduced, as we shall afterwards prove, from the doctrine of Jesus and His apostles. The Church has her own peculiar unity in her Lord before those humanly concocted schemes of external union begin. And all these schemes have their dangers as well as their advantages. They are right when they bring to light or give expression to the spiritual, invisible and everlasting unity which knits all the

members in every place to their head, and to each other in Him. They are fraught with danger, and are more cognate to Popish than Protestant sentiments when advocated as an indispensable duty at any cost, or merely with a view to give a particular Church a more worthy or respectable position in the eyes of others. The expected advantages are to a large extent illusory, and they threaten the united body with all the dangers of a hierarchy, oftentimes a self-constituted order of men. The notion which I see expressed in certain quarters of the Church, that you cannot recede from these union efforts without sin, is one I do not share. That position, by whomsoever it is propounded, just means that some men have invented a new code of ethics on the subject of external ecclesiastical union - a theory unknown to the Protestant Church - and they have succeeded in fettering their own consciences; and they are proceeding, as far as in them lies, to do the same ill turn to their neighbours. I cannot allow any man to put the matter in this light. I cannot concede that external ecclesiastical union, even though it be a Protestant and Presbyterian union, is to be elevated into such a rank that it shall be made a religious duty irrespective of all consideration of fitness and brotherly love. I cannot allow men to bind the conscience of the Church with such a dogma when visible unification is not synonymous with union to Christ, nor with union to the people of Christ. It is a matter desirable indeed when it is found to be practicable, convenient, or workable. But every Church from the days of the apostles has been acting on the principle that many things may warrantably prevent it" (National Christianity and Scriptural Union).

Our excuse for giving this long quotation is that Dr Smeaton was acknowledged by all concerned in this controversy to be a man of the utmost integrity and Christian, unbiased charity towards his fellow - men. He was not moved by party spirit in the least as to the matter of union by which the Free Church was now rent into two opposing camps. There were many in the Free Church who were not opposed to union who agreed with Dr Smeaton.

REV. WALTER C. SMITH CASE

The Free Church Presbytery of Glasgow in 1866 brought one of the ministers under its jurisdiction, Rev. Walter C. Smith, to its bar on account of heretical views expressed by him in sermons. In these he manifested how far he had departed from the Confession of Faith and the Holy Scriptures as regards the binding obligation of the Moral Law, and the Old Testament's place as a whole under the Christian dispensation. The Presbytery unanimously affirmed that

the doctrines and opinions contained in the sermons of Mr Smith were heretical and were going to take steps to proceed against him according to the laws of the Church. Mr Smith complained and appealed. This case came before the Assembly in May 1867. Dr Rainy moved as follows: "The General Assembly sustain the complaint, reverse the sentence of the Presbytery of Glasgow complained against, and first find that the two sermons of Mr Smith brought before the Presbytery contain statements with respect to the Moral Law and Old Testament, which are at variance with the Confession of Faith and the teaching of Scripture. The General Assembly accordingly confirm the finding of the Presbytery of Glasgow, at their meeting of 12th September last, disapproving and censuring the said sermons. But in respect that the statements submitted by Mr Smith in explanation, specially that laid before the Presbytery on 19th November, 1866, warrant the General Assembly in holding that Mr Smith's views are in substantial accordance with the teaching of the Confession of Faith, and that he disclaims the contrary doctrine which various passages in the sermons have been found by the Presbytery and the Assembly to convey - they find it unnecessary to take further judicial action in the case. "Dr Begg moved: "That the General Assembly dismiss the dissent and complaint, and remit to the Presbytery of Glasgow to proceed in the case according to the laws of the Church." The result of the vote was 301 for Dr Rainy's motion, and 111 for Dr Begg's. Dr Begg dissented in his own name, and in the name of those who might adhere to him. The dissent reads, "We, the undersigned, protest against the decision of the Assembly in the case of the Rev. W.C. Smith for the following, amongst other, reasons: (1) Because the Assembly thereby sustained a dissent and complaint, the object and effect of which was to arrest the course of discipline in a case in which the Presbytery of Glasgow had unanimously affirmed that Mr Smith had taught what was contrary to the Word of God and the Confession of Faith; and further that, in the first instance at least, his explanations were unsatisfactory. (2) Because, although the judgment of the Assembly proceeds on the assumption that a disavowal of the dangerous doctrines referred to had ultimately been made, there is no clear and satisfactory evidence of this, and no evidence at all of retraction or regret on the part of Mr Smith, whilst on the contrary the offence has been openly repeated by the publication of the condemned sermons. (3) Because no security of any kind has been given or demanded that the minister in question will not continue to preach the same objectionable doctrines, although certain censures have been pronounced and certain advices

tendered. (4) Because the deliverance of the Assembly, in so far as it does pronounce additional censure, - is virtually a sentence pronounced without hearing the party condemned and without libel, and, therefore, is in every way irregular. (5) Because for the future no Presbytery in this Church can be expected to take up a case of heresy, however clear, with a prospect of such an issue of their labours in the supreme court; and thus heresy may be expected to receive great encouragement from the decision objected to. (6) Because in these days of abounding error such procedure is fitted to promote error by holding out the prospect of comparative impunity to those who maintain it, and to be greatly prejudicial to the position of this Church and to the cause of truth." This dissent and protest points out in plain language the unconstitutional, irregular, and dangerous course upon which the Free Church had entered, and warns her of the consequences which were sure to follow.

INTRODUCTION OF HYMNS

At the General Assembly of 1866 overtures which were forwarded for serious consideration as to the desirableness of introducing hymns of human composition into the public worship of God caused a serious debate on the floor of the Assembly. At its conclusion, the following motions were submitted. Dr Begg moved: "That the Assembly, considering the great importance of acting in this matter with due deliberation, appoint a committee to report to next General Assembly in regard to the following points: - (1) Whether any principle is involved in the singing of inspired or uninspired compositions in the public worship of God. (2) Whether, apart from this question, any of the other practical suggestions embodied in the overtures upon the table, or any other suggestions that may be made to the Committee, are worthy of the consideration of this Church." Another motion was submitted by Rev. Mr Adam. It reads as follows:- "That the General Assembly, having taken into consideration the overtures relating to paraphrases and hymns, and having respect to the importance of the subject, and especially to the diversity of opinion which prevails regarding it, resolve to appoint a Committee maturely to consider the whole matter, enjoining said Committee to report to next General Assembly, whether in their opinion any such changes as those now craved should be made, and if so, in what way this may best be done, so as to preserve the peace and promote the edification of the Church." Dr Begg's motion was supported by 163 votes, and Mr Adam's by 237.

In the year 1869 when the report of this Committee came before the Assembly, Dr Adam moved: "That the General Assembly approve the report, with the suggestions therein contained, and remit to the Committee to carry on these suggestions, by revising carefully the existing collection of paraphrases and hymns, selecting a limited number of scriptural and standard paraphrases and hymns in addition to those that may be retained, and making a more thorough examination of the versions of the psalms formerly prepared and submitted by the Psalmody Committee. The Assembly instruct the Committee to lay the result of their labours in these respects before the next General Assembly, with the view of its giving such approval to all or any of the materials of praise thus presented as to its wisdom may seem right and expedient." Dr Gibson moved: - "That this Church shall give no sanction, either by recommendation or otherwise, to the use of human hymns or uninspired materials of praise in the public worship of God." There voted for the first motion 213, and for the last 124. The following dissent was laid on the table: "We, the undersigned, dissent from the resolution now adopted, for the following amongst other reasons: - (1) Because it is inconsistent with the principles of this Church. (2) Because it is fitted to cause dissensions and divisions in the Church."

This effort to introduce hymns of human composition formed a part of the determined aim of those who desired union with the United Presbyterian Church at any price; for that Church had a large number of hymns used in her public worship. The end of this controversy in the Free Church was that hymns and organs were made an open question, i.e., that such as desired to introduce them might do so.

The considered opinion of John Knox is worthy of serious consideration on this point: "All worshipping, honouring, or other service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without His own express commandment, is idolatry." The opinion of John Calvin is also certainly deserving of serious consideration: - "In popery ... they employed organs and many other such ludicrous things, by which the Word and worship of God are exceedingly profaned, the people being much more attached to these rites than to the understanding of the divine Word." These two men of God knew by painful experience while under the thralldom of the papacy, the dreadful effects of human inventions upon the souls of men. This made them leave a warning behind them as to the fatal effects of these innovations. They learned to value God's truth as being of paramount importance and indispensable to save

perishing men from sin and everlasting punishment. They had emerged out of darkness so intense that it might be felt, into the glorious light of God's Word; but the Free Church turned her back upon this light, and was making strides towards the very darkness from which God delivered Scotland in the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER 3

Free Church divided - Discussions on principle of establishment - Free Church doctrine of the civil magistrate - Dr Rainy's and Dr Begg's motions - A dangerous state of mind - Hymnal controversy - Disestablishment debate in 1878 Assembly - The debate continued - Bitterness created by the controversy - Backsliding of the Free Church.

FREE CHURCH DIVIDED

We have seen from the review of the Union controversy as carried on in the General Assembly of the Free Church from the year 1863 till the year 1873, that harmony and peace in the matters of the utmost importance in doctrine, worship, government, and discipline were things of the past within her pale. It is written, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3, v. 3), to which the answer must be absolutely in the negative. So it became apparent that the two parties who were then opposed to each other in the Free Church could not continue very long in cohesion. The same truth is stated by our Lord: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12, v. 25). Such as loved and admired the Free Church and the sacrifice she made for her doctrines and principles - which were the doctrines and principles of the Reformation, but especially because they firmly believed them to be based upon the infallible Word of God, mourned in secret on account of the backsliding of the majority at least of her ministers and office-bearers. But this discord became much intensified when it became apparent that the infallibility of the Scriptures was very seriously and daringly attacked, to begin with, by one of her professors, and that his heretical views were defended by the majority in her Assemblies. This was Professor Robertson Smith as the fourth chapter shows.

DISCUSSIONS ON PRINCIPLE OF ESTABLISHMENT

Another subject which increased the anxieties of the faithful Free Church ministers, elders and people was that when the Union Controversy had to be stopped on account of the fact that the Principle of Establishment stood so strongly in the way, a crusade was started in the year 1875 for the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Discussions "pro and con" were held at each Assembly, and motions passed, some for and others against it.

The position held by the Protestant Churches of the Reformation on the duties of the Civil Magistrate as regards the safeguarding and maintenance of the Protestant religion, should be looked for in the Confessions of Faith of these

Churches and not in the statements made by men who were concealing their real aims. Some of the statements on this Principle of Establishment and also of Endowment by the Civil Magistrate in the Reformed documents may be quoted. The later Confession of Helvetia says: "Magistracy of whatsoever sort it be, is ordained of God Himself, for the peace and tranquillity of mankind; so that the magistracy ought to have the chief place in the world. If he be an adversary to the Church, he may greatly hinder and disturb it; but if he be a friend and member of the Church, he is a most profitable member, and may excellently aid and advance it. His principal duty is to procure and maintain peace and public tranquillity; which, doubtless, he will never do more happily than when he is seasoned with the fear of God and true religion, particularly when he shall, after the example of the most holy kings and princes of the people of the Lord, advance the preaching of the truth, and the pure unadulterated faith, shall extirpate falsehood and all superstition, impiety, and idolatry, and shall defend the Church of God. For, indeed, we teach that the care of religion doth chiefly appertain to the holy magistrate" (Quoted in Dr M'Crie's Statement, p. 89).

The Confession of Bohemia, called also the Confession of the Waldenses, says:- "The Christian magistrate ought also to be a partaker, and, as it were, a minister of the power of the Lamb Jesus Christ, whom God hath, in our nature, made Lord and King of kings. that the kings of the earth, who in times past had been heathen, might come under the power of the Lamb, give their glory unto the Church, and become nurses of it, which began to be fulfilled when they received the Christian religion. The Christian magistrate is peculiarly taught, by this authority of his, to promote the truth of the holy gospel, etc., whereunto the second psalm doth exhort magistrates: 'And now, ye kings, understand, etc.'."

The Confession of Saxony declares that: "The Word of God doth, in general, teach this concerning the power of the magistrate; First, that God wills that the magistrate, without all doubt, should sound forth the voice of the Moral Law among men, according to the ten commandments, or law natural, by laws forbidding idolatry and blasphemies, as well as murder, theft, etc. For well has it been said of old, the magistrate is a keeper of the law, i.e., of the first and second table as concerning discipline and good order. This ought to be their special care (of kingdoms and rulers), to hear and embrace the true doctrine of the Son of God, and to cherish the Churches, according to Psalm 2 and 24, and Isaiah 44, 'And kings and queens shall be thy nurses', i.e., let commonwealths

be nurses to the Church, let them give entertainment to the Church, and to godly studies” (Ibid., pp. 89-90). The Dutch Confession teaches that it “is the duty of magistrates not only to be careful to preserve the civil government, but also to endeavour that the ministry be preserved, that all idolatry and counterfeit worship be abolished, the kingdom of anti-Christ brought down, and that the kingdom of Christ be enlarged: In fine, that it is their duty to bring it to pass that the holy word of the gospel be preached everywhere, that all men may serve God purely and freely, according to the prescribed will of His word” (Ibid., p.90). The French Confession declares that God hath “delivered the sword into the magistrate's hand, that so sins committed against both tables of God's law, not only against the second table, but the first also, may be suppressed” (Ibid., p. 90). In the Confession of the English congregation in Geneva, it is said: “Besides this ecclesiastical discipline, I acknowledge to belong to this Church a politic magistrate, who ministereth to every man justice, defending the good and punishing the evil. To whom we must render honour and obedience in all things which are not contrary to the Word of God. And as Moses, Ezekias, Josias, and other godly rulers, purged the Church of God from superstition and idolatry, so the defence of Christ's Church appertaineth to the Christian magistrates, against all idolaters and heretics, as Papists, Anabaptists, with such like limmes of Anti-Christ” (Ibid., p. 91). The Scots Confession says: “Moreover, to kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates, we affirm, that chiefly and most principally the conservation and purgation of religion doth appertain; so that not only they are appointed for civil policy, but also for maintenance of the true religion and for suppressing idolatry and superstition whatsoever, as in David, Josaphat, Ezekias, Josias, and others, highly commended for their zeal in that case, may be espied” (Ibid., p. 91). The Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that “Christian magistrates, in managing of their affairs, ought specially to maintain piety, justice, and peace”; that “the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the Word of God” (Ibid., p. 92).

FREE CHURCH DOCTRINE OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE

From the above quotations from the Confessions of the Protestant and Presbyterian Churches of the Reformation, it is evident they all held that the Civil Magistrate had certain duties to perform towards religion and the Church of Christ. In none of them is this duty of the civil magistrate towards the Church of Christ more definitely set forth than in the Westminster Confession.² The Free Church separated from the Established Church of Scotland in the year 1843; not because she ceased to hold the duty of the Civil Magistrate as set forth in her Confession of Faith, but on account of the Civil Magistrate's intrusion into the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church. Dr Chalmers declared on the day of the Disruption; "We have left today a vitiated Establishment, we would return tomorrow to a purified one; and we are not Voluntaries." This principle was so strongly fixed in her constitution, that when the majority in her Assembly endeavoured to force on a union with the United Presbyterian Church which was absolutely opposed to this principle of Establishment and Endowment of Religion, it became an unsurpassable barrier. It was the necessity, as the majority saw it, for this union which made them campaign so vigorously for the disestablishment of religion.

In the General Assembly of 1877 when the business of Disestablishment came up, there were five resolutions from synods for Disestablishment and one against it; from the presbyteries of the Church eighteen resolutions were presented for, and only one against. When the resolutions were read in the Assembly, Dr Begg gave notice of the following motion: "The General Assembly, whilst not satisfied with the existing relations between Church and State in Scotland, and deploring the divisions which exist, hold that it is the duty of this Church to maintain firmly the whole principles of the Disruption; and that can only be done in connection with a decided adherence to the universal supremacy of Christ as King of nations as well as King of saints, with the consequent duty of nations to honour and serve Him by recognising His truth and promoting His cause; whereas, the direct tendency of a policy of mere disestablishment is to subvert the principles of the Reformation and of the Free Church, inasmuch as the abolition of the existing Establishment is advocated, whilst no clear views of national duty are maintained."

² Those interested in the Westminster doctrine of the Civil Magistrate will get much useful information in Dr Cunningham's *Discussions on Church Principles*, chap. viii and in Dr Moody Stuart's pamphlet "Is the Establishment Principle Outside the Confession?"

In his speech in support of his motion, he said, "It is a thorough delusion to imagine that these endowments were given by the State. They were, in fact, the old voluntary contributions of the people to the professing Church, and if you resolve that they shall be taken away and confiscated, the question is whether you are not bound at the same time to consider the question, What is to be done with these endowments seized by the landlords and aristocracy of Scotland at the Reformation? The proposal of disestablishment properly means the repealing of those statutes which recognised the Church of Christ and have thrown a legislative fence around it, which have acknowledged it and sanctioned its constitution; but the question is, are we prepared to ask the State to undo all these Acts? Virtually to abolish the Coronation Oath, disestablish the Protestant Church and the Protestant cause in the land." As regards the principle of Voluntaryism, he said, "You have here the very same difficulty which you take to be impossible in regard to the United Presbyterian Church. They don't want your principles of acknowledgment by the State. They most decidedly affirm that anything like recognition of their creed by Act of Parliament is inconsistent with their view, they, hold that anything of the nature of a public recognition of truth as distinguished from falsehood is inconsistent with an absolute neutralityThe new theory is just the theory of the French Revolution. It began with the French Revolution, and Dr M'Crie, who was a farsighted man, indicated his opinion that in the end of the day it would shake every throne in Europe." When this motion was moved at the Assembly it was seconded by Mr William Kidston³ in a vigorous and enlightening speech.

In opposition to Dr Begg's motion, Dr Rainy moved: "That the principles of the Claim of Right and Protest of 1843 condemn the existing connection between Church and State in Scotland. That the circumstances of the country and the relative position of the Churches preclude the present re-establishment on a scriptural basis of a national united Church. That it is now the duty of the Legislature, while making due provision for life-interests, to terminate the connection of the State with the existing Established Church, and to give facilities for a beneficial adjustment of ecclesiastical matters in Scotland. That a committee be appointed to take suitable means for representing the views of the Church, as stated in this deliverance, as occasion may arise. And the Assembly direct the committee to consider and report to a future General

³ Mr Kidston was the uncle of the late Mr Bonar Law, the distinguished British statesman.

Assembly on the whole subject, and, in particular, on the line of action in which the Church may best contribute, in conformity with its known principles, to the discharge of the duty by the State through the continued recognition by it of national obligations to the truth and the Church of Christ as heretofore owned in Scotland, in connection with the change now demanded."

Dr Rainy spoke to his motion in a way that no man could be at a loss to understand what he meant by it. It was entirely another thing whether such as held the scriptural-ness of the Establishment of the Church in Scotland could agree with him. Indeed, the view held hitherto of that principle was quite different from Dr Rainy's view for which he had now so eloquently pleaded. For instance, he began with the statement: "First of all, I start from this, that the maintenance of the position of the Established Church of Scotland, as it stands, is indefensible ...Apply it (his argument) to any test you like - be it in reason or on Free Church principles the Established Church should be tested, and it fails ... My motion points to the principles of the Claim of Right and Protest of 1843, as condemning the existing connection between Church and State in Scotland." This is quite the reverse of what the Free Church claimed in 1843. The Principle of Establishment was not condemned then. On the contrary it was declared to be in accordance with the Word of God and the Confession of Faith. What was truly condemned was that, through the Patronage Act and the maladministration of it, the spiritual independence of the Church was so seriously interfered with by the Civil Courts that they for the time being sacrificed State connection, but held firmly to the Principle of Establishment of the Church of Christ by the Scottish nation." Dr Rainy further added: "But what I wish to say is this, that I am thoroughly persuaded a process of disestablishment would immediately give immensely increased weight, and influence, and fruitfulness to everything that is good and of good tendency in the Established Church.....I say that Disestablishment, for our purpose, or as it is put in our motion, the termination between Church and State, simply means the repeal of so much of those Acts as gives its present position to the existing Establishment -the repeal of so much of those Acts as will effect thatFor example, I see no reason why the disestablishment of the Church should include the repeal of certain Acts or clauses of Acts, which give a certain place to the Confession of Faith.....The position really is this, that you can disestablish the Church, without such trouble, and maintain the position of the Confession of Faith, for the reason that the maintenance of it is the basis of certain social arrangements, in regard to which we are perfectly

agreed.....Well then, the same thing applies to the Protestant succession. That is not a religious tenet. It was no part of the Reformation doctrine that the heir to the throne must be a Protestant. The Reformers accepted a Popish Queen in the very springtide of the Reformation. It came in afterwards as a security which the Church and the nation felt to be required, and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe that the mere existence on the throne of a Popish sovereign, with the sort of operation that would be likely to go on in that connection, would go far to render a peaceable government a most impracticable thing.....I am not inclined to say that my hope is precisely the Establishment of Chalmers, any more than I could say that it is precisely the Establishment of Alexander Henderson, or the Establishment precisely of Knox." Dr Rainy's motion was seconded by Sir Henry Moncrieff. He supported almost all that Dr Rainy said in his speech. Several spoke to the two motions - the great majority in support of Dr Rainy's motion. There voted for Dr Rainy's motion 460, and for Dr Begg's 78.

Dr Begg dissented in his own name and in the name of all who would adhere to him from the judgment adopted for the following amongst other reasons: "(1) Because, whilst not satisfied with the existing relation between Church and State in Scotland, and deploring the divisions which exist, we hold that it is the duty of this Church to maintain firmly the whole principles of the Disruption, and that this can only be done in connection with a decided adherence to the universal supremacy of Christ as King of nations as well as King of saints, with the consequent duty of nations to serve and honour Him; whereas, the direct tendency of the resolution now adopted, as well as most of the overtures which have been under consideration, is to subvert the principles of the Reformation, and of the Free Church, inasmuch as the abolition of the existing Establishment is advocated, whilst no clear views of national duty are maintained. (2) Because a policy of national disregard to the Divine authority must involve the most serious consequences, inasmuch as the Scriptures declare in regard to the Church of Christ that the nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted'. (3) Because the Protest adopted in 1843, and ordered to be inserted at the commencement of,-all our Presbytery and Synod records as 'the ground and warrant of their proceedings', affirms that 'the Claim, Declaration and Protest of the General Assembly which convened in Edinburgh in May, 1842, as the act of a free and lawful Assembly of the said Church, shall be holden as setting forth the constitution of the said Church'. The very object of the Claim of Right,

on the other hand, is to set forth that the principles contended for in the struggle which culminated in 1843, should be fully adopted by the nation, and that the people should pray for the restoration of their rights and privileges taken away at the Disruption, and the full recognition and establishment of Reformation principles in the land. (4) Because the preamble of Act. xii of the Assembly of 1846, anent questions and formula, which has now twice passed under the Barrier Act, declares that the Church firmly maintains the same scriptural principles as to the duties of the nations and their rulers, in reference to the true religion and the cause of Christ, for which .she has hitherto contended.

(5) Because the movements now in progress seem not only fitted, if successful, to subvert the securities of the Reformation and Revolution Settlement, but to defeat or defer the prospect of a sound union of the Presbyterians of Scotland, and thus to frustrate the objects at which enlightened and earnest men have been aiming since the Reformation” (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1877, pp. 174-205).

A DANGEROUS STATE OF MIND

Dr Begg's dissent is given in full, as he points out, so far, the real deviations from the hitherto understood position of the Free Church as regards the Principle of Establishment of religion by the nation, upon which Dr Rainy, and his large majority in the Assembly, had so jubilantly embarked. There is, however, one statement made by Dr Rainy in his speech in order to rebut a statement in Dr Begg's speech which should be carefully considered, because it revealed a very dangerous state of mind on the part of the majority of the members of that Assembly. Dr Begg's statement referred to is as follows: - “Are we prepared to ask the State to undo all these Acts (Acts establishing and endowing the Church) virtually to abolish the Coronation Oath, disestablish the Protestant Church and the Protestant cause in the land?” Dr Rainy's criticism is: “One thing at a time; disestablish the Church first, and if there is anything in this matter (the existing marriage law) in regard to which any party can establish that there is a cause for question being raised let that be considered after. Well, then, the same thing applies to the Protestant succession. That is not a religious tenet. It was no part of the Reformation doctrine that the heir to the throne must be a Protestant. The Reformers accepted a Popish Queen in the very spring-tide of Reformation. It came in afterwards as a security which the Church and the nation felt to be required, and I have no hesitation in

saying that I believe that the mere existence on the throne of a Popish sovereign, with the sort of operation that would be likely to go on in that connection, would go far to render a peaceable Government a most impracticable thing” (Ibid. p. 187).

Why Dr Rainy and his followers should deal so light-heartedly with such a very serious matter as the change of the Coronation Oath and the prospect connected therewith of a Papist ascending the throne, in the light of past history in Scotland and England, causes one to ask were these men realising their responsibility, or were they careless as to persecution which might arise again in this nation?

That Dr Rainy had before his mind at the time of uttering the above, the persecutions which hurled the House of Stewart from the British throne is evident, seeing he says that: - “A popish sovereign... would go far to render a peaceable Government a most impracticable thing.” Did he mean that in order to attain his aim in disestablishing the Church of Scotland, he would be prepared to cause the practicableness or otherwise of a Papist on the British throne to be put to the test again? His statement bears clearly that construction. That he could get a majority of 460 to follow him, and some of these old men who had passed through the Disruption struggles, causes amazement. But this proves the Scripture: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man” (Ps. 146, v. 3).

HYMNAL CONTROVERSY

Another innovation that caused some sharp controversy at the Assembly of 1877 was a motion that was moved by Professor Bruce, Glasgow, which reads as follows: “The General Assembly having taken into consideration the overtures anent revision and enlargement of the Hymnal, resolve to appoint a special committee to consider whether any or what changes in the way of revision and enlargement are desirable, with powers to take all steps necessary to assist them in the inquiry, and to report to next General Assembly.” In support of this motion, Professor Bruce said he should prefer that the Free Church had a hymnal of her own, and it was well worth their pains to try and make a good collection.” Dr Begg moved “that they take no action whatever as a General Assembly in this matter”. He said he was extremely astonished at the statement made by an elder of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Bailie Rowatt). They were told by him that unless they entered upon the subject many of the congregations and ministers would

choose hymn books for themselves apart altogether from the ecclesiastical authority. To him (Dr Begg) that was the very strongest reason why they should refuse to enter upon the question at present. Were they to be told that men would set at defiance the existing arrangements of the Church? They had a great deal of ecclesiastical anarchy springing up among them, and it seemed to him they ought to discountenance it by every means in their power. He stood firmly by the divine Psalmody, and agreed entirely with Romaine who said that he had not a name for a man who thought that he could make a better poem than the Holy Ghost.

Human poetry was useful in its own place, but not in the public worship of God. Men speak of a uniform hymn book, but we have that already in the divine Psalter, which is large enough, and you cannot use a hymn in public worship without so far displacing an inspired song. Besides there is no end of these "broken cisterns", as he had seen in America and in other parts the world. If a minister had any difficulty in finding a Psalm to suit his discourse, it was a very bad sign indeed of the discourse. Upon the whole, he thought that it was much safer for the Church to resist this new movement. Professor Bruce's motion was carried by a majority. A large committee was then appointed by the Assembly in terms of the motion. Dr Begg dissented (Report of Free Church General Assembly (1877), pp. 210-212).

DISESTABLISHMENT DEBATE IN 1878 ASSEMBLY

At the Free Church General Assembly of 1878, the disestablishment question came up again at the commencement of the sitting in connection with overtures entitled, "Movement for legislation modifying the constitution of the Established Church". In these overtures charges were made against the Constitutional Party of having approached the Government in order to counteract the efforts of the majority to disestablish the Church of Scotland. This charge was taken for granted without any proof given in the overtures of its correctness, and the Committee on Overtures without any ground of justification passed them on to the Assembly. Dr Begg moved that "the Assembly reverse the decision of the Committee on Overtures, and reject the overtures complained of". Sir Henry Moncrieff moved, "that they (the overtures) be received by the Assembly". Dr Begg's motion was supported by 43 votes, and Sir Henry Moncrieff's motion by 263. Dr Begg entered a strong dissent, accompanied by reasons, in which he charged the majority with using their strength numerically to prevent justice being done in carrying on the

business of the Assembly of the Church, and in receiving overtures which were clandestinely got up to damage the character of some of the ministers and elders of the Church.

Before the motions anent disestablishment were brought under the consideration of the Assembly, Dr Begg protested as follows: "We, the undersigned, do hereby protest that in taking part in this discussion we are not to be held as admitting that a movement for disestablishment in the Free Church is in accordance with her constitution." This protest was signed by twenty-one ministers and five elders.

Dr Adam, Glasgow, moved that the Assembly approve of the report of the Committee appointed at last year's Assembly on the disestablishment question, and in accordance therewith resolve as follows: "(1) That the Assembly, while holding, as this Church has always done, that the State is under law to God and His Christ, and while earnestly desiring the preservation of our ancient constitutional securities for the performance of the duty which the nation owes to religion and the Church, do not regard the maintenance of our ecclesiastical establishment, as in the present circumstances of this country, the appropriate means of fulfilling the State's obligation in this respect. (2) More particularly, the Assembly, in accordance with the Claim of Right, and the principles which, from the Disruption, this Church has ever held, hereby declare their solemn conviction that the connection subsisting between the Church now established and the State is wholly indefensible, and ought with as little delay as possible to be brought to a termination. (3) The Assembly resolve to petition Parliament in terms of this motion; and further; they re-appoint the Committee to watch over the subject, to represent as they may see cause to the legislature and the country the views herein set forth, and, while keeping within the Church's proper province, to adopt and carry out such measures as may be fitted to accomplish the object aimed at in this deliverance."

Dr Adam made it quite manifest in explaining his motion that he wished the Church in Scotland to be free from any State connection. Now the National Establishment of Religion in Scotland was nothing more or less than the determination of the nation to bind themselves civilly as well as ecclesiastically to the Confession of Faith and the relative documents thereto. The efforts of the majority at this time in the Free Church were put forth to separate the people of Scotland from the settlements made at the Reformation, the

Revolution Settlement, and again at the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland. That this was their real goal, whether they realised it at the time or not, will become quite clear from the following quotation from Dr Adam's speech: "What had these securities (the securities connected with the establishment of the Church of Scotland) done for them in the past? They had them at an early period of the Church's history, but they had not prevented the introduction of a bastard Episcopacy once and again into Scotland. They had their Revolution Settlement, on which many were prepared to found so largely. They had their Treaty of Union and Act of Security, which were scarcely enacted ere they were violated by the Act of Patronage under Queen Anne . . . Did they (securities) save them from the invasion of the civil courts? Did they save them from the sacrifices that were involved in the Disruption? The best security for national religion was just religion - religion itself, pervading the country, stamped not upon parchment, but upon the hearts of a God-fearing people."

Dr Begg moved:- "That while the Disruption was a protest for redress, and in no respect for destruction, and whilst all Free Churchmen are bound by their avowed principles to seek the reformation of the Establishment, in accordance with the Claim, Declaration and Protest of 1842, which the Protest of 1843 declares to be holden as setting forth the true 'Constitution' of the Free Church, a regard to the glory of Christ as Governor amongst the nations, the good of our country, and of the world, as well as to our consistency as a Church professing to maintain a testimony which has never been altered since 1843, require that we should dis- countenance the present disestablishment agitation, and in all our proceedings, conform to the preamble to our Act anent questions and formula, which has twice recently been approved of under the Barrier Act, viz., that the Church firmly maintains the same scriptural principles as to the duties of nations and their rulers in reference to true religion and the Church of Christ for which she has hitherto contended, and also that we should reassert the unanimous declaration of our General Assembly in 1853, as expressing our true principles and position as a Church, viz., that this Church maintains unaltered and uncompromised the principles set forth in the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of 1842, and in the Protest of 1843, relative to the lawfulness and obligation of a spiritual alliance between the Church of Christ and the State, and the conditions upon which such an alliance ought to be regulated, as well as also the position which, in the maintenance of these principles, the Church was called upon to take in 1842 and 1843 as a Church

protesting against invasions of her just and constitutional rights, and demanding redress of the wrong thus inflicted.”

Dr Begg supported his motion by a long statement of the nature, binding force, and the responsibility of the Free Church, relative to the principles of the national recognition by the State of the Protestant and Presbyterian Church of Scotland; how the Free Church by her own solemn declarations repeatedly made, bound herself to the scriptural-ness of the Establishment Principle in Scotland; and their duty at that time was quite plain, viz., not to disestablish the Church but to press their Claim of Right for the removal of all the evils in that Church which caused the Disruption of 1843. Dr Adam, he said, believed that the majority of the people in the country are keen for disestablishment. He did not believe that; what he believed was that “if the Established Church fell it would not be because of attacks from without, but because of feebleness or unfaithfulness from within, and of erroneous views on the part of the statesmen of the country”. He said that this was a specific question. “What does the constitution of the Free Church say in regard to this matter? What ground are the ministers and office-bearers of this Church entitled to take in connection with this movement?” ... “He did not know what those who had taken part in getting his Lordship (Sir Henry Moncrieff) to make so excellent a lecture and to publish it. - he did not know what they thought of it. It looked like bringing one to curse the friends of Establishments, and yet he blessed them altogether . . .”

Here is what Lord Moncrieff said: - “The public guarantees given by the Civil Government for the Protestant faith, Presbyterian Church government, and evangelical doctrine, whatever such securities may be worth, for the most part centre in the institution of the Church established by law. I have no nervous apprehension in regard to any such, but none of them are so far beyond peril that I would willingly renounce any of our safeguards and liberate the Imperial Parliament from its obligations unless better assured of what would come in their place.” Dr Begg added “he hoped the Free Church would stand firm to her real principles, her real constitution. They might depend upon it that if they had stood firm to their constitution they never would have heard of the movements of himself and his friends. He told them deliberately that if the Free Church had simply gone on in doing her work, and had stood firm to the basis of her own principles, they did not need to go to any statesman; the statesmen would come to them . . . He earnestly trusted, whatever might be the result of this decision that day, that the people of Scotland would not

despair of seeing the old system restored, although the day seemed dark.
(Cries of no, no:) Oh, yes!

Here again Lord Moncrieff came to his assistance. He said, 'Although the prospect is not bright, it is far too soon by any act of our own to make the Claim of Right impossible,' by the process of disestablishment. Lord Moncrieff said that. He told them the people of Scotland were not in favour of their Voluntary Movement, and he thought if they acted wisely they would drop all this disestablishment agitation, and resume the position, the noble position, which Chalmers and others occupied when the last Assembly met in Glasgow."

Dr Kennedy, Dingwall, in seconding Dr Begg's motion, said: "He agreed with them (i.e., the other party) in thinking that there was something connected with the Establishment which should utterly and suddenly terminate. But when they came to determine what that was which should terminate, a difference arose between them. Their quarrel seemed to be with the connection between the Church and the State, while the quarrel of those who agreed with him was as to the unscriptural-ness of that connection. What he desiderated was the removal of all that was unscriptural in the connection now subsisting between the Established Church and the State. To kill off a man who was very sick was not the prescription to follow - the kind and righteous way was to try to cure him, and the cure had been prescribed by wiser men than they were. If they could only get the Establishment to swallow the Claim of Right and if they could get the State also to consider it, the cure would be effected ... If that bondage (i.e., to the civil courts) should be removed, the Church of Scotland would become the Church of Scotland *free*, and he lacked the discernment to see the difference between that and the Free Church of Scotland."

Sir Henry Moncrieff then moved: "That the General Assembly declare that no legislative change in the relation of Church and State in Scotland can be approved of by this Church that does not provide for the continued recognition by the State of national obligations to the truth and Church of Christ, through the continued maintenance of such legislative securities for it as may correspond in altered circumstances to those which, till 1843, were supposed to have been furnished by the Revolution Settlement and the Treaty of Union." He said: "There were some things in Dr Begg's motion which he approved of, but he could not agree with him or with Dr Kennedy in saying that they were to fulfil the obligations of the Claim of Right by seeking the reformation of the existing Establishment. He held that was not the position they were called

upon to maintain.....He had held in previous Assemblies, and he held still, that the essential step towards a right adjustment of ecclesiastical matters in Scotland was the termination of the existing connection between Church and State." Mr George Macaulay, Edinburgh, seconded Sir Henry's motion. He spoke very strongly and drastically against the existing connection between Church and State, and denied as a calumny that he and others, who were for ending the existing Establishment, were denying "the duty which rulers owe to Christ, to truth, and to God... But this recognition was perfectly consistent with disestablishment". There were three motions before the Assembly. Dr Begg's motion was put against Sir Henry Moncrieff's. There voted for Dr Begg's 50; for Sir Henry's 84. Then Dr Adam's motion was put against Sir Henry's. There voted for Dr Adam's 404; for Sir Henry's 134 (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1878), pp., 163-199).

THE DEBATE CONTINUED

In the General Assembly of 1879 Sir Henry Moncrieff moved: "That the Assembly take no action on the question of disestablishment." His speech in support of his motion made plain that it was not because he changed his mind as to the need there was of bringing the establishment of the Church of Scotland to an end, but "to save himself from being involved in what he was not prepared to approve of". His position may be explained by this quotation - "He was sorry to see that some of their friends appeared to run into the Voluntary arguments." This motion was seconded by Mr Ferguson of Kinmundy. After Dr Rainy had given the report of the Committee on Disestablishment, Dr Adam moved the motion of which Dr Rainy had given notice. This motion was on the same lines, and the same expressions were used as in the motion of the previous Assembly, so that, for the sake of brevity, it will not be necessary to give the opinions and arguments put forth. For Dr Adam's motion (which was really Dr Rainy's) there voted 362, and for Sir Henry Moncrieff's 106 (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1879), pp. 175-194).

At the Assembly of 1880, Dr Rainy gave in the usual report of the Committee on Disestablishment, and in a vigorous speech urged the Assembly and the Church as a whole to press forward the movement of disestablishing the Church of Scotland. In his motion at the conclusion of this speech the only new phase revealed was the use to be made of the Endowments of the church, viz.: "That in the present circumstances, the funds set free ought to be employed in

objects connected with the welfare of the community, and among these are an improved system of education, in conformity with the convictions of the people of Scotland. That the time has come at which the justice and necessity of these steps ought to be resolutely pressed upon the Scottish community, and ought to be firmly maintained and asserted by the office-bearers and members of the Church. That the same claim, on the same grounds of justice and necessity, ought to be by this Church placed before Parliament; and therefore that a petition be prepared for presentation to both Houses of Parliament. "Dr Rainy's motion was seconded by Mr Rennie, Wick. Sir Henry Moncrieff moved: "That the Assembly, while denying the right of the Church now established to the position and historical inheritance of the Scottish National Church, do not see their way, in present circumstances, to petition Parliament on the subject, or to take any action regarding Disestablishment." Sir Henry made a cautious speech in supporting this motion, and brought before the Assembly the great advantage which follows from having the Confession of Faith ratified by Parliament. "Will anyone tell me," he said, "that when the spirit of evangelistic truth revived in our Church and country, no advantage was derived from the fact that we had good standards to appeal to, and that in proposing the revival of religious earnestness we were only proposing the very thing that the old standards of the Church testified to. It appears to me that the existence, even in legislative enactments, of a right testimony to religious truth always will be a matter of the greatest moment, and that as Scotland has enjoyed that advantage for centuries, it would be a rash thing to take a step the practical effect of which would be to throw these advantages away." This was really a good advice; but the Rainy party were not in a mood to accept it - their aim was destruction. This motion was seconded by Mr Kidston of Ferniegair who warned the Assembly against taking precipitate action in the direction of disestablishment.

Professor MacGregor moved: - "That the Assembly petition the two Houses of Parliament for the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the condition and history of the Scottish Churches, in relation to Establishment." Dr Begg seconded this motion. In doing so he said, "that he did so from a very different object from that which has been avowed by the mover of it. It is now some years ago since I proposed that a Royal Commission should be appointed to report on the whole facts in connection with Church and State in Scotland." When the vote was taken, it was found that Dr Rainy's motion had a majority

of 326 (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1880, pp. 123-153).

BITTERNESS CREATED BY THE CONTROVERSY

At each Assembly since 1873 the struggle for and against dis-establishment was carried on, but especially from the time of the appointment of a Committee in 1875. Year by year the controversy was continued by which much bitterness was generated not only among the ministers and elders of the Church as they adhered to the Constitutional or the Voluntary or Rainy party, but, also, in the congregations of the Church. This was urged upon the Rainy party repeatedly by members of the Assembly, but they would not listen. By 1886 the split in the Free Church had become so pronounced that those who favoured the original position of the Free Church would not go to hear ministers of the Rainy party, neither would the followers of the Rainy party go to hear ministers of the Constitutional camp. They were really even then divided into two opposing camps. Still the disestablishment crusade was being vigorously pursued as if men had really become infatuated, or were seeking the glory of leadership.

When one looks back upon the position of peace and prosperity, both in temporal and spiritual concerns, enjoyed by the Free Church during the first twenty years after the Disruption, and the love and confidence with which her ministers and people were, at least seemingly, praying for the continued peace and prosperity of the Free Church and doing their best to harbour peace within her walls, the condition of strife and hatred then manifested could not be anything else but a cause of grief. The true people of God within her pale groaned, cried, and shed many tears before the Lord in secret over her downfall and unfaithfulness to God's Word and to her own avowed constitution. Some separated from her communion even then, although, as yet her constitution was still intact.

BACKSLIDING OF THE FREE CHURCH

Let us take a bird's eye view of the strides she had made from her former position since the appointment on the Committee on Union of men who were considered true and faithful Free Church men in the year 1863. Nothing appeared to cause any alarm or suspicion till 1867 when four of the members of the Committee refused to be re-elected by the Assembly, giving as their reason for doing so that if there was to be union between the United

Presbyterian Church and the Free Church, it would be consummated by sacrificing the distinctive position of the Free Church. It became apparent very soon that the Free Church's Committee began to find out subterfuges by holding forth that the Claim of Right bound the Free Church to demand the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. This was an unheard of interpretation of the Claim of Right till then. But for a while it took the feet from able and honest men who debated this view with all earnestness on the floor of the Assembly. The whole cause of this change was on account of the fact that the United Presbyterian Church was rabidly Voluntary.

There was another serious effect which this union proposal had on the Free Church. Up till then Arminianism was not countenanced in her manner of admitting her office-bearers, or in her pulpits, but now Arminianism was publicly preached in many of her pulpits and defended in her Church Courts. These two baneful effects followed the discussions held by the Committees of these two Churches about the proposed union, and their consequences were really deplorable on the Free Church.

Another thing that caused searching of heart to many in the Free Church was the place given, even as Professors, to men who held and declared erroneous views as to the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures. Professor Robertson Smith of the Free Church College, Aberdeen, as will be seen in the next chapter, made extraordinary statements about several of the books of the Bible, revealing in this way views that he had learned from German rationalists. These he partially defended in the church courts, even in the Assembly, during several years. It became apparent that there were many in the Free Church who were looking favourably upon these Higher Critical, infidel views, and who did their utmost to screen such as held and expressed publicly these most pernicious heresies from the usual discipline of the Church of Christ. Furthermore, the pernicious heresies expressed by these men turned many of the people away from God's Word into infidelity, and caused great grief of heart and many temptations to the Lord's true people.

Another thing that followed the Union movement was the introduction of hymns of human composition, in other words, uninspired hymns, into the public worship of the Free Church. This was introduced by a resolution of the Assembly which went only the length of permitting such congregations as agreed to use them to introduce them, or in other words leaving it, to begin with, an open question. In a few years instrumental music was introduced in

the same way. When all these innovations and heresies, errors in doctrines and principles, are taken into consideration, should it seem strange though the true sons and daughters of the Free Church felt that she was no longer the Free Church which they loved and admired?

CHAPTER 4

Rise of Higher Critical Views: Professor Robertson Smith - Professor Smith charged with heresy - New libel framed – Appeal from Aberdeen Presbytery to 1880 Assembly – Article on “Hebrew Language and Literature” - Case before 1881 Assembly: Professor Smith dismissed from his chair.

RISE OF HIGHER CRITICAL VIEWS: PROFESSOR ROBERTSON SMITH

It is one of the ironies of our ecclesiastical history that in one of the most evangelical Churches in Christendom as far as Scotland is concerned, that the Higher Criticism which has done so much to throttle the spiritual life of Scotland showed itself first of all. The issue was raised at a time ere yet the warm evangelical fervour of the Disruption had passed away, and it is not saying too much that it came as a rude shock to many to discover that the Enemy had been sowing such a crop of tares when they learned the amount of sympathy the new views on the Old Testament Scriptures elicited in the General Assembly of the Free Church. The man who raised the question was William Robertson Smith, a brilliant scholar, who at various stages of his trials made impressive speeches asserting his fidelity to the evangelical faith and loyalty to God's Word. Robertson Smith has been educated at home by his father, the Rev. W.P. Smith, D.D., Free Church minister of Keig, Aberdeenshire. At the age of fourteen he went to Aberdeen University and carried everything before him. He took his theological course at the New College, Edinburgh, and there, from Professor A.B. Davidson, he got his first taste of the poison that was soon to vitiate the theological scholarship of Scotland. In 1870 the General Assembly did an unprecedented thing in appointing one so young to the Chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Criticism in the Free Church College, Aberdeen. Dr Carnegie Simpson, the biographer of Principal Rainy, speaks of his being ultimately driven from his chair as a tragedy - the real tragedy for the Free Church was the appointment of this young, brilliant scholar to such a chair.

The story of the controversy is somewhat long: the issues involved were mightier than the claims of the new learning to have a hearing in an Evangelical Church hitherto noted for its allegiance to the Scriptures. The wearisome intricacies of ecclesiastical procedure raised at every possible point to hinder a clear cut issue are points which irritate the reader almost beyond endurance. During the tenure of his chair, Professor Smith continued his studies abroad during the vacation. While in pursuit of knowledge he met Wellhausen, recently appointed Professor of Theology at Gottingen. The

acquaintanceship thus begun ripened into a fatal literary friendship for Robertson Smith. In view of his fame as a scholar, Professor Smith was asked to contribute some articles to the 9th Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. The first article on “Angels” evoked some comment, owing to the writer's indefiniteness as to the personality of the angels and on other points, but it was his next contribution - “Bible” - which made it clear that the young Professor had drifted far from the moorings of the Free Church. The article not only was written from the higher critical standpoint, but it accepted some of its most advanced conclusions. No reference was made to the spiritual origin of the Bible, and the composition of several books were dealt with in the freest manner. The non-Davidic authorship of all but one or two of the Psalms was asserted, the greater part of the predictive element in the prophets was eliminated, and the ascription of the Synoptic Gospels was attributed not to the writers whose names they bear, but to later non-apostolic tradition. Needless to say the articles caused a storm, and the alleged guileless ignorance attributed to Professor Robertson Smith by Dr Carnegie Simpson, in saying that he was the only one who was surprised at the panic caused, shows that the Church had to deal with a man who, with all his brilliant parts, did not know when he was carrying fire. This unaccountable insensibility to the cause of the storm that was raging around him is a window showing the Professor's mentality. This strange attitude, according to Dr Carnegie Simpson, was due “to a remarkable intellectual simplicity”! It will be seen that throughout this whole case Professor Robertson Smith with proud disdain brushed aside as unworthy of consideration the feelings of those who were painfully hurt by the new teaching which was an intruder and disturber of the peace.

Dr Begg was the first to take ecclesiastical action. He raised the question at the Commission of the General Assembly in August, 1876, and at the November Commission a motion was made to call a special Commission to deal with the case, which was not pressed as it was intimated that the College Committee were preparing a report. The Committee gave in their report to the March Commission (1877). It declared that it did not find in the offending article “any ground sufficient to support a process for heresy against Professor Smith”. But it declared the article to be “of dangerous and unsettling tendency”. The commission decided to call the attention of the Free Church Presbytery of Aberdeen under whose jurisdiction Professor Robertson Smith was, to the matter. Principal Rainy characteristically declared that they could not have a heresy libel, and that he would refuse to the last “the idea of making such

questions rank as confessionally settled". As an astute leader, however, "he recognised with great sympathy," he said, "the bewilderment, anxiety, and apprehension" which Professor Robertson Smith's views caused. Rainy began to try his master tactics on Robertson Smith, but the brilliant scholar in the pride of his undoubted learning and backed by a haughty disposition that comes out in his biography written by his friends, and particularly in the case before us, would have none of Dr Rainy's suggestions. What had he done that he should withdraw or express regret?

About this time Smith wrote a letter to the "Daily Review", in which he severely criticised one of his critics for "weakness in scholarship", "theological acrimony", etc. Throughout the controversy it will be observed what tremendous stress was laid on Hebrew scholarship as the deciding factor in the questions raised. Professor Robertson Smith's ill-concealed contempt for many of his opponents, simply because they were not so familiar with the niceties of Hebrew scholarship and were not spell-bound by the erratic theorisings of the German school, explains to a certain extent his inability to see matters from their standpoint, and accounts for his haughty bearing, so unbecoming in a young man, even though he had imbibed a good deal of the poison of his friend Wellhausen, the unbelieving critic. In fact the fatal mistake made both by Professor Robertson Smith and his friends was that they considered scholarship as the deciding voice in such matters. It was on this rock the evangelical orthodoxy of the Free Church was wrecked. Rainy himself lays his finger on this weak spot in Robertson Smith's character in a letter to Dr Laidlaw; "The root of the whole mischief," he writes, "appears to me to be an absence of regard for the conditions under which believing men who have not great scholarship, including most ministers, maintain their faith in the Word of God, by which they live and order their thoughts about. The disregard of this appears to me (I lay emphasis on appears; I do not think the case is so, but it looks so) amounts to contempt. Where this is so, scholarship itself wants a steadying influence. Personal faith is not enough as a steadying influence. At all events, the disregard of this side of things is sure to entail the most mischievous and the most needless misunderstandings. I feel as if there were no chance of Smith putting himself right, so far as that is possible, until, of himself as it were, he begins to look at this with more sympathy and with more respect" (Life of Principal Rainy, 1, 329).

"The account given in Dr Rainy's Life of what he was doing behind the scenes casts a flood of light on the astute methods of this noted ecclesiastical leader.

His biographer, a hero-worshipper of Rainy and Robertson Smith, in trying to put the best face on the actions of these two men, has an extremely difficult task and utterly fails in the execution of it. We have seldom read in any biography such lame pleading, so full of sophistry, with a naive simplicity that does not deceive the reader.

PROFESSOR SMITH CHARGED WITH HERESY

When the case came before the Assembly in 1877, Professor Smith demanded a "libel".⁴ Dr William Wilson moved that the Aberdeen Presbytery proceed with the case and that in the meantime Professor Smith cease teaching. Professor Candlish moved an amendment, but Dr Wilson's was carried by - 713 to 491. Professor Smith, when the case came up before his Presbytery, at once plunged into a criticism of the procedure. Like most long drawn out ecclesiastical cases, the proceedings before the Presbytery make wearisome reading. The drawing up of the libel was a difficult task, and the friends of Professor Smith fought its relevancy point by point until the Presbytery decided in their favour. The minority appealed to the Superior Court, and when the Assembly met in Glasgow in 1878, the interest in the case was intense. The first count in the libel about the Aaronic priesthood was dismissed by the Assembly. But when the second count came up as to Professor Smith's views on the historicity of Deuteronomy, Sir Henry Moncrieff moved that the appeal be sustained and the count on Deuteronomy declared relevant. Principal Rainy moved that this count be declared irrelevant. In his speech he made the distinction between the Church's credited teaching and opinions which might be tolerated. The opposition to the orthodox position was strong and determined, but Sir Henry's motion was carried by a majority of 23.

The next count in the libel was taken up in the evening. Professor Smith, in an extraordinary speech, referred to what his critics had said in the forenoon in attacking his attitude to Deuteronomy, and said: "He felt that he would like to ask the speakers if they had anything higher to say of Scripture than that which he said - that in every part of it God still spoke to us." A man incapable of realising the yawning gulf between his own position and that of his orthodox opponents was certainly a difficult person to deal with, as the whole issue from beginning to end very clearly showed. He specially singled out Dr Begg for a piece of reckless criticism. "Dr Begg," he said, "had told them he was trembling for the Ark of God. There was another expression more appropriate, and that

⁴ "Libel" the formal indictment by which a minister or probationer is charged with misconduct or heresy.

was trembling at the Word of God. He trusted he trembled - he trusted he should never cease to tremble, though rejoicing with confidence and love - at every word of God, which he took as the absolute rule of his faith and life. But he was not one of those who trembled for the ark of God. He knew but of one character in the Bible history, set up for our instruction, who trembled for the ark of God, and that was Eli - not the most admirable character of the Old Testament - a worldly ecclesiastic. Eli trembled for the ark of God, and why did he tremble for the ark of God? Because for him the ark of God had ceased to be a shrine of the living, revealing word of God in the commandments and had become a fetish, an idol, carried about as if by its power it could assist the Church in its war against the Philistines. He trembled for the ark of God, and as he trembled, he fell and perished. But there was no need to tremble for the ark, because the ark was safe, not in virtue of those outside things he had looked at, but because it was the ark of God's revelation. No man need tremble for that. God's revelation was safe." As he shot that arrow - "a worldly ecclesiastic" - his supporters with frenzied glee cheered the excited orator to the echo.⁵

Dr Carnegie Simpson in his "Life of Dr Rainy" makes reference to this attack and its reception by men who boasted broader mindedness than their orthodox opponents - "The sensation this passage produced - the part of it from the words 'a worldly ecclesiastic' onward - baffles description. At the bar, the small slim figure quivering with life - his pallid face and bright eyes - the high, rapid, passionate tones - the riveted attention of every person in the heated crowded hall. And then, when, with a kind of shriek, the words, 'a worldly ecclesiastic', flashed out like lightning, a moment's amazement, and, immediately after, an uproar of wild acclamation mingled with some protests, and altogether an uncontrollable commotion; the whole scene was one without parallel in, at least, the modern annals of the General Assembly. The excitement was, of course, highly improper in the midst of a judicial process, but it was difficult to avoid being carried away by the combined religious unction and dialectic dash of this brilliant pleader, who so feared God and so disregarded man - dead or living. There was little sympathy felt for Begg, whose ruddy countenance blanched for once, under what was perhaps the most overwhelming verdict ever passed by the Assembly on one of its

⁵ It has been said in defence of Professor Smith that he had not Dr Begg in view when he spoke of Eli as a worldly ecclesiastic; but his followers in the Assembly certainly made the application to Dr Begg.

members" ("Life of Principal Rainy", I, 338). The Day will declare which of the two most deserved the description - "worldly ecclesiastic" - Dr Begg or Professor Smith, when a righteous Judge will preside and a soberer assembly will hear the verdict. Others looking on the "slim figure" saw something else in the quivering than the quivering of life - the quivering due to a haughty temper that was not getting all its own way. But the heated imagination of the brilliant scholar in describing Eli as a worldly ecclesiastic led him into that region of fiction from which so many of his theories about other things in the Bible had come.⁶ The count on which Professor Smith made the above speech was disallowed by the Assembly, and after further discussion a committee was appointed to amend the whole libel. The libel after undergoing various amendments was at last adopted by the General Assembly. It had the advantage over the first in that it was not so cumbersome and did not give Professor Smith and his supporters such wide field in which to roam and exercise their mental acrobatic gifts. The indictment against Professor Smith was that he advanced "the opinion that the book of inspired Scripture called Deuteronomy, which is professedly an historical record, does not possess that character, but was made to assume it by a writer of a much later age, who therein, in the name of God, presented a dramatic form, instructions and laws as proceeding from the mouth of Moses, though these never were and never could have been, uttered by him". The motion to proceed with this indictment was moved by the saintly Dr Andrew A. Bonar, and his motion instructed Professor Smith's Presbytery to take immediate steps to proceed and, in the event of the libel being proved, to suspend Professor Smith and bring up the case to next Assembly for final judgment. Principal Rainy moved that before proceeding further, a Committee be appointed to consider the case in all its bearings. Dr Rainy was constitutionally incapable where such issues were involved of taking the plain, straightforward course, which in this instance would have saved the Church and himself from a great deal of unnecessary trouble. His biographer defends him on the plea that he was acting "on the line of high moral expediency". Expediency, no doubt, there was, but whether it was "high moral" or even moral expediency is quite another question. When

⁶ Even Dr Carnegie Simpson feels it necessary to criticise the disgraceful conduct of Professor Smith's supporters when he says: "This dancing on the grave of Eli - a weak man but hardly a worldly man - was, on calmer reflection, felt to be a little less than just and decent. Two things should be added about Professor Smith personally. One is that he had never thought of the Assembly applying his sharp-pointed words to anyone present; it was not Smith who fitted them mercilessly on Begg, but the House" - all the more disgraceful for the House, we say.

the vote was taken Principal Rainy was in the humiliating position of being in the minority; but it was only a majority of one which carried Dr Bonar's motion - the vote being 321 to 320. Throughout all these debates the man who had instilled the higher critical poison into the mind of his brilliant young pupil sat silent. His admirers found it difficult to explain the silence, and where they offer explanations of this strange conduct, they only make matters worse. No man in Scotland had more reason to feel guilt on his conscience in this matter than Professor A.B. Davidson, the famous Hebrew scholar and the idol of his students.

APPEAL FROM ABERDEEN PRESBYTERY TO 1880 ASSEMBLY

When the Aberdeen Presbytery met, Professor Smith appeared with certain pleas at law, on the strength of which he contended the Court was not entitled to proceed with proof. The Presbytery and the Synod admitted there was something in these pleas, and the minority appealed to the Assembly. These methods, while giving full scope to the mental smartness of Professor Smith, did little to raise him in the eyes of men who had not his mental agility, but disdained what in Parliament would rightly be described as obstructionist tactics. When the appeal came before the Assembly in 1880, the first question to be debated was: Had such a change been made on the libel as to raise anew the point of its relevancy? The question went to the vote of the Assembly, when it was carried by 383 to 164 that no such change as asserted by Professor Smith before the Presbytery had been made on the libel as to raise the question anew of its relevancy. The Church was getting weary of these displays of what his admirers regarded as mental gifts of a high order, but with others regarded as altogether out of place in view of the seriousness of the issues involved.

At length when the matter came up later at this Assembly, four motions were brought forward - (1) Sir Henry Moncrieff's, which asserted that as Professor Smith no longer retained that measure of confidence on the part of the Church which is necessary to the edifying and useful performance of his professional work, that he be relieved of his office; (2) Dr Laidlaw's, which declared the views promulgated by Professor Smith to be not those of the Free Church, but inasmuch as they do not directly contradict the doctrine of the Confession, replace him in his chair with an admonition; (3) Dr Begg's, which asked the

Assembly to proceed to proof; (4) Dr Beith's,⁷ which, as it was the motion that carried, is given in full, was as follows:- "The General Assembly, considering that the course of the case has confirmed the report of the College Committee, that they had not found any ground sufficient to justify a process for heresy against Professor Robertson Smith, inasmuch as seven of the eight counts in the original libel have been found irrelevant, while with regard to the remaining count the explanation offered by Professor Smith at various stages, and in particular his answer to the amended libel, afford satisfactory evidence that, in this aspect of the case also, there is no sufficient ground to support a process for heresy, do resolve to withdraw the libel against him. Further, the Assembly, finding that Professor Smith is blameworthy for the unguarded and incomplete statements of his articles, which have occasioned much anxiety in the Church and given offence to many brethren zealous for the honour of the Word of God, instruct the Moderator to admonish Professor Smith with due solemnity as to the past, in the confident expectation that the defects referred to will be guarded against and avoided in time to come. And finally, the Assembly declares that, in declining to decide on these critical views by way of discipline, the Church expresses no opinion in favour of their truth or probability, but leaves the ultimate decision to future inquiry, in the spirit of patience, humility, and brotherly charity, admonishing professors to remember that they are not set for the propagating of their own opinions but for the maintenance of the doctrine and truth committed to the Church."

Principal Rainy had cast in his lot with Sir Henry Moncrieff and Mr Wilson for better or worse. When news of this alliance reached Professor Smith, he wrote an open letter against its unconstitutional injustice. Rainy was assailed with merciless bitterness - nothing was too bad to say about the man whose astute dealings had landed him in the camp of the enemy, as his quondam friends averred. "His coalition with Sir Henry," says his biographer, "was compared with the sudden friendship of Pilate and Herod" ("Life of Principal Rainy", I, 365). The Smith party viewed the situation with doleful feelings. Professor Salmond went the length of asking his friend Professor Smith to resign to save a catastrophe which seemed inevitable. When the case came up in the Assembly on Thursday, the House was packed. Smith received an ovation on his entrance, while Rainy met with a hostile demonstration. It was nearly

⁷ Dr Beith's motion was dear for him as he was unable to be present through illness.

midnight when the vote was taken. The first division was between Dr Begg's and Dr Beith's motions. Dr Beith's carried by a vote of 287 to 256. The next vote was between Dr Laidlaw's and Dr Beith's. Dr Beith's was again carried by a vote of 244 to 51. The final vote was between Dr Beith's and Sir Henry Moncrieff's. Dr Beith's motion carried the day by a vote of 299 to 292 - a majority of 7. Dr Begg and some of his followers did not vote.^{8*} The result was quite unexpected and was received with jubilant shouts by Professor Smith's supporters. Still, Professor Smith's friends should have tempered their jubilation with becoming sobriety, for though they had the majority as far as the vote was concerned, they were not in a majority in the Assembly. Principal Rainy winced under the result, and the orthodox party were too much overcome by the unexpected vote to hide it.

The hero of the hour was then summoned to the bar of the Assembly to receive his admonition. Dr Main, the Moderator, did this difficult piece of work well. Professor Smith in addressing the Moderator after his admonition said: "Moderator, I hope I am not out of place when I say that while I thank God for the issue of this evening - an issue which I trust will be for His glory and for the maintenance of His truth - I have never been more sensible than on the present occasion of the blame that rests on me for statements which have proved so incomplete that, even at the end of three years, the opinion of this House is so divided upon them. I feel that in the providence of God, this is a very weighty lesson to one placed as I am in the position of a teacher, and I hope that by His grace I shall not fail to profit by it." Yet at the very moment when those words were spoken, the Professor knew that there had passed through the press an article which robbed these fair words of any meaning they had. The mentality of those who go astray from the truth is a problem that is difficult to solve. Their asseverations of orthodoxy and loyalty to God's truth is characteristic of them down through all the ages of the Church. Professor Smith was congratulated by Wellhausen, Kuenen, Cheyne, Driver and

⁸ Both Sir Henry and Dr Begg have been blamed for not standing by each other, but Professor Thomas Smith says that Sir Henry while unsparingly condemning Professor Smith's views, was not convinced that they were "heresy" in the technical sense. Dr Begg held that since Professor Smith had been served with a libel it ought to have gone to proof, and in this Dr Begg was right (Memoirs of James Begg, D.D. II 532).

many others - names which show as clearly as anything else in what boat the young Professor was sailing.

ARTICLE ON "HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE"

The coolness and callous indifference of Professor Smith comes out even more prominently in the next phase of his case. A few days after he made the above speech, a new volume of the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' appeared with an article - Hebrew Language and Literature - by Professor Smith. In this article he definitely accepted the Graf-Wellhausen view of the Pentateuch as his own. The effect on the Church was extraordinary; even Professor Smith's friends were stunned by the recklessness of their brilliant but headstrong young hero. As the storm burst, Professor Smith quietly entrenched himself behind his scholarship and sat down behind the opinions of such men as Wellhausen and awaited developments. But at length he was drawn out of his shelter, and in a letter he says: "Since I wrote the article on 'Hebrew Language and Literature' the Assembly has given me a final decision on the question whether the critical views for which I was libelled are inconsistent with office in the Free Church.....The Church declines to make those views matters of discipline, and leaves the ultimate decision as to what truth they contain to future inquiry, in the spirit of patience, humility and brotherly charity. The decision enabled myself and those who held my views to remain at our posts with a clear conscience, and return to our work in the Church with fresh vigour." If this is one of the fruits of scholarship, to read meanings into decisions and resolutions that never entered into ordinary minds, then it is a fatal gift the less of which the professing Church of Christ possesses the better. Dr Laidlaw, whose motion is referred to above, was startled by this interpretation, and pointed out that the views expressed by Professor Smith which had caused such a storm in the Church were not tolerated in any sense except that "she declines to make the past promulgation of them by Professor Smith the ground for any judicial action".

When the Commission of the General Assembly met in August, a Committee was appointed to examine the article, and this Committee were to give in their report to a special meeting of the Commission in October. The Committee reported that "the statements made by the author in many particulars are such as are fitted and can hardly fail to produce upon the minds of readers the impression that Scripture does not present a reliable statement of the truth, and that God is not the Author of it." Passages of Scripture, continued the

report, are spoken of (1) in an irreverent manner; (2) in such a way as to render it difficult for readers to regard God as the Author of them; (3) so as to naturally suggest that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences; (4) as discrediting prophecy in its predictive aspects; (5) the whole tendency of the writings examined is fitted to throw the Old Testament history into confusion, and to weaken, if not destroy, the very foundation on which the New Testament doctrine is built, and further that there is no adequate recognition of the divine element in the production of the Bible. Professor Smith was heard in his own defence and made an able speech, but fortunately, in this case it did not carry conviction. Professor Smith's able speeches and clever defences were now seen to be rather dangerous equipment where the higher interests of truth were at stake. The Commission decided to ask Professor Smith to refrain from conducting his class during the coming session, which he loyally did. It was argued that the Commission was acting unconstitutionally in instituting a new process, but it was pointed out that the instruction to refrain from teaching was not an act of suspension but a precautionary order given under peculiar circumstances and which he might legally disregard. When the Assembly met in 1881, the action of the Commission was condemned as unnecessary, unwise, contrary to the spirit of the instructions given, and dangerous as a precedent, but, except in some of the speeches, it was not held as unconstitutional, and its conduct was finally approved by 439 votes to 218.

CASE BEFORE 1881 ASSEMBLY: PROFESSOR SMITH DISMISSED FROM HIS CHAIR

Principal Rainy was now at his wit's end for, though a master in ecclesiastical diplomacy, an undoubtedly difficult situation had arisen. The young professor who had been lauded to the skies was proving a rather troublesome person, even to his friends. The case was taken up in three separate sections - (1) the action of the Commission to which reference has been made; (2) Dr Rainy's motion on Tuesday, the 24th May, whose vital point was the last clause - "therefore the General Assembly, having the responsible duty to discharge of overseeing the teaching in the Divinity Halls, while they are sensible of the importance of guarding the due liberty of professors, and encouraging learned and candid research, feel themselves constrained to declare that they no longer consider it safe or advantageous for the Church that Professor Smith should continue to teach in one of her colleges." A counter motion was moved by Dr Alexander Whyte. Principal Rainy's motion was carried by 423 votes to

245. (3) Next day Dr Adam moved that “the Assembly appoint and declare that Professor Smith's tenure of his chair shall cease”. The motion expressly conserved his salary. Professor A.B. Bruce moved an amendment. Dr Dods made a speech in defence of the Professor. 394 voted for Dr Adam's motion and 231 for Professor A.B. Bruce's.

So ended the Robertson Smith case as far as the Courts of the Free Church were concerned. A great flood of idle tears has been shed over the fate that overtook Professor Smith. His dismissal from his chair has been described as a blunder on the part of the General Assembly, but in the estimation of many the only blunder about it was that the dismissal did not take place sooner. There was a slackness in dealing with the case that bore bitter fruits in the days to come. In reading through the Assembly, Commission and Presbytery proceedings, together with the comments made by the biographers of Professor Robertson Smith, Dr Rainy, Dr Begg and Dr David Brown in connection with this case, one is impressed with the amount of precious time that was wasted by the raising of little points of procedure by Professor Smith and his party, as if his case or the points at issue were to be decided by these. Reference has been made more than once to Professor Smith's haughty bearing towards his opponents, who though they had not drunk deeply of the Graf-Wellhausen well, had probably drunk out of a purer and more heavenly spring. The stress laid on the necessity of Hebrew learning ere the judges were competent .give a verdict on the questions raised shows the perverted judgment of the scholars. It has been pertinently pointed out that there was scarcely a question raised whose decision depended in any material degree on scholarship. The question was one of the authenticity, historical accuracy, and the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, and if these cannot be decided without proficiency in a high degree of Hebrew scholarship and familiarity with the theories of the Graf-Wellhausen school, then the Church of Christ is in an unenviable position.

CHAPTER 5

Dr Dods' Glasgow sermon - Appeal to Assembly - Dr Dods' St Giles' sermon - Case of Dr Bruce - Motion re Confession of Faith in 1889 Assembly - Overtures on Inspiration at 1891 Assembly - Proposed Declaratory Act - Assembly of 1892 Rev. M. Macaskill's motion on doctrine of inspiration - Ruinous effects of rationalism.

DR DODS' GLASGOW SERMON

We have seen the advance made by the Free Church since the Union controversy began in 1863, and the evil effects of it on her orthodoxy, peace and prosperity. But instead of calling a halt, the progress made in the departures from God's Word and its own original position was pursued with something like infatuated blindness.

In the year 1877 the Rev. Marcus Dods, Glasgow, published a sermon in which he made statements on the infallibility of the Scriptures which were contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the Confession of Faith. This sermon was considered by the Presbytery of Glasgow. In a letter sent to the Presbytery he withdrew the sermon, as it was then, on the distinct understanding that the views expressed in it should be allowed in the Free Church. This is his statement: - "In view of the decision to which the Presbytery came last Thursday, and in pursuance of the statement I then made, I beg now to express my willingness to withdraw my sermon in its present form, and I say that in view of the Presbytery's decision, and on the grounds on which the decision was based; and I desire that it may be put upon the record of the Presbytery that I withdraw my sermon on the distinct understanding that a majority of the Presbytery has found that the views expressed in my sermon and preface are to be tolerated within the Church, and are not condemned by the Confession. I am myself of opinion that the views I have expressed are consistent with the Confession, and I withdraw it only in deference to the Presbytery's opinion that the publication of these views has been ill-advised in form and in time. I have my own mind on the decision." The views which were before the Presbytery were: "No careful student of Scripture can well deny that there are inaccuracies in the gospels and elsewhere - inaccuracies such as occur in ordinary writings through imperfect information or lapse of memory, sufficient entirely to explode the averment of infallibility." The majority of the Free Church Presbytery of Glasgow was prepared to leave it an open question in the Church whether such views on inspiration were to be tolerated in the Church. But the minority of the ministers and elders appealed against their decision to

the Synod. The Synod sustained a part of the appeal, but dismissed the rest of it. The minority appealed to the General Assembly of 1878.

APPEAL TO ASSEMBLY

After explanatory statements by the appellants, and the long speeches by those who appeared in defence of the Synod's findings, Dr Rainy at the end of a characteristic speech moved as follows: "The General Assembly, considering that they are not in circumstances to enter with advantage on a discussion of the topics which this case appears to involve, and that no substantial interest appears to be imperilled by accepting the decision of the Synod, dismiss the protest and appeal, and declare the sentence of the Synod to have become final."

Dr Begg moved that: "The General Assembly dismiss the dissent and complaint, and affirm the judgment of the Synod in so far as it takes exception to the report approved by the Presbytery as not being a full representation of the dangerous character of the views set forth in the sermon and preface reported on, especially in not with sufficient emphasis condemning the view that there are errors in the Scriptures as originally given; as also in so far as affirmed the doctrine contained in the Standards in regard to the infallible truth and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; but the Assembly regard that judgment as defective in so far as it does not explicitly reverse the judgment of the Presbytery; and the Assembly further enjoin the Presbytery of Glasgow to delete from their record the minute in regard to Dr Dods of December 5th now on the table, and to deal with him in regard to his views, reasserted in his letter contained in that minute." A division was then taken, when 316 voted for Dr Rainy's motion and 97 for Dr Begg's. Dr Begg dissented (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1878), pp. 229-252).

DR DODS' ST GILES' SERMON

In the year 1890 an overture from the Synod of Argyll came before the General Assembly. It read as follows: "Whereas, some views expressed by Dr Dods and Dr Bruce in recent publications seem not to be in harmony with the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, the authoritative standards of the Church; whereas, these views have caused a widespread alarm among professing Christians, and deeply wound the consciences of many of God's people within our bounds; and whereas, the action of the Free Church in this matter deeply concerns the glory of Christ's cause and kingdom: it is hereby humbly

overtured by the Synod of Argyll to the General Assembly that they take the premises into consideration, and take steps as may seem in their wisdom the best to vindicate the honour of God's Word, and secure peace and harmony in our Church.”

It appears from the speeches made by the movers and seconders of the several motions which were brought under the serious consideration of the Assembly in connection with the overture from the Synod of Argyll that the following charges were made against Dr Dods. Dr Dods in a sermon which he preached in St Giles', Edinburgh, said they “must not too hastily conclude that even a belief in Christ's divinity is essential to the true Christian”. This language which was employed was taken hold of by Unitarians. It had been used by them as if it had been a testimony to their particular views. Another charge brought against Dr Dods was that he said: “If then we are accepting God's forgiveness, and living in the sunshine of His favour, we need not be seriously disturbed in spirit if we find that we cannot accept what is known as the orthodox theory of the atonement.” Another charge brought against him was that he said: “If any one finds it impossible to believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, but easy to believe in His present life and power, it would only be mischievous to require in him a faith he could not give in addition to a faith which brings him into a fellowship with Christ.” He held also “that there were errors and immoralities in the Scriptures”.

Dr Adam who moved the first motion gave what might appear as a thorough trouncing to Dr Dods for divulging such erroneous views; but ended his speech thus; “He did not mean at all that they were to be confined to every form and every expression of a bygone century. They must recognise the change of time, and habits of thought, and they must seek to have an adaptation of the truth to these altered circumstances - it was to him one of the great proofs of Christianity that it admitted of that adaptation - and they ought most earnestly to see that that adaptation was made. Let them not, however, allow the substance to slip through their fingers while they were carrying on the process of adaptation. Let the great essentials be held fast in life and death.” Such language and sentiments as these seem to mean that Dr Dods and such as held his heretical views were encouraged to expect a change in the public creed of the Free Church. It will become quite manifest that this was their inward and true meaning. There were five motions considered, the most of these pleading for toleration of the views under consideration; others demanding that the case should be dealt with in accordance with the practice of the Church in such

cases. The vast majority were on the side of toleration while declaring that they held by the Word of God and the Confession of Faith. The majority for Dr Adam's motion was 237 over the motion of Dr Winter, who asked that Dr Dods should be libelled (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1890), pp. 70-121).

An appeal by the minority of the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh against a decision of that Court not to receive a libel against Dr Dods was brought before the same Assembly on the authority of the Synods of Glenelg and Chanonry by the Revs. M. Macaskill, Dingwall, and William Sinclair, Plockton. Mr Macaskill appeared also against the finding of the Edinburgh Presbytery. He made an able speech in which he charged the Edinburgh Presbytery with dereliction of duty towards God's Word, the Confession of Faith, and those who brought the libel and were quite ready to prove it or suffer the consequences; also towards the Free Church's constitution which they had solemnly vowed to maintain, and towards Dr Dods, who, he expected, would be anxious to clear himself of these charges if he could. Dr Rainy replied for the action of the Presbytery. He held that they acted quite constitutionally in their proceedings and denied that it was in order to shelve the libel that they sent it to the Assembly. When parties were removed from the bar, Dr Adam moved: "That the Assembly find that in all the circumstances the Presbytery were right in not proceeding further in the petition and libel without the sanction of the General Assembly; looking to the proceedings and findings in the case of Dr Dods at a former diet, the Assembly now decline to grant such sanction, and, therefore, they direct the Presbytery of Edinburgh to proceed no further."

CASE OF DR BRUCE

At this Assembly (1890) also, Dr Bruce of the Free Church College, Glasgow, came before it charged with expressions in books written by him which were contrary to the received orthodox views of the inspiration of the Scriptures, especially of the New Testament. The Rev. R.G. Balfour moved that: "The Assembly approve of the report of the Committee (College Committee) as regards its conclusion, finding no ground for a process against Dr Bruce as teaching doctrine opposed to the Standards of the Church. But the Assembly also declare as follows: (1) With respect to the inspiration of the Gospels and the reliable character of their reports as to the life and ministry of our blessed Lord, the Assembly find that, by want of due care in his modes of statement, and by his manner in handling debated questions as to the motives and

method of the Evangelists, Dr Bruce has given some ground for the misunderstandings and for the painful impressions which have existed. (2) With respect to Dr Bruce's doctrinal positions and his statement about the system of the Christian faith, the Assembly find ground for reminding Dr Bruce that, in endeavouring to state afresh the bearing of our Lord's teaching, and in setting forth aspirations after fresh light upon the matter of the teaching received among us, he was bound to express himself not only with essential loyalty to the Church's faith professed by him along with all his brethren, but, also, so as to make that continued loyalty evident to the world. With reference to both departments of this finding, the Assembly call Dr Bruce's special attention to the responsibility attached to his position. Finally, the Assembly cordially recognise the good gifts which Dr Bruce has brought to the service of the Church in the line of theological literature and otherwise, as well as those which distinguished Dr Dods, whose case was before the Assembly at a former diet. They assure those brethren of the Assembly's earnest desire for their acceptance and success in the important work which the Church has entrusted to them."

Mr Balfour, in his speech, referred to Dr Bruce's book, 'The Kingdom of God'. He would not say that there was any unfairness in the quotations made by brethren in Glasgow. 'These quotations were necessarily short, but when they read those passages with the context, and especially when the whole book was perused, and perused, perhaps, more than once, then one began to see that the passages which startled at first sight were susceptible of a very harmless and suitable explanation. Mr Balfour quoted the following sentence: "But the question may be raised even in reference to the Synoptists (i.e., the first three Gospels) whether they can be regarded as giving a perfect and trustworthy report of the sayings of Christ." That the Assembly of the Free Church should allow such teaching by anyone under its jurisdiction shows how far -it had fallen from holding that " all Scripture is given by inspiration of God", the Holy Spirit. The language used by these professors as to the inspiration of the Bible verges on the denial of the trustworthiness of the records; still they were allowed to continue teaching the rising ministry of the Church. Mr Balfour gave another quotation "The power which Jesus claimed to forgive sin is put upon this footing - God is willing that it (i.e., the privilege of forgiving) should be exercised by all on earth in whom dwells His own Spirit; and any right to forgive rests on this, that I am a sympathetic friend of the sinful, full of the grace and charity of heaven." Mr Balfour tries to justify this statement, and

thus shows there were more than professors very unsound in the faith in the Free Church. Another quotation given was: "Jesus did not think of the elect as chosen to an exclusive salvation, or as enjoying a monopoly of divine favour. He regarded them rather as chosen to the noble vocation and function of saviours to their fellow-men. 'Ye are the salt of the earth'; 'Ye are the light of the world' - such was the language He employed to indicate the purpose of their election."

Mr Findlay, Larkhall, moved that: "The Assembly receive the special report of the College Committee and its sub-committee on the case of Dr Bruce, and thank them for their diligence. The Assembly find as regards that in the volume of Dr Bruce entitled, 'The Kingdom of God' and others of his writings there are many statements which are seriously objectionable and appear to be irreconcilable with the standards of the Church and the position and responsibility of a Professor of Theology. The Assembly remit this decision, along with the special report of the College Committee and its sub-committee, to the Presbytery of Glasgow to deal therewith as seems to them fit." Mr Findlay supported his motion with a faithful, vigorous, and convincing speech, in which he warned the Assembly of conniving at such unconstitutional and unscriptural doctrines as were divulged by Professor Bruce. He said: "No living Church of Christ could be indifferent as to the teaching of her professors, and as to the views of divine truth promulgated from the chairs of Theology. Their colleges were the schools of the prophets, the nurseries of their future ministers. What was taught there would be reproduced in their pulpits; would, humanly speaking, mould the religion of their Church; and would, indirectly, have an important bearing on the highest interests of their land and of the world at large. No Church of Christ, if faithful to her divine Head, could shirk the duty of keeping a watchful eye over her Divinity Halls, and that duty was all the more imperative in a Church such as theirs, when the appointment of professors was not made by the State, but by the Church herself, and where the professors were directly responsible to the Church.....In the Free Church their professors were chosen because they were believed to be sound in the faith, in harmony with the Church's creed, and prepared to teach the truth as embodied in the Church's standards; and if the Church should unhappily find herself to be mistaken, if the professors should be found to be at variance, or should be supposed to be at variance, with the faith of the Church, it was the Church's duty to interpose and, if necessary, to find a remedy."

This expression as regards the Church's duty towards her own creed; towards her rising ministry; towards the vigilant care she should exercise for the souls of the people under her jurisdiction; and towards the professors themselves, appeals to every right thinking man as being judicious, stating facts which could not be gainsaid, and an upright exposition of the duty of the Church. However plain it was that Professor Bruce's statements (many of which Mr Findlay brought before the Assembly) were contrary to the clear meaning of Scripture and the Confession of Faith, the majority in the Assembly had their mind made up that the new unbelieving views should be tolerated in the Free Church. To mention one point in proof of this, Professor Bruce wrote that the vows office-bearers made when ordained were an "ecclesiastical scandal of making solemn pretence of receiving *ex animo* what was only submitted to reluctantly as a condition of office". Every God-fearing and honest man will regard such a base insinuation with contempt; but there were many in the office of the ministry in the Free Church at this time, and after, who boasted that they were not committed to the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. Such would highly approve of Professor Bruce's statement, as we shall see by and by. After long speeches were made on the merits and demerits of Professor Bruce's teaching and publications, they voted as follows: - For Mr R.G. Balfour's motion, 392; for Mr Findlay's, 237.

Mr John MacEwan dissented as follows from the finding of the Assembly in his own name and in name of such as adhered to his dissent: "We, the undersigned, ministers and elders, in our own name and in behalf of all who may adhere to us, hereby dissent from this judgment now come to by the Assembly. (1) Because it fails to do adequate justice to the grave questions raised regarding the divine authorship and infallible truth of the Word of God written. (2) Because, while partially condemning the views of Dr Bruce on several matters, the Assembly yet declare that they find no ground for process against him for teaching views which are opposed to the standards of the Church. (3) Because, by the rejection of the motion which provided an orderly way of affording Dr Bruce an opportunity of either vindicating or retracting the views which he is alleged to have set forth in the writings referred to in the College Committee's special report, the Assembly have by implication made these views of Holy Scripture matters of forbearance -that is, open questions in the Free Church. And we hereby declare that, in view of the vital interests imperilled by this decision of the Assembly, we hold ourselves not only at liberty, but bound by our ordination vows, to use all legitimate means to have

this judgment reversed." Eleven ministers and six elders signed this dissent (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1890), pp. 145-180).

MOTION RE CONFESSION OF FAITH IN 1889 ASSEMBLY

At the Assembly of 1889 the following motion was passed: "The General Assembly having taken up the overtures regarding the Confession of Faith, and recognising alike the importance and difficulty of the question thus raised, and the indications of a present call to deal with it, hereby resolve to appoint a committee to make inquiry, and consider carefully what action it is advisable for the Church to take, so as to meet the difficulties and relieve the scruples referred to in so large a number of overtures - it being always understood that the Church can contemplate the adoption of no change which shall not be consistent with a cordial and steadfast adherence to the great doctrines of the Confession. "The report of this Committee was submitted to the Assembly of 1890. In the report several suggestions were made: (1) Some of those with scruples desired some action by the Church regarding the Confession. Some would have favoured the idea of making certain changes on the Confession itself. (2) Others, a very considerable number, strongly advocated an early relaxation of the formula, so as to give relief to those whose consciences were burdened in connection with certain matters. (3) The prevailing opinion was that the Committee should in the meantime contemplate the framing of a Declaratory Act, somewhat on the lines of the one prepared and adopted by the United Presbyterian Church. After delivering the report Dr Adam moved as follows: "The Assembly re-appoint the Committee, instructing them to prosecute the work entrusted to them by last Assembly, in accordance with the terms of the motion adopted by that Assembly."

The Rev. A.M. Bannatyne, Aberdeen, in a speech on this occasion said: "He wished the Assembly to understand that he, for one, held that if the Free Church departed from the Confession of Faith by which it bound him, in any of its particulars - to the whole of its particulars he adhered *con amore and ex animo*, and he had signed the Confession of Faith and the formula referring to it some three or four different times - if the General Assembly departed from that Confession of Faith with which the Church came to him saying, 'This is the confession of my faith, is it the confession of your faith? If it is the confession of your faith, then you can be a minister of this Church: I abide by that confession; do you abide by it?' - then he held that they had broken faith with

him." The deliverance of the Committee was agreed to without going to a vote, and the Committee was re-appointed with the same instructions as they had received in 1889 (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1890), pp. 195-201).

OVERTURES ON INSPIRATION AT 1891 ASSEMBLY

When the report of the Committee on the Confession of Faith was taken into consideration in the year 1891, three overtures "anent the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, as contained in the Confession of Faith", were read:-

(1) The Synod of Sutherland and Caithness overtured as follows:

"They desiderate a reaffirmation by the Assembly of the doctrine of Holy Scripture laid down in the Confession as to the great truths of inspiration - the infallible truth and divine authority of Holy Scripture. This declaration is desired as suitable to restore confidence, unity, and brotherly love, which are so essential to the wellbeing of the Church."

(2) The Free Presbytery of Breadalbane overtured as follows: "Whereas the Confession of Faith Committee have unanimously recorded their full and steadfast adherence to the doctrines laid down in the Confession as to the great truths of inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of Holy Scripture, as proceeding from God, who is the Author thereof; and whereas the adoption of such a finding by the Assembly would greatly tend to allay the anxiety which at present prevails regarding those vital and fundamental truths, etc."

(3) The Presbytery of Dornoch overtured: "Whereas in view of recent dissensions and proceedings, anxiety unduly prevails as to the Church's relation to Holy Scriptures, her supreme standard; whereas it is of the utmost consequence, with a view both to vindicate divine truth and the peace and prosperity of the Church, that all doubt on such a question be at once removed: It is humbly overtured that the Assembly on the report of the Confession of Faith Committee, declare anew the full and steadfast adherence of the Church to the doctrines laid down in the Confession, as to the great truths of the inspiration, infallibility, and divine authority of Holy Scripture, as proceeding from God, who is Truth itself, the Author thereof, etc." Dr William Balfour tabled the following protest: "In our names and in behalf of all who may adhere to us, we, the undersigned, protest that, in taking part in any

discussion arising in connection with the proposed Declaratory Act anent the Confession of Faith, now on the table, we are not to be understood as admitting the lawfulness of altering the relation of this Church to any part of its received doctrines- as set forth in its authorised standards, or in the terms of subscription thereto, as is implied in said Act."

PROPOSED DECLARATORY ACT

The proposed Declaratory Act referred to by Dr Balfour is as follows:-

"Whereas, it is expedient to remove difficulties and scruples which have been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence or are admitted to office in this Church, the General Assembly, with consent of Presbyteries, declare as follows:-

(1) "That in holding and teaching, according to the Confession of Faith, the divine purpose of grace toward those who are saved, and the execution of that purpose in time, this Church most earnestly proclaims, as standing in the forefront of the revelation of grace, the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to sinners of mankind, manifested especially in the Father's gift of His Son to be the Saviour of the world, in the coming of the Son to offer Himself a propitiation for sin, and in the striving of the Holy Spirit with men to bring them to repentance.

(2) "That this Church also holds that all who hear the gospel are warranted and required to believe to the saving of their souls; and that in the case of such as do not believe, but perish in their sins, the issue is due to their own rejection of the gospel call. That this Church does not teach, and does not regard the Confession as teaching, the foreordination of men to death irrespective of their own sin.

(3) "That it is the duty of those who believe, and one end of their calling by God, to make" known the gospel to all men everywhere for the obedience of faith. And that while the gospel is the ordinary means of salvation for those to whom it is made known, yet it does not follow, nor is the Confession of Faith to be held as teaching, that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His mercy, for Christ's sake, and by His Holy Spirit, to those who are beyond the reach of these means, as it may seem good to Him, according to the riches of His grace.

(4) "That in holding and teaching according to the Confession of Faith, the corruption of man's whole nature as fallen, this Church also maintains that

there remain tokens of his greatness as created in the image of God; that he possesses a knowledge of God and of duty; that he is responsible to comply with the moral law and with the gospel; and that, although unable without the aid of the Holy Spirit to return to God, he is yet capable of affections and actions which in themselves are virtuous and praise-worthy.

(5) "That this Church disclaims intolerant or persecuting principles, and does not consider her office-bearers in signing the Confession, committed to any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment.

(6) "That, while diversity of opinion is recognised in this Church on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith therein set forth, the Church retains full authority to determine, in any case which may arise, what points fall within this description, and thus to guard against any abuse of this liberty to the detriment of sound doctrine, or to the injury of her unity and peace."

Dr Rainy then proceeded to explain the Declaratory Act relative to the instruction given by the Assembly of 1889 to the Committee on the Confession of Faith; especially, their duty to such as had difficulties and scruples in signing their adherence to the Confession without some explanation of its meaning in certain statements. The Constitutional party rightly put the question: "Who was responsible for raising these difficulties and scruples? Was it not the Professors who, not only destroyed the faith of their students, and many others besides, in the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, but made it impossible for such to believe the doctrines of the Confession of Faith? and the majority in the Assembly of the Free Church who shielded these Professors from the discipline of the Church." These were the real parties responsible for there being any difficulties and scruples in the Free Church, and they were now the framers of the Declaratory Act.

It will be necessary to look carefully into the meaning of the Declaratory Act so as to find out how these difficulties and scruples were to be removed, and also to find out what was really the nature of them. Dr Rainy had a very difficult task to perform when he began to explain the meaning of this Act to the Assembly; it was easily seen that he realised it to be so. "He did not mean," he said, "to occupy the time of the Assembly by general remarks on the relation of Churches to their Confessions; the importance, on the one hand, of Confessions as declarations and witnessings of the Church's adherence to the

truth, as it sees it and understands it; and on the other hand the importance of their not allowing Confessions to become bonds of slavery; their not allowing Confessions to occupy the place that belongs to the Word of God alone; their not allowing themselves to be led to forget the respect that was due to the reasonable liberty of judgment of those who were united to them in the service of the same Lord." He pointed out that other Presbyterian Churches had made Declaratory Acts already and that this was a guide and encouragement to them in framing and producing this Act. He moved as follows: "The Assembly approve generally of the report, and return their thanks to the Committee, especially to the Convener. They approve of the proposed form of a Declaratory Act, and resolve to send it down to Presbyteries as an overture under the Barrier Act. They remit to the clerks to prepare an overture in proper form, and to report to a future diet of this Assembly. The General Assembly re-appoint the Committee, renewing their former instructions, and directing them in particular to revise the Act (1846) anent questions and formula, and to consider in what way it may best be adapted to the Declaratory Act." Rev. Robert Howie, Govan, seconded the motion, and followed Dr Rainy in setting up a weak and apologetical defence for the Declaratory Act. It was easily discerned that what gave them the courage they showed was not any merit in the Act, but the assurance they had that they were supported by a large majority in the Assembly and throughout the Church.

Rev. Murdo Macaskill, Dingwall, moved the following motion: "They receive the report, thank the Committee, and especially the Convener; but in regard to the Declaratory Act prepared by the Committee on the Confession of Faith, and now proposed to be transmitted to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, the General Assembly refuse to adopt and transmit the same (1) Because the Act as now proposed to be sent down to Presbyteries is virtually subversive of the Calvinistic doctrine as set forth in the Confession of Faith, while its last clause gives encouragement to the utmost laxity of faith on the part of those who subscribe it. (2) Because, though it were otherwise unexceptionable, it would still leave the difficulties which many profess to feel to the Confession of Faith untouched, and the end proposed thus unattained. (3) Because, while professedly designed to relieve the burdened consciences of men who have signed the Confession of Faith, this Act would lay a serious burden on the consciences of those who adhere to the Confession of Faith as agreeable to the Word of God, and as the confession of their faith. (4) Because this particular

mode of dealing with alleged difficulties in the Confession has never been considered and adopted by this Church, as it ought to have been, before such an Act was prepared."

In support of this motion, Mr Macaskill said: "The report of the Confession of Faith Committee, with the recommendation it made, he considered, so far as it travelled through the Confession, quite as much an insult to the Christian intelligence of this Church as it was to the Confession of Faith itself, the eminent men by whom it was composed, and the whole line of eminent theologians, by whom, for more than two centuries, it had been cordially adopted and defended, as a most lucid and admirable compendium of gospel truth and of Christian duty. To him there was something ludicrous in a small company of modern theologians, some at least of whom have not yet cut their theological wisdom teeth, sitting for an hour, or an hour and a half, on ten or eleven days in the year, coming forward with an amended edition of what cost the grand theologians, the profound biblical scholars, and Christian philosophers of the Westminster Assembly, as many months as it has cost these gentlemen hours....." He criticised the deliverance of the Committee in reference to "such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed faith therein set forth." He took up in the light of this, the doctrine of the inspiration of God's Word; he then referred to the doctrine of the atonement and the person of Christ and His resurrection, and many others which he knew entered very fully into the essence and substance of the Reformed faith. He held by the Confession. He signed it when he became a minister of the Church, and he protested against them touching one single letter of the Confession. It was a contract that had been made with him, and he could call the Church to account if that contract was interfered with; and he challenged the Church to take the Confession and mangle it in any way they chose. These words were good, but it will appear later on how little value could be placed in such language. Some who professed to be leaders had learned the practice of being mighty in word but not in deed - saying one thing this year and next year quite the reverse. Dr William Balfour, Edinburgh, seconded Mr Macaskill's motion. After several had spoken for and against the motions, the vote was taken. There voted for Dr Rainy's motion 428; for Mr Macaskill's 66. Dr William Balfour dissented as follows: "We, the undersigned, dissent from the deliverance now come to anent the Declaratory Act regarding the Confession, because in our judgment it is subversive of the doctrines of grace

as set forth in said Confession” (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1891), p.p. 74-94).

ASSEMBLY OF 1892

On the 26th May, 1892, the Assembly took up the return to the overture anent the Declaratory Act. Rev. Murdo Macaskill, Dingwall, said: “We feel that the discussion on which we are about to enter is a very grave discussion, and, therefore, in our own names, and in behalf of all who may adhere to us, we, the undersigned, protest that in taking part in any discussion arising in connection with the proposed Declaratory Act anent the Confession of Faith sent down by last Assembly to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, we are not to be understood as admitting the lawfulness of altering the relations of this Church to any part of its received doctrines, as set forth in the terms of subscription thereto.” This protest was signed by eighteen ministers and twelve elders.

Dr Rainy, after the Declaratory Act had been read to the Assembly, moved that: “The General Assembly, finding that the overture of a Declaratory Act anent the Confession of Faith has obtained the requisite approbation from the Presbyteries of the Church, pass the same as a Declaratory Act, with consent of Presbyteries.” “One is conscious,” he said, “that this Declaratory Act, and other kinds of discussion in some degree entering on grounds analogous to this, are environed with danger, and are regarded at present with a certain amount of suspicion and apprehension. There is no doubt that we are passing through times which, to a certain extent, exercise the wisdom and thoughtfulness of the Churches. There is no doubt that in some respects the present is a time of transition - of lively movement in the mental world. There is a certain heave going on in the method of human thought with reference to all subjects.....and no Church that is a living Church - that seeks to deal in a living way with the men and the thought of its time can escape from a certain participation in the common conditions of human thought as they exist in our time.....But if ancient creeds, if a document like our confession is not to fall into that position of regarding it merely as a historical document it can only be by the Church making it plain that it occupies a living relation to the documents on which it rests, and whose authority it professes to maintain - showing that it has a present mind as to the construction which it sees is its duty to put on its Confession, as to the measure and the manner in which it conceives the

obligations which entrants to office are undertaking when they become office-bearers in the church."

It appears evident from the above sentences taken from Dr Rainy's speech that he was looking at the progress of thought at that time as the guiding light of the Free Church as to the construction she ought to put on certain doctrines and principles in her Confession of Faith, instead of looking to God's inspired Word as the framers of the Confession did in constructing it with the utmost care. This explains also why the heretical professors who had been accused before her courts were shielded from the discipline of the Church, for they were looked upon as men who were moving with "the present thought" of the time. But taking this way of construing such a document as the Confession of Faith was tantamount to an effort to bring rationalism and simple and implicit faith in God's Word to have the same place in the creed of the Church - to give the same place to the vagaries of men who should have never been tolerated within the Church, as to the Confession which was solidly based upon the Holy Scriptures.

Dr John Macewan, Edinburgh, moved: "The General Assembly having now on their table the final report of their Committee anent the Confession of Faith and the returns from Presbyteries anent the Declaratory Act; and taking into consideration (1) the serious difference of judgment which exists in the Church regarding that Act, as shown by these returns and otherwise; (2) especially considering that the Presbyteries of the Church have not yet had a legitimate opportunity of suggesting any amendments on said Act to which they are justly entitled; (3) considering, further, the grave importance of the changes proposed on the preamble to the formula; on the questions put to office-bearers; and on the formula itself, and the close relation in which these stand to the Declaratory Act - reappoint the Committee, and transmit these documents, including the Declaratory Act, to the Presbyteries for their consideration, instructing them to forward any suggestions they may have to make to the Committee not later than the 1st February, 1893 - the Committee to tabulate the results and their judgment there-anent to the next General Assembly." "At last Assembly," he said, "Dr Rainy had not said that the Committee was unanimous. In substance, however, Dr Rainy had said that they had had differences of opinion on many things, but that none had thought the difference so important as to make them take the formal steps of protesting and dissenting. One of the reasons why such a thing was not done was that it never occurred to him for a moment that any other steps would have been

taken by that Assembly when the Committee finished its labour and laid the report on the table. It had never occurred to him for a moment that that report would be *ipso facto* turned into an overture under the Barrier Act, and that the Presbyteries of the Church were to be deprived of what he held to be their right and privilege to look at the handiwork of the Committee, and to give that fair and honest criticism upon it that Dr Rainy had referred to ... With all deference to Dr Rainy, he wished to point out that never in the former history of the Church, when there was a known and large difference of opinion in the Church had an Act been *ipso facto* turned into an overture under the Barrier Act. He had looked into the past history of the Church, and he found no case analogous to what was proposed. Three years ago the General Assembly appointed a Committee on this matter. They took two years to accomplish this first part of the business - namely, the Declaratory Act. The Church had no knowledge of what was done during that period until the Committee's report was laid on the table ... Dr Rainy had used very extravagant language in describing the majority; for it was certainly a formidable thing to see above twenty-three Presbyteries rejecting this Act."

The vote was then taken. For Dr Rainy's motion there were 346 votes, and for Dr Macewan's 195 (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1892), pp. 145-172). The result was received with cheers and waving of hats. Rev. M. Macaskill then dissented in his own name and in the name of all who might adhere to him, submitting six reasons of dissent and appending a protest – eighteen ministers and seventeen elders signed this dissent and protest. The terms of this dissent and protest are not recorded in the Assembly Report. There were three other parties that dissented, but none of these dissents is recorded in the Assembly Report.

REV. M. MACASKILL'S MOTION ON DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

Mr Macaskill then submitted the following motion: "Whereas, the College Committee, in their Report for 1890, recognised the existence of grounds for the profound anxiety felt by many office-bearers and members of the Church on account of the views promulgated with respect, among other doctrines, to the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture; whereas, the deliverance of that Assembly failed to allay the anxiety which had been awakened, last Assembly came to a finding in regard to the Church's position as to the inspiration and authority of Holy Scriptures, which was designed to remove the anxiety which continued to prevail; whereas, since last Assembly, views have

been promulgated, and are being disseminated, which are not only fitted to defeat the end contemplated by the finding of that Assembly, but to shake and overthrow the faith of the people in the inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of Holy Scripture, and the several books thereof, as enumerated in the Confession of Faith, which should be clear and well established: the General Assembly, having respect to the unsettled views that are abroad regarding the inspiration of Scripture and other matters, resolve to appoint a Committee to draw up a pastoral address, to be read from all the pulpits of the Church after it shall have been submitted to and approved of by this Assembly."

Mr Macaskill, in speaking to his motion, began by quoting the following words from Dr Dods: "There are two processes by which they might arrive at a conclusion that a writing was inspired - first, as in reading any book, they formed an opinion of it, and either pronounced it stupid or felt in it a touch of genius, or in reading the work of an inspired man they might arrive at the conclusion that it had been written with divine aid, the Holy Spirit in them responding to the spirit in the book, as Paul said the spiritual man judgeth all things; second, they might believe in the inspiration of a book, first of all, because they believed in Christ, and that He authorised certain persons to speak in His Name and with His authority and Spirit. Again, let them always remember that the true Protestant order was, first, faith in Christ, and, second, faith in Scripture. Their faith in Christ did not hang upon their faith in Scripture as an inspired book, but their faith in Scripture hung upon their faith in Christ. He, and he only, was the true Protestant who knew that God has spoken to him in Christ, and he knew this irrespective of any infallible authority separate from Christ Himself, whether it was the authority of a Church or the authority of Scripture." Mr Macaskill asked if these were the views held by the Free Church concerning the inspiration and divine authority of God's Holy Word? Where did Dr Dods get the Christ in whom he believed? If he knew what Rationalism was - and he thought he did - he said that was the purest possible Rationalism.....Was that the teaching of the Free Church?" As Mr Macaskill was proceeding with his speech on these lines, the interruption became a real pandemonium. It was evident that the majority were determined to protect their idols at all costs. So Mr Macaskill had a hot time of it between professors, ministers, and elders, but he stood his ground well. Only 47 voted for his motion (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (1892), pp. 172-179; 189-202).

RUINOUS EFFECTS OF RATIONALISM

The Free Church in 1843 had a class of professors teaching her future ministers in theology who were notable for learning, piety, intelligence, and soundness in the faith. The same could not be said of her professors since the case of Professor Robertson Smith had come before the Assembly. One after another of them were charged before her courts for teaching doctrines quite subversive of the Scriptures and the Confession of Faith. These made great claims for new light and learning, which required that they should not be bound to the doctrine of inspiration set forth in the Confession, or, in fact, to any doctrine of inspiration except what their own spirit or reason approved of. This was the very essence of rationalism. How did so great a change come about in less than thirty years? Was it because they were superior to Drs Chalmers, Cunningham, and others, in learning or mental powers? The answer must be, no. Where did these new-light men receive this light which has proved to be truly darkness? They got it from the rationalists of Germany. The opposition to the views of the professors was said to be based on ignorance and the inability of their opponents to understand what these learned men taught, but as time went on it became clearer and clearer that the critics of the new views had a much clearer understanding than those who supported them. Professor Bruce grew bolder and bolder in setting forth his new views, and at his end had drifted far away from the doctrinal position of the Free Church. As for Dr Dods, he has left on record where his unbelieving scholarship landed him. "I am a backslider," he writes. "I used to enjoy prayer, but for years I have found myself dumb. Of course one can always make a prayer, as I do every morning for my class; but prayer in the sense of asking for things has not been a proved force. The thing I have chiefly prayed for all my life I have not got. Communion with the Highest and consideration of Christ are, of course, efficacious to some extent, but I pray now not because my own experience gives me any encouragement, but only because of Christ's example and command." But the amazing thing is that the large majority of her ministers and elders got so quickly out of the good old path, and, as we shall see, even the minority who fought bravely till the day of acting instead of speaking had come, became so weak as to cave in to those who were abandoning not only the original creed and constitution of the Free Church, but also the gospel which the Lord had on several occasions blessed to the conversion of many sinners within her pale. That this was done for another gospel upon which the Holy Ghost pronounced a curse is amazing in the extreme.

It became evident that no discipline could be exercised in her inferior or supreme courts. These rationalistic tenets had come to stay in her, and her office-bearers should any of them feel bound in conscience to prosecute professors or ministers before any of her courts for heresy, were now told that such could not be allowed. They might teach as they used to do, but they were to allow the new lights to teach their own rationalistic doctrines without let or hindrance. Where was the Free Church of 1843 now? It was truly a thing of the past, should all the ministers, elders, students, and people acquiesce in her changed condition, and bow down to the irresponsible leaders who ruled by force of numbers within her so tyrannically. But, as we shall see, the Free Church was saved from such a catastrophe.

In the dissent and protest entered upon when the Declaratory Act was passed, an appeal was made to the Assembly of 1893, to take steps to repeal that Act. This caused that no separation took place during that year, because there might be a hope that another Assembly would take steps in that direction. The effect of this hope and the disillusion which it met with in 1893 will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

The Barrier Act - Meetings of the Constitutional Party - Glasgow meeting in 1892 - Rev. D. Macfarlane declares his intention to separate - Protests against the Declaratory Act in the inferior courts - Overtures for repeal of Declaratory Act - Rev. D. Macfarlane's protest - Departures of Free Church from her original position.

THE BARRIER ACT

Since the Barrier Act has been referred to so often already, and will cross our path again and again as we proceed, it may be advisable to give it here so that readers may have it at hand. It is as follows:

“The General Assembly, taking into their consideration the Overture and Act made in the last Assembly concerning innovations, and having heard the Report of the several Commissioners from Presbyteries to whom the consideration of the same was recommended, in order to its being more ripely advised and determined in this Assembly, and considering the frequent practice of former Assemblies of this Church, and that it will mightily conduce to the exact obedience to the Acts of Assemblies, that General Assemblies be very deliberate in making of the same, and that the whole Church have a previous knowledge thereof, and their opinion be had therein, and for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation, or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine, or worship, or discipline, or government thereof, now happily established; do, therefore, appoint, enact, and declare, that before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass any Acts, which are to be binding rules and constitutions in the Church, the same Acts be first proposed as overtures to the Assembly, and, being by them passed as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church, and their opinions and consent reported to their Commissioners to the next General Assembly, who may pass the same, in Acts, if the more general opinion of the Church thus had agreed thereunto.”

This Act was passed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the year 1697. It was under this Act the Declaratory Act was passed.

MEETINGS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY

On the evening of the day upon which the Assembly of the Free Church passed the Declaratory Act, a meeting was held by some of the Constitutional Party in the New College, Edinburgh. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed to that Dr William Balfour should act as chairman. He made a statement to the

following effect: "It has come to this pass now in the Free Church that only two alternatives are left us. (1) We must separate from those who were responsible for passing the Declaratory Act immediately and declare ourselves the Free Church as this Church was settled in 1843; or (2) if we remain in this Church, and, if we continue to fight for the Creed and Constitution of the original Free Church we shall be kicked out one by one." One of the ministers present rose up and warned them of the danger that their people might not follow; that their pulpits would immediately be occupied by ministers of the opposite party; that they all knew the great trials to which ministers and their congregations were exposed for many years after the Disruption of 1843, before they were enabled to build churches and manses; and that the property and funds of the Free Church belonged to her as well as her creed and constitution. When he sat down, the Rev. Murdo Macaskill, Dingwall, rose and said: "I never thought or dreamt of a disruption." Yet this was the man who more than once in public said: "This movement on the part of our opponent's means - Bible or no Bible, Confession of Faith or no Confession of Faith. Let Dr Rainy and his party put their fingers on the Confession and the whole thing is done."

It was then suggested at the meeting that a policy of fighting within the Church should be adopted. One of the ministers called attention to the fact that there were some students present and that an opportunity should be given them of expressing their minds. Mr Macaskill was averse to this, but ultimately three of the Students expressed their views and made it quite clear that they intended to leave the Declaratory Act Free Church. The speeches made by the students impressed the ministers, and Mr Macaskill voiced their feelings in saying that this matter was much more serious than he had imagined, and he accordingly moved that the matter be taken into further consideration at a later meeting to be held on the following Monday. The meeting was duly held, but all that was done was the appointment of a committee to call a meeting of ministers who were in sympathy with the Constitutional Party in the Free Church. When this meeting took place, it was quite clear that many were in full sympathy with the changes that had taken place in the Free Church. When one of these was challenged for being present, he drew out of his pocket the circular calling the meeting and said: "This is my authority. "Another declared that he had been teaching the doctrines of the Declaratory Act for twenty years. Though it was declared from the platform that only office-bearers had a right to be present, there were sixteen students in the hall, and one of them was

permitted to speak. In the evening the students held a meeting by themselves, and after prayerful consideration came to the following decision, the gist of which is as follows: What had been done at the above meeting had not in the least degree relieved the consciences of the Constitutional Party or those adhering to them from the unscriptural teaching of the Declaratory Act and the heretical views which were now, with the authority of the Church, to be protected within its pale; and until the Constitutional ministers would take effective steps to relieve themselves and the people from these pernicious doctrines, the students would not acknowledge the courts of the Free Church. A copy of the resolution was sent to the Secretary of the Committee which had convened the above meeting and was considered the following day, but the request of the students was ignored.

GLASGOW MEETING IN 1892

A meeting was held in Glasgow for further consideration of the course to be followed in the circumstances. At this meeting a Committee was appointed with which the students could hold conference if they so desired. Dr William Balfour whose opposition to the Declaratory Act was much appreciated by many in the Free Church, said at this meeting: "He had no hesitation in saying that the present body of men who constituted the Free Church of Scotland would cease and determine to be the Free Church of Scotland the moment that Act was passed." At this stage Dr Balfour, in common with others, had evidently made up his mind to leave the Free Church as represented by the Rainy party. After the General Assembly of 1892 the Constitutional Party held a meeting at Glasgow and passed a resolution that all students following the Constitutional Party in the Free Church were requested to attend the Colleges of the Free Church that year, and that such as did not attend were not to be considered as Constitutional students afterwards. Following this a meeting of Constitutional students was convened. Ten answered the invitation and issued a statement to the effect that as the Free Church had changed her creed and constitution they ceased to be students of the Free Church and refused to enter her theological colleges. Some of the students who were in their divinity course went to the Assembly's College, Belfast, for the session 1892-3.

REV. D. MACFARLANE DECLARES HIS INTENTION TO SEPARATE

Near the end of 1892 the Rev. D. Macfarlane who was not a member of the Assembly that year, made it clear to some friends that if the Declaratory Act

was not repealed at Next Assembly, he would separate from the Church which had passed the Declaratory Act. The situation was now assuming a serious aspect as month after month was passing, and the General Assembly was drawing near. In February, 1893, a meeting of Constitutional ministers and elders was convened at Inverness. The result of the ministerial deliberations was the discovery that the Declaratory Act was not binding. How this came about will probably remain a mystery until the secrets of men's hearts are revealed. When one remembers the eloquent speeches, the brave words and the damaging indictment made against the Declaratory Act by leading Constitutionalist ministers, the above discovery is inexplicable. This unexpected wheel-round was viewed with amazement by many who had listened to the soul stirring and denunciatory speeches against the Declaratory Act by these modern sons of Ephraim. The confidence of the people got a rude shock, and the discredited leaders latterly became as voiceless as they had hitherto been vocal, except for the lame efforts they made in hopelessly trying to make people believe in their consistency. These waverings opened the eyes of such as were not willing to be led blindfolded to follow a Church which had ceased to be the Free Church of Scotland as regards her adherence to an infallible Bible, or to the Confession of Faith solidly based upon its doctrines and principles. A meeting of elders was held at Flashadder in Skye, at which resolutions were unanimously passed to the effect that if the General Assembly in May, 1893, would not take steps to rescind the Declaratory Act, they would no longer remain in her communion. These resolutions were published in the 'Northern Chronicle', and an advertisement calling all the office-bearers of the west of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire, who were in agreement with the resolutions to meet the Skye elders at Achnasheen on a fixed date – 23rd May, 1893. When the meeting was convened, a motion was submitted asking for delay until it should be known what the Constitutional Party would do at the Assembly. Another motion was submitted to the effect, that if the Assembly should take steps to have the Declaratory Act repealed there should be no separation, but should the Assembly refuse to do so, all who voted for the motion should feel bound to separate from the Declaratory Act Church in order to continue their adherence to the Free Church as constituted in 1843. When the motions were put to the vote, 6 voted for the first motion, and 26 for the second. A telegram was sent to Rev. M. Macaskill informing him of this, which he read in face of the Assembly, but the Rainy

party had their mind made up. They had also learned by this time that the so-called Constitutional Party did not intend to separate.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE DECLARATORY ACT IN THE INFERIOR COURTS

A discussion took place in the General Assembly on Saturday, the 20th May, 1893, relative to the protests the Constitutional Party declared in their dissent they would enter upon the records of the inferior courts against the Declaratory Act. The first case came from the Synod of Sutherland and Caithness. At a meeting of that Synod, when Presbytery Records were examined, there was found in the Dornoch Presbyterial Record's a statement made by the minister settled over the Dornoch congregation, to this effect: "I am to sign the Confession of Faith, simpliciter, and wholly irrespective of the Declaratory Act passed by last Assembly, as signed at my licence, and by the other members of this Presbytery." The Synod, by a majority of its members, ordered this statement to be erased. The Rev. C.G. Ross, Berriedale, protested against the Synod's finding and appealed to the Assembly. Dr Thomas Smith moved: "that the Assembly sustain the dissent and complaint, and reverse the judgment of the Synod." Dr Rainy moved: "that they dismiss the appeal, and sustain the judgment of the Synod, so far as to enjoin the Presbytery to record in its minutes this finding of the General Assembly. "After a prolonged debate for and against such protests being allowed on the records of the inferior courts, there voted for Dr Rainy's motion 136, and for Dr Smith's 56.

Protests came up from the Synod of Glenelg against statements inserted against the Act on the records of the Presbytery of Abertarrf and the Kirk-sessions of Kilmallie and North Ballachulish. "The Synod of Glenelg sustained the action of the Presbyteries of Abertarrf, of Lochcarron, and of Skye in inserting the protest in their records, and in sanctioning the insertion in the records of the Kirk-session of North Ballachulish and Kilmallie, protests against the Declaratory Act passed by last Assembly." Rev. John M'Intosh, Fort William, spoke against the Synod's finding, while Rev. Angus Galbraith, Lochalsh, spoke in support of it. He said he did not think it was right, he did not think it was strictly legal, to have made such a change as this (viz., such as is made in the Declaratory Act) without consulting the people and finding out in the same way whether they approve this sweeping change of their creed as a Church ...It might be said that their people were not competent to deal with such a question, but to say so was not very complimentary to the Free Church and her fifty years of teaching. But their people knew more, and had more discernment

than they were sometimes given credit for. They could very well see the distinction between the Free Church of 1843, and the Declaratory Act Church of 1893. Dr Rainy moved: "that they sustain the dissents and complaints, and direct the courts concerned to expunge these resolutions." Dr John M'Ewan moved: "that they dismiss the dissents and complaints, and affirm the judgment of the Synod of Glenelg in these cases. "It turned up during the debate on these motions that the papers, in reference to the resolutions on the records of the Presbytery of Abertarrf and the Kirk-session of Kilmallie and North Ballachulish, were not before the Assembly. Dr Rainy, in this connection, then moved: "That the Assembly sustain the dissents and complaints, reverse the judgment of the Synod, and order the deletion of the protest and declarations referred to from the Records of the Presbyteries of Skye and Lochcarron, but not having the documents in the case of Abertarrf before them, they pass from consideration of it." This motion was put against Dr M'Ewan's and carried by a majority. Dr M'Ewan dissented and seven others with him (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1893, pp. 55-65).

OVERTURES FOR REPEAL OF DECLARATORY ACT

On Thursday, 25th May, the Assembly took up consideration of ten overtures for the repeal of the Declaratory Act. Rev. Angus Galbraith, Lochalsh, spoke in support of the overture from the Synod of Glenelg. He said that some of them did not expect that they should have to appear at the bar of that House praying the Assembly to rescind this Act. They had been led to understand that it was optional for them to receive or to reject this Act, but the discussion on Saturday made it plain that the permissiveness was only in name, not in reality. It was very small comfort for them to be told that this Act was not intended to interfere with their personal beliefs when they learned that it regulated their creed and public testimony as a Church . . . They maintained that it (the Act) asserted views at variance with the Confession of Faith and the Holy Scriptures. If it was not so, he asked, why was it necessary to change the Questions and Formula? ... It just came to this, that it was the signing of the Confession of Faith with a qualification, and that qualification was to be as wide as the Act, and that would be wide enough ... In the four heads specified in the Act, views were stated which they regarded as at variance with the object of the Confession. To make the Church the judge of truth was pure Popery; and notwithstanding all the praise heaped on their Professors last

night, they were not prepared to take Drs Dods, Bruce, Candlish, and Professor Henry Drummond to determine for them what should enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith ... He took leave to say that they from the Highlands would find it very difficult to go back and face their people after the deliberations of last Saturday, and if it was repeated that day by continuing the Declaratory Act, they should have a very difficult and delicate task to face.

Dr Rainy in his speech, which followed immediately Mr Galbraith's, said: "Now if that phrase (optional) is to be used, then the contents of the Declaratory Act, or what it specifically sets forth, no doubt may be said to be optional, in so far as each minister and each member of the Church is perfectly free to approve or not to approve of this explanation, so long as he takes his stand, as to what he holds and teaches, within the line of the Confession of Faith itself. That is plain. *But then it is also true that this Act has set forth the Church's understanding of the range of opinion which is open in this Church in its own understanding of what is involved in the acceptance of the Confession of Faith by our ministers and elders. It sets forth that, and as long as it lasts, no doubt it is authoritative.*" He moved: "that the Assembly pass from these overtures." Dr W.R. Taylor, Glasgow, seconded.

Dr Winter, Dyke, moved: "The General Assembly, having taken up consideration of the overtures and petitions for the rescinding of the Declaratory Act of last General Assembly, and finding that great anxiety is felt in various quarters as to the effect of the said Declaratory Act on the unity and peace of the Church, and being willing, so far as in them lies, to relieve such anxiety, hereby agree to remit to a committee to consider and report to next General Assembly in what form the prayer of the overtures and petitions may best be dealt with." Mr Macaskill, Dingwall, said in support of this motion that they knew as a matter of fact - and Dr Ross Taylor knew as well as he did - that in the county with which he was intimately connected, there were not a few of their most powerful and pious people who had either left the Free Church or were waiting to see what this Assembly would do that day. He knew that in the county from which he hailed also that that was the real state of things. They might have seen from the public press that thirty of their office-bearers met, and by a majority of 26 to 4 resolved that if the Assembly would do nothing in relieving their consciences, their connection with the Free Church ended the moment the telegraph carried to them the result of the vote that day. And he would solemnly warn the Assembly that if these 26 office-bearers, or even less, broke away from the Free Church in the Highlands, it would take more than Dr

Rainy could do, or they in the Highlands could do, to hold the Highlands any longer for the Free Church This was the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, and that Church was bound to the Formula of 1846, according to which their principles were to be held and their worship was to be conducted...

There seemed to be a tendency just simply to trample upon their convictions and disregard them, because they seemed a small and insignificant party, *but if one or two of them were to raise the fiery cross in the Highlands, insignificant as they were, the Free Church would have cause to regret that they trampled upon them, and gave so little regard to their convictions.*"

Dr Rainy's motion was "pass from the overtures". "If those men," he said, "were to meet on this footing, that they deny the right of this Church to pass any such thing as the Declaratory Act, then they are raising a live question in this Church. If we are to concede to our friends that this Church has no power - I do not speak of the particular merits of the Declaratory Act, there might be this blunder and that blunder in it - but, if we are to concede that this Church has no power in general to pass such an Act for the relief of consciences, then this Church has to consider whether she is prepared finally to resign the fundamental right of Christian Churches, a right which pertains to their life." There voted for Dr Rainy's motion 415; and for Dr Winter's 120. Dr Winter dissented from the decision as follows: (1) "As failing to do justice to the feelings and convictions in which the overtures and petitions have originated, and (2) as injurious to the unity and peace of the Church." This dissent was signed by 21 ministers and 21 elders.

REV. D. MACFARLANE'S PROTEST

Rev. Donald Macfarlane, Raasay, afterwards advanced to the table and read the following protest:

"Whereas by the action of the General Assembly of 1892 in passing the Declaratory Act into a law of the Church, and by that Act being retained in her constitution, the Church, in our opinion, ceases to be the true representative of the Free Church of Scotland; and whereas by our ordination vows we are bound by the most solemn obligations to assert, maintain, and defend the doctrines and constitution of the said Church, and to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline, government, and exclusive-jurisdiction of the same, I, the undersigned minister of the Free Church, in my own name, and in the name of all who may adhere to me, declare that, whatever I may

subsequently do, neither my conscience nor my ordination vows allow me to act under what has now been made law in this Church.

“I also protest against the despotic power exercised by a majority of the office-bearers of this Church in making changes in her creed and constitution, which are *ultra vires* of any majority in the face of any protesting minority, and I declare that I claim my sacred and civil rights according to the terms of contract agreed upon between me and the Free Church at my ordination, and in accordance with the creed and constitution of the Free Church in the year 1843. - (Signed) Donald Macfarlane, Minister at Raasay” (Records of the Free Church Presbytery of Scotland).

Dr Rainy said, of course, they were always anxious to give relief to the consciences of brethren. If this document which had just been read was merely a dissent, even though strongly worded, they should of course have no hesitation in allowing it; but it was much more than that. It was an express repudiation of the authority and validity of the final act of the General Assembly in this matter, so far as that Assembly was concerned. He was sorry to move therefore: “That they do not receive the protest.” After some opinions were expressed as regards the meaning of the document, Mr Macfarlane said he wished to reserve the power of acting in any way he thought best (Report of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1893, pp. 164-183).

DEPARTURES OF FREE CHURCH FROM HER ORIGINAL POSITION

As this action of Rev. Donald Macfarlane meant that he was refusing to acknowledge the Church as now constituted under the Declaratory Act as the true representative of the original Free Church of Scotland, some of the changes thus made may be noticed.

(1) In 1843 the Free Church held firmly and taught from her theological chairs and her pulpits, the inspiration, infallibility and absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, also she believed in the Confession of Faith in all its articles without any reservation. Now, in 1893, it became very evident that the Free Church had ceased to hold that the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments were inspired, infallible, and free from any errors, the very Word of God. As regards the Confession of Faith, the Free Church held now, according to Dr Rainy, that they were quite entitled to modernise the Creed of the Church so as to make it fit in with the views of Scripture which prevailed among them. This left the Church only a mutilated Bible and

Confession of Faith, i.e., her Supreme Standard was torn to shreds by men who vowed that they believed it to be God's inspired Word, and who were paid by the Church to teach it to her people. These, shielded by a majority in her Assemblies, boldly aired their views, and bade defiance to such as maintained the Bible was God's perfect Word. Such as held in their entirety the doctrine and principles contained in the Confession of Faith, were looked upon as ignorant and far behind the times, forgetting that centuries, and the light or darkness they may have, cannot change the true light of God's Word. Pride, and gaping after a name for scholarship and popularity, were the root cause which gave German rationalism such a hold of the Free Church.

(2) In 1843, all the Professors who taught from the theological chairs in the Colleges of the Free Church, were known far beyond the British Isles on account of their soundness in the faith, their unflinching adherence to the Scriptures as being all God-breathed, and to the Confession of Faith as setting forth the doctrines and principles of the Scriptures. But a change for the worse came over the teaching which came from many of the theological chairs of the Free Church. This teaching begot scruples in the consciences of some of the students of the Church against the doctrines of God's Word and the Confession of Faith --- which were scruples in the consciences of the Professors themselves before they conveyed them to these students. It was to meet these difficulties and scruples that the Declaratory Act was framed and foisted upon the Church.

(3) Discipline was completely a thing of the past, especially in her General Assemblies. Libel after libel was brought to the 'Assembly against several of her Professors, but all in vain. The great mental powers of Dr Rainy were used to shield these Professors from the discipline which the circumstances required; but nothing could be done to purge heresy out of her Colleges and pulpits. This was the Church from which Rev. Donald Macfarlane separated in 1893, in order to get behind all the innovations brought into her till he would reach the old foundations of 1843. This is what was done by the Free Presbyterian Church.

CHAPTER 7

Two congregations follow Mr Macfarlane - Quotations from article in F.P. Magazine - Formation of the F.P. Church of Scotland - Criticism of the F.P. movement - Mr Haldane's erroneous statement - Inverness conference and adoption of name – “Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland” - Additional preachers and congregations - Troubles in Inverness congregation - Free Church Assembly discuss repeal of Declaratory Act - Events bearing on polity of F.P. Church.

TWO CONGREGATIONS FOLLOW MR MACFARLANE

The bold step taken by Mr Macfarlane created considerable commotion among the Constitutionalists. A meeting was convened in Edinburgh at the close of the Assembly. Among those present were Revs. Dr Balfour, Edinburgh; Murdo Mackenzie, Inverness; and Murdo Macaskill, Dingwall. Mr Mackenzie asked Mr Macfarlane, who was also present, what he meant to do. Mr Macfarlane replied that it was his intention to have a Presbytery formed, and that they would then proceed to license those students who adhered to them and who had finished their theological course. Mr Mackenzie, on hearing this, said: “You will compromise us.” This, however, did not influence Mr Macfarlane from following the course implied in his protest and indicated in his reply to Mr Mackenzie ('Memoir and Remains of Rev. Donald Macfarlane, Dingwall', p. 27). On his way back from the Assembly Mr Macfarlane was invited to address a meeting of students at 147 Albert Street, Glasgow, and to preach to the congregation worshipping at Millhouse, Karnes. On Monday after the Sabbath services a meeting of that congregation was called, which was addressed by Mr Macfarlane and others. After the ecclesiastical situation had been explained, the congregation decided to separate from the Church which had adopted the Declaratory Act, and in doing so formed the first congregation of what was to be known afterwards as the Free Presbyterian Church. Mr Macfarlane was greatly encouraged by the step taken by this congregation, and on his return home to Raasay he called a meeting of his own congregation on the Monday of the Communion (second Sabbath of June). At this meeting he gave a lecture explanatory of the situation. A large congregation was present gathered from different parts of the West of Scotland. At the end when all who adhered to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God, and to the Confession of Faith in all its doctrines as hitherto held by the Free Church, were asked to stand up, all present with the exception of half a dozen, stood. Mr Macfarlane then requested the strangers present to sit down so that it might be seen how the Raasay congregation were. The few objectors, with one exception belonged to

his own congregation. Immediately after this a meeting was called at Inverness, and on the Tuesday evening following a large gathering assembled. The Rev. Donald Macdonald, Shieldaig who was present took his stand with Mr Macfarlane. It was decided that immediate steps be taken to form a Presbytery. While all this was going on, the Constitutionalists who remained in the Free Church felt that something must be done to arrest a movement which they had had their part in creating.

QUOTATIONS FROM ARTICLE IN F.P. MAGAZINE

A meeting was called at Inverness on 3rd July, 1893, at which speeches were delivered by Dr Aird, Messrs Macaskill, Dingwall, and Mackenzie, Inverness. A plea was made in some of the speeches that the Declaratory Act was only a relieving Act, and that it was a dead letter as far as the Constitutional Party was concerned. The action of those who left the Church was adversely criticised. In 1901 two Gaelic articles appeared in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine' which, though written some years after the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church, so clearly set forth the Free Presbyterian position that extracts from them are herewith quoted:

“About twenty years ago, when Dr Kennedy was opposing the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, he issued a pamphlet⁹ explaining the matter to the people of the Highlands; in that pamphlet he made clear his own mind as to the authority of the Barrier Act. This is the way in which he states the case: 'If the Assembly of 1880 had sent down to Presbyteries as an overture their deliverance on Disestablishment, and it had passed through the Barrier Act, the Free Church had already ceased to be. And what right have our leaders to implicate the Church by deliverances which they dare not to make finally binding? Had they given this force to the deliverance referred to, I, for one could no longer have retained my connection with a Church that had thus finally and formally abandoned her distinctive position, ... and ... the connection would have been broken, simply by my not ceasing to be a Free Churchman.' Now this is the mind which the minority in the Free Church were of till 1892, and on this foundation we took the stand which we took. It is upon the other foundation that the Free Church of today claims to have the right to the name and place of the Free Church, that is, they held that the Declaratory Act was a dead letter because it was ultra vires of the Church to make it a law.

⁹ The Disestablishment Movement in the Free Church: An address to Free Church men in the Highlands. (Edinburgh: 1882).

But at the same time they reveal their mind in the matter pretty clearly that as soon as they get free from the law courts, they intend rescinding the Acts of declension (na h-Achdan claonaidh), and for this year (1901) itself they withdraw the Declaratory Act.¹⁰ We believe that they took a wrong step nine years ago, and their feet are now entangled in one or two ways. Had they stood like men then, they had a good opportunity, and in all likelihood the Highlands, at least to a great extent, had remained whole until now. If the man who tried to fill Dr Kennedy's shoes¹¹ it is to blame for the step then taken, he is blameworthy indeed. Now when they set themselves to rescind the Acts of declension, it will not be easy to square this with the view that the 1892 Act was a dead letter. In 1892 they changed their mind and the wrong step which they took then chiefly stands against them today." ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', vi. 158).

After Lord Low had given his decision in the Free Church case, the same writer¹² commenting on it says:

"When there is reason for points of which their meaning is in doubt to be interpreted, we confess it ought to be right for the Church to pass a Declaratory Act. We never opposed that. But when a thing goes under the name of a Declaratory Act, which is not a Declaratory Act, there arises need that people would look not only at the name but at the nature of what it is. And this is what we believe is necessary to be done as regards the 1892 Act. When this is done, although there was nothing but the last section, that would suffice to show that there was more than declaration in that Act. In that section the Church loosens herself from the whole teaching of the Confession of Faith and binds herself to what she herself concludes to be of the substance of the Reformed Faith in the Book. If this is not the Church turning her back on the Confession as the established rule, we do not know how that can be accomplished. A 'bastard' Act is the name, for it is no interpretation of disputed points which it contains, but a complete change from the true creed of the Church. We do not wish to continue too long upon this point, but we are

¹⁰ The Act was not rescinded until 1906. An interim Recision Act passed by the Assembly in the previous year (1905)

¹¹ Rev. Murdo Macaskill, Dingwall, who took such a prominent part in leading the opposition to the Declaratory Act and who finally entered the United Free Church in 1900.

¹² The articles are signed by the initials J.M. The writer was the Rev. John Macleod (now Principle Macleod, D.D., Free Church College, Edinburgh). Dr Macleod, it is true has publicly stated in the press that he does not now hold the views he held on these matters when the articles were written. The articles are quoted however, not to gain a controversial advantage, but simply because they express clearly the views held in the past and which are still held by Free Presbyterians in regard in the matters touched upon.

fully assured that anyone who wishes to see the nature of the 1892 Act, without being deceived by the name, could not but conclude that the Free Church had left her position as a Church when she made that Act a law. It was not the custom of the Church of Scotland to take the opinions of lawyers as a guide in matters of faith, and although a hundred lawyers would come to be of one mind that the Declaratory Act was not a forsaking of the faith, we could not as reasonable and responsible men but hold to the view we took and raise the testimony we did. No living man should put his discernment and his conscience under the feet of a lawyer. There is a difference between the view which a Church takes of her doctrines and her principles, and the view which the law of the land takes of them. Although the law and lawyers may err, that is no reason for any one not exercising his judgment for quenching the testimony of his own conscience. Worldly matters go according to the opinion of men of law, but although the law would take away completely the property of the Church, she should not be unfaithful to that good thing that is entrusted to her. We are satisfied in our mind that we took the right step at the right time nine years ago, and the steps which the minority took, which are now in the law courts, that this will stand against them; but if things go against them, although it may shake some who are faint hearted, it will not give reason to any one of them to go in with the Union. And one does not know but that if they are stripped, it may be as well for them, for it will nerve their will to suffer loss for the raising of a testimony." ('Free Presbyterian Magazine'. vi. 199, 200.)

FORMATION OF THE F.P. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

At the end of July (27th July, 1893) the Revs. D. Macfarlane and D. Macdonald, Shieldaig, with Mr Alexander Macfarlane, school-master, Raasay, met in conference and "resolved to meet next day, and, in the name of the Head of the Church, form themselves into a separate Presbytery, not owning the jurisdiction of the courts of the presently subsisting Church, calling herself the Free Church of Scotland". In terms of this resolution the first Presbytery of what was afterwards known as the Free Presbyterian Church met at Raasay on the 28th July, 1893 - Messrs Macfarlane, Macdonald and Alexander Macfarlane, ruling, elder, were the members present. "It was agreed that the Presbytery should be known and called by the name of 'The Free Church Presbytery of Scotland'. It was also agreed that a statement setting forth the reasons for taking this solemn step should be prepared, to be submitted to a future meeting of Presbytery with a view to the same being engrossed in the minutes

of the Court." ('Records of the Free Church Presbytery of Scotland', p. 2.) The Presbytery then adjourned to meet in the afternoon to take Mr John R. Mackay, M.A., on trials for licence. His trial discourses were sustained with much approbation, and he was thereafter licensed to preach the gospel. At the same Presbytery "trial discourses" were appointed to Mr Allan Mackenzie, divinity student. At next meeting held in Portree on 14th August, 1893, the Presbytery adopted the Deed of Separation, one of the important documents of the Free Presbyterian Church. A request for moderation in a call to Rev. John R. Mackay, M.A., probationer, was made to the Presbytery which fixed the 30th of August for moderation in a call. Mr Allan Mackenzie, divinity student, having successfully passed his license trials, was licensed to preach the gospel. Messrs Mackay and Mackenzie¹³ were the first two students licensed in the newly formed Church.

At a meeting of Presbytery held on 30th August, 1893, a call was moderated in to Rev. John R. Mackay, M.A. It was signed by three elders, one deacon, forty-six communicants, and two hundred and sixty-three adherents. Mr Mackay's ordination and induction took place at Gairloch in the *Leabaidh na ha baine* on 11th October, 1893. He was the first minister ordained in the Free Presbyterian Church. At an adjourned meeting of the Presbytery held at Kerrysdale in the afternoon of the same day, Mr James S. Sinclair was licensed to preach the gospel after having passed the usual trial exercises. On 1st November, 1893, the Presbytery met in Fraser Street Church, Inverness, to moderate in a call to Rev. Allan Mackenzie, probationer. The call was signed by thirty-seven communicants and ninety-six adherents, and was left in the hands of the Kirk-session to receive additional signatures. His ordination and induction took place on 22nd November, 1893.

CRITICISM OF THE F.P. MOVEMENT

While these events were taking place in the Church, those who bore no friendly feeling to the movement endeavoured, to begin with, to treat it with contempt - it was only a storm in a teacup - its leaders were not men of commanding gifts - its members were negligible, and nothing was more certain than that the first blast of adversity would utterly wreck so weak a movement; and if it did stand the strain and stress for a few years, it was bound to come to

¹³ Mr Mackay joined the Free Church in 1918 and became Professor of New Testament Greek in the Free Church College. Mr Mackenzie joined the Established Church and became minister of Uig (Lewis).

grief for lack of funds. Among some of the Church's severest critics were quondam friends¹⁴ who, probably, were under the delusion that by making much noise they would drown the voice of conscience. They became experts in self-justification, and no juggler ever excelled them in the way they made out that their present position was in keeping with the whirling words used in the past. But the criticisms of former friends and the frowns of those in high ecclesiastical positions did not interfere with the warmth and unity that characterised the little band who faced a hostile world with neither great leaders, nor men of social standing, nor wealth to support them. Those who are still living and who remember the early years of the movement, will - readily bear witness to this statement. The main difficulty the Church had to contend with was lack of ministerial supply. There can be little doubt if the Church had been in a position to send ministers to congregations, the movement in its initial stages would have been much more extensive.

At a meeting of the Free Church Presbytery of Skye held at Portree on 22nd August 1893, the Presbytery declared Mr Macfarlane no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, and on 14th September his church was declared vacant. The Raasay elders were also cited to appear before the Kirk-session. The words of the citation were as follows: "Take notice that you will have to compear before the Kirk-session of the Free Church congregation at Raasay on Tuesday, the 31st day of October, 1893, at the house of John Macmillan, postmaster, at twelve noon, to answer to information against you, viz., that you have, contrary to your ordination vows, publicly renounced the authority of the Kirk-session of the Free Church congregation at Raasay and the superior judicatories of the Free Church of Scotland, and placed yourself under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery calling themselves 'the Free Presbytery of Scotland'."

MR HALDANE'S ERRONEOUS STATEMENT

It may be as well to call attention at this stage to a misstatement made by Mr Haldane in presenting the majority Free Church case before the House of Lords, as a reference was made to it at the 1904 Synod of the Free

¹⁴ *The Rev. Murdo Macaskill, so vociferous in his denunciations against the Declaratory Act, characterised the Free Presbyterian movement "as the most mischievous movement of modern times and calculated only to do most serious harm to the cause of truth and godliness in our beloved Highlands". Yet this was the man who had formerly said: "If this Declaratory Act becomes part of our constitution, what remained of our former principles is wholly obliterated, and anyone who pleases may pronounce the funeral oration of the once noble Free Church of Scotland ... She is no longer the Free Church of our early love and loyal adhesion, but a false claimant to honours and dignities which she has wilfully and shamefully forfeited."*

Presbyterian Church (November). The statement, as recorded in the 'Free Church of Scotland Appeals' (R.L. Orr, M.A., LL.B.), is as follows:

“The Lord Chancellor - The Declaratory Act of 1892 put in a very plain form what the views of those who were framing it meant. Has that ever been acted upon in the Church? I mean if there were persons who were disposed to refuse authority of the Church to change its doctrine; has that question ever risen?

Mr Haldane - I think not, my Lord. The Lord Chancellor - If so, have the people been turned out of their manses for holding it?

Mr Haldane - I want to give your Lordship the accurate answer to that, and, if I may, I will consult my client. (After consultation.) Not under the Declaratory Act, my Lord. There have been people turned out for heresy, but it has nothing to do with the Declaratory Act.”

The real facts of the case were that at the August Commission of the Free Church it was decided that legal steps be taken to dispossess Messrs Macfarlane and Macdonald of their churches and manses. Neither of them raised a legal action, and in the spring of 1894 they were dispossessed of the property. The Free Presbyterian congregation at Millhouse and Kilfinnan (Karnes) were similarly deprived. When Mr Haldane's statement appeared in the press, the Rev. James S. Sinclair wrote a letter to the 'Scotsman' calling attention to the inaccuracy, but as no notice was taken of it, Mr Sinclair entered into correspondence with Messrs Cowan and Dalmahoy, agents for the majority Free Church in the Church Case. At length a letter was received from the Law Committee of the United Free Church expressing great regret for the statement complained of. They admitted that it was the case that two actions were raised by the Free Church in January, 1894, against ministers who protested against the Declaratory Act, and formed the Free Presbyterian Church, and promised that in any future issue of the authorised report of the case the statement would be corrected in a footnote. One of the sentences proposed was: “Those ministers of the Free Church of Scotland who protested against the Declaratory Act, and formed the Free Presbyterian Church were not proceeded against for heresy” ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 15th November, 1904).

What actually took place is set forth in the report in connection with the work done by a Committee appointed by the Free Church General Assembly. The report was. to the following effect: The Committee found themselves obliged

to report to the Commission in November that legal proceedings would be necessary to recover the property, and were authorised by them to take such proceedings. Accordingly the cases were taken into Court, and, the actions being undefended, decrees were obtained against the parties in occupation of the buildings. Possession has been obtained of the buildings at Kilfinnan and the church at Shieldaig, and it is expected that those of Raasay will shortly be secured for the sake of the adhering congregation. The minister of Shieldaig had collected a sum of money throughout the Church for a district church at the head of Loch Torridon. Decrees having been obtained in favour of the Free Church on this point, Mr Macdonald at once handed over the money which is lodged in the general treasurer's hands.

Like Mr Macfarlane, Mr Macdonald, Shieldaig, also found himself without church or manse because of his fidelity to his ordination vows. His brother minister Rev. D. Macfarlane, in the 'Memoir' of his friend thus pithily states the case: "In consequence of the faithful stand Mr Macdonald made in defence of the principles of the Free Church, the General Assembly, at the instance of the Presbytery of Lochcarron, took steps to deprive him and his congregation of the church and manse which they had gifted to them in 1877. The end of it was that the minister and his congregation were evicted from these buildings and deprived of the money collected for the Annat Church. The Assembly of 1877 presented them with church and manse in consideration of their faithful adherence to the principles of the Free Church; the Assembly of 1893 deprived them of these gifts for the very same reason!" ('Memoir and Remains of Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig', p. 35).

INVERNESS CONFERENCE AND ADOPTION OF NAME

Early in May, 1894, it was decided by the Presbytery that a Conference be held at Inverness, and at a later meeting (2nd July, 1894), the Presbytery drew up a list of subjects on which the opinions of delegates should be asked. These were as follows: "(1) What distinctive name we should assume as a Church? (2) How a Trust Deed might be agreed upon, so as that the property of the Church might in all times coming be used for the furthering of the real principles which we profess. (3) What changes, if any, should be introduced into the Formula and Questions in view of our circumstances being so much altered as a Church. (4) To direct the attention of the Church to the claims of the Sustentation Fund" ('Records of the Free Church Presbytery of Scotland', p.50). When the Conference met on 3rd July, the name generally agreed upon for the Church

was “The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland”, but it was decided that the name be not finally decided on by the Presbytery until opportunity had been given to any within the borders of the Church to state disapproval if they wished, and in such an event it was requested that intimation should be made to the Clerk of the Presbytery. When the Presbytery met at Lochcarron on 31st August, 1894, no objections having been received by the Clerk, it was resolved that the Church “shall in future be called 'The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland'.” ('Records of the Free Church Presbytery of Scotland', p. 55.) At the same Presbytery it was further resolved “that the Presbytery shall be called 'The Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland'.” At a meeting of the Presbytery held at Inverness on 30th October, 1894, notice was given of the new Formula to be signed by all office-bearers in the Free Presbyterian Church at their entrance on office, and at its next meeting held at Glasgow on 12th November, 1894, the Presbytery approved of the same ¹⁵ ('Records of the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland', pp. 64, 66).

ADDITIONAL PREACHERS AND CONGREGATIONS

During 1894 the ministerial ranks were strengthened by the ordination of the Rev. Alexander Macrae at Karnes on 13th November, 1894. Mr Macrae's call was signed by 234 - 36 members and 198 adherents.

The following students were on the Presbytery's list in 1893:--Neil Cameron, Neil Macintyre, Roderick Mackenzie, William Mackay, George Mackay, John Macleod, Donald Beaton and Alexander Stewart. In addition to those mentioned there were the following on the Church's list in 1894: Dugald S. Cameron, Kenneth Ross, Roderick MacCowan, Duncan Mackenzie, Ewen Macqueen and James Cameron. The Rev. D. Bannerman's application to be received into the Church was accepted near the end of this year (19th October, 1894), and later on he was recognised as a probationer.

As the Church's need of preachers became known, applications came in from all sorts and conditions of applicants, but the Presbytery, notwithstanding its great need of preachers, examined these applications with the greatest care, and the minutes of the Presbytery contain entries of applications time and again which were turned down. At a meeting of the Presbytery held at Inverness on 30th April, 1895, intimation was made of a legacy of £300 left to the Church by Mr James Ross, 7 Belford Terrace, Edinburgh. This was the first

¹⁵ This is the formula that is still in use (1933) and will be found in Church Documents.

legacy received by the Church, at least, the first that is recorded in the minutes, and the Presbytery received it with gratitude. In connection with this financial item it may be here mentioned that the salaries of ministers were fixed at £160 per annum. As stated, applications for preachers were pouring into the Presbytery, and all the ministers, students, and lay missionaries were kept busy. New congregations were being formed, and it is to the credit of many of these congregations that they wisely recognised the Presbytery's inability to supply them with preachers. Fortunately there were men of outstanding ability and Christian character at the head of most of our congregations, and their wise counsels controlled any impatience which might naturally manifest itself. These were accustomed to speaking, and in the hour of need they presided at the public means. Some of these congregations were a considerable number of years without a minister, but they remained faithful to the cause they espoused.

In 1895 John Knox's congregation, Glasgow, made application to be received into the Church. This congregation was the remnant of the congregation ministered to by the late Rev. Jonathan Anderson, whose connection with the Free Church had been severed in 1852. The Presbytery proceeded with due caution, and after having had the matter up before it at one or two meetings, it finally decided to receive the congregation as a congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The Rev. James S. Sinclair was called by this congregation the following year and ordained and inducted on 7th April, 1896.

TROUBLES IN INVERNESS CONGREGATION

Troubles in connection with the Inverness congregation began to demand the Presbytery's attention in 1895. These caused considerable heart-burning and broke the harmony that hitherto prevailed in the Free Presbyterian Church. At a meeting of the Presbytery held at Inverness on 31st October, 1895, advice was tendered to the Inverness Kirk-session in the hope that it would help the congregation out of its difficulties. The matter came up again at a meeting of Presbytery held at Broadford on 11th February, 1896, when a minute of the Kirk-session of the Inverness Free Presbyterian congregation was read, which contained a motion moved by Mr Alexander Fraser and Mr Alexander Maclean to the effect that the Session delay the election of office-bearers and ask the Presbytery to enquire first into the trouble that existed in the congregation. The nature of the trouble is indicated so far in the words of a motion moved by the Moderator, Rev. Allan Mackenzie, to the effect:

“Whereas, there are only two ruling elders in the congregation, one of whom resides in the parish of Dores, and the other in the parish of Fort-George; whereas, the affairs of the congregation are principally managed by a few men who formed themselves into a temporary Committee nearly three years ago, and without consulting the congregation until a Deacons' Court would be constituted; whereas, some of the members of the said Committee, which acts as a substitute for a Deacons' Court, are not members in full communion with the congregation; and whereas, the members of the congregation have not had since its formation in connection with the Free Presbyterian Church an opportunity of electing office-bearers to represent them in the Kirk-session and Deacon's Court in accordance with the laws of the Church, and the number to be elected shall be four elders and four deacons.” Mr Mackenzie's motion had no seconder.

The case dragged on for a considerable time until at last it came before the July Synod in 1897 by way of an appeal from the Northern Presbytery. The finding of the Synod did not please Mr Mackenzie, and he gave in his Reasons against the finding. A reply to these Reasons was drawn up by the Revs. Neil Cameron and J.S. Sinclair ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', ii, 305). At the November Synod, 1897, among other things Mr Mackenzie was charged with “refusing to constitute the Kirk-session in accordance with the finding of the Synod of 7th July 1897, and at the request of his elders in a letter dated 23rd July, 1897, as also by refusing to compear before the Northern Presbytery when cited three times to answer to the following charges, viz.: (1) Of having refused to carry out the instructions of the Synod held at Inverness on the 7th July, 1897, affecting the Fraser Street congregation, Inverness; (2) of having refused to call a meeting of Kirk-session at the request of his elders in a letter addressed to him by them on the 23rd of July, 1897; and (3) of setting up a new order of things in the Fraser Street congregation of which he is pastor: he thereby showed contempt of the Synod, Northern Presbytery and his own Kirk-session. Therefore, the Synod find that the said Rev. Allan Mackenzie must by fair and necessary inference be regarded as having separated himself from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and as having, by his own act in passing the aforesaid resolutions, ceased to be a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

At the same time the Synod expressed willingness to give Mr Mackenzie an opportunity to reconsider his position. They, therefore, instructed the Northern Presbytery to hold a meeting at Portree, on Wednesday, the 1st day

of December, 1897, at 7 p.m. If Mr Mackenzie compeared and sought re-admission, expressed regret for his conduct, and promised obedience to the courts of the Church according to his ordination vows, the Synod instructed the Presbytery to deal with him in a brotherly way and according to the constitution of the Church. In the event of Mr Mackenzie refusing to do this, the Presbytery are instructed to appoint one of their ministerial members to act as interim-moderator of the Kirk-session at Inverness. Mr Mackenzie's controversial methods caused considerable heart-burning. He was expert at the use of the pen and did not hesitate to drag the affairs connected with the dispute into the public press, as if the general public were in a better position to judge his case than his brethren who had all the facts of both sides before them. This led the Synod in July, 1897, to insert in their finding: "The Synod deplore the injudicious conduct of the Rev. Allan Mackenzie in having widened this painful disagreement;

(1) by rushing to the public prints, and that while the matters in dispute were under the consideration of the Courts of the Church, instead of showing a meek and peaceable spirit which the servants of Christ should cultivate and cherish; (2) by making public statements regarding the character of office-bearers and members of Committee which the Synod cannot pass by without strong disapproval" ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', II, 25).

FREE CHURCH ASSEMBLY DISCUSS REPEAL OF DECLARATORY ACT

In 1896 a discussion took place in the General Assembly of the Free Church on overtures from the Presbyteries of Dingwall and Glenelg praying for the repeal of the Declaratory Act. Principal Rainy, in moving that the Assembly pass from the overtures, said they regretted the separation of brethren whom they would be glad to see remaining in the Free Church. He had further to say that they had heard in the present Assembly member after member stating that they would not have been there as members had it not been for the operation of the Declaratory Act. The Rev. Robert Howie, Govan, in seconding Dr Rainy's proposal, said he believed their brethren were unwittingly helping forward the cause of the Secession by bringing up overtures of this kind. He was positively amazed, he said, after all the noise they had heard, how few there had been who seceded; it was only in one Synod (Glenelg) where the Church had suffered to any extent at all. Rev. Angus Galbraith, in speaking in support of the overtures, said there was not the same attachment to the Free Church that once obtained, and if this sort of thing was to go on, he felt that there would

be another exodus, and a larger one than that which had taken place. He did not say that it would be in the direction of secession, but it would be in another direction. Mr. Sinclair, Plockton, in a speech remarked that among those who had left the Church were some of the salt of the earth and the light of Christ in their districts. He felt his own hands weakened though the Secession was not strong in his district. Dr Rainy's motion was adopted.

EVENTS BEARING ON POLITY OF F.P. CHURCH

The ranks of the ministry were gradually being strengthened in numbers, and in 1896 the following ordinations took place:- Rev. Neil Cameron, St Jude's, Glasgow, 9th January, 1896; Rev. Roderick Mackenzie, Portree, 25th March, 1896; and Rev. James S. Sinclair, John Knox's, Glasgow, 7th April, 1896. This year is also important in the history of the Church as a number of events took place that had a bearing on the Church's polity. At a meeting of Presbytery held on 20th January, 1896, a new question was added to those usually put to office-bearers on entrance to office, viz.: "Do you approve of the Deed of Separation by ministers and elders from the Free Church of Scotland (by the Rev. D. Macfarlane, minister at Raasay; Rev. D. Macdonald, minister at Shieldaig; and Mr Alexander Macfarlane, elder at Raasay) ¹⁶ all at Portree, August 14th, 1893, and of the principles and doctrines set forth in the same?" At the beginning of 1896 a Model Clause to be inserted in Title Deeds was presented to the Presbytery. After careful consideration it was approved, and it was "unanimously recommended that so far as possible it should be inserted as a clause in all and every title to property in this Church" ('Records of the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland', pp. 113, 114). The first number of the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine' was issued in May, 1896, and at a meeting of Presbytery held on 11th May, the Magazine was approved and formally adopted as the official organ of the Church - the Rev. James S. Sinclair being appointed editor. The circulation was 2000 copies per month.

In 1896 the Presbytery which had been functioning hitherto was divided into the Northern and Southern Presbyteries (15th June, 1896), and on the 7th July of this year the last of the annual conferences was held at Inverness. On the evening of the same day the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church met for the first time. The first Moderator was the Rev. D. Macfarlane, and Rev. J.R.

¹⁶ The words in brackets were deleted at a later meeting (16th April, 1897) and at a meeting of the Presbytery held at Glasgow 29th April, 1897, the words "Free Church of Scotland" were changed to "from the present subsisting Church now calling herself the Free Church of Scotland."

Mackay, M.A., was appointed Clerk. A discussion took place as to the training of the theological students for the future, but nothing definite was done at this Synod. Hitherto the theological students of the Church had attended the Assembly's College, Belfast, and the Original Secession Divinity Hall classes. The Clerk of the Synod was instructed to write thanking the Original Secession Church for admitting the students of the Church to their theological classes and examinations free of charge. At next meeting of Synod (29th September, 1896) the question of the theological training of students was raised, and a Committee consisting of Revs. N. Cameron, J.S. Sinclair, A. Mackenzie, D. Macfarlane, Roderick Mackenzie (Convener), were appointed to make provisional arrangement for the theological instruction of the students for next winter. The Committee in their report to next Synod (6th July, 1897) intimated that they asked Revs. John R. Mackay, M.A., and John Macleod, M.A., to undertake the work for last session at Gairloch. It was then moved and agreed to that Mr Mackay and Mr Macleod be appointed theological tutors of the Church. Mr Macleod resigned the following year, and the Rev. D. Beaton was appointed in his place.

At the meeting of Synod held in July, 1898, a motion was brought forward by Rev. Alexander Macrae, seconded by the Rev. John Macleod (Clerk) that each of the ministers should preach once a year on the Church's principles, particularly with respect to current movements in the direction of union. The movement thus inaugurated has been kept up to this date (1933).

CHAPTER 8

Union of the Free and U.P. churches - New fields of labour - Death of Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig - Free Church approach re union - Free Church succeed in claim to property - Synod motions re attitude to Free Church - Letter by Rev. J.R. Mackay to Northern Chronicle - Rev. John Macleod's motion: three ministers leave Church - Petition against Clause V of Churches (Scotland) Bill.

UNION OF THE FREE AND U.P. CHURCHES

As 1900 approached, important ecclesiastical movements were taking place in which the Free Presbyterian Church took a keen interest. One of these was the Union between the United Presbyterian and Free Churches so skilfully engineered by Principal Rainy. All along the Free Presbyterians were opposed to such a Union, and when it became plain that there was a movement in the Free Church to oppose the contemplated Union, it was hailed with pleasure. This pleasure, however, was tempered by the issue of a leaflet by the Free Church Anti-Unionists, in which it was asserted (1) that the Free Church “holds the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith as heretofore understood”; (2) “Hitherto no responsibility for such erroneous teaching (i.e., the erroneous teaching referred to in the leaflet) rests on the people.” A warning note was sounded in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine' V, 201, and while pleasure was expressed at the fact that there were a number of ministers and others in the Free Church who were showing a determined opposition to the Union, yet it was pointed out “that until the leaders of it realise their own true relation to the present nominal Free Church and its past errors and defections, they will not scripturally and successfully perform their generation work” ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', V, 203).¹⁷ On the 30th October, 1900, the Union Act was passed. Principal Rainy moved the ratification of the Act of Union. Rev. C.A. Bannatyne, Culter, moved an amendment. Principal Rainy's motion was carried, - by a vote of 643 to 27 - a majority of 616. On Wednesday, the 31st of October, union of the two Churches was consummated. The members of the Free Church Assembly who declined to enter the Union met about eleven o'clock on the day of Union, but on finding the gates leading to the Assembly Hall shut and admission being refused by the janitor, the Free Church Assembly was constituted in the open. It was then moved that it adjourn to meet at 2 O'clock in Queen Street Hall. This action by the minority was the forerunner of

¹⁷ See also Vol. IV, 75 (Gaelic).

events which were to vitally affect the ecclesiastical situation in Scotland, and ultimately to have a bearing on the Free Presbyterian Church. How this came about will be dealt with later on. At present the attitude of the Synod to the Free Church at this date may be stated.

At the November Synod, 1900, the question of the relation between the Free Church (minority) and the Free Presbyterian Synod was discussed, and the following resolution was agreed upon: "The Synod, while expressing its thankfulness that so many ministers and people of this country have refused to enter the United Free Church, and while cherishing the hope that these same ministers and people may be ultimately led in the mercy of God to take up a position similar to that held by the Free Presbyterian Church, desires to inform the people under its charge that the ecclesiastical position of the Anti-unionists is in its estimation still unsatisfactory. The Synod would therefore urge upon all its congregations to stand fast to the testimony raised in 1893 by this Church." The members present at the Synod were: Revs. N. Cameron, J.S. Sinclair, Alexander Stewart, John Robertson, John Macleod, George Mackay, and Alexander Macrae with Messrs John MacNeilage, Duncan Crawford, James Nicol, and Alexander Maclean, ruling elders ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 13th November, 1900).

NEW FIELDS OF LABOUR

While all eyes were turned to the Union which had been heralded as one of the greatest blessings which had come to Scotland for years, the rejoicings were soon to be mingled with anxiety. Meantime, events, very significant in themselves, were happening in the Free Presbyterian Church which were to lead on to the extension of the activities of the Church in other fields. The first of these was the arrival in this country of two coloured students from South Africa - John Radasi and James Saki. They were taken in hand by the Church and were educated for the Foreign Mission field in their native country. This was to lead on to the Church's Mission at Ingwenya. Unfortunately Mr Saki adopted Plymouth Brethren views and cut his connection with the Free Presbyterian Church in 1900. Mr Radasi continued faithful to the Church until his death in 1926, and was the Church's first missionary in the mission field.

Another event was the sending of a petition in 1901 from Ontario, by those who were in sympathy with the Church, and which was heartily welcomed by the Synod. It ran as follows:

“Gentlemen - We, the undersigned representatives of several groups of Presbyterians scattered through the western part of the province of Ontario, holding the same views, professing the same faith, and contending for the same pure worship which characterised the Church of Scotland in its best days and now contended for by you, beg to address you and present to you our case as regards gospel ordinances, of which we may say we are entirely destitute at the present time. Although there are churches and ministers all around us, yet with these we cannot conscientiously associate and worship; we, therefore, earnestly ask you to recognise us as part of your mission field and take us under your care and providence. If you can give us the services of a wise and good man during the summer season, say four, six or eight weeks, in visiting around, we will pay all travelling expenses and whatever the Synod may see right to lay upon us for such services so given. We do not want a penny of the Synod's funds and will do in the future as we have done in the past - owe no man anything but to love one another. Hoping to have a favourable hearing and answer, we subscribe ourselves, yours in Christ” ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', VI, 292).

The Synod received the petition with the greatest pleasure and appointed a Committee to make arrangements for sending a minister for two or three months in the following summer (1902). In its report the Committee informed the July Synod, 1902, that Rev. Neil Cameron had been asked and had consented to visit Ontario in place of Rev. John R. Mackay who was hindered through illness. Mr Cameron who was accompanied by one of his elders, Mr Allan Maclachlan, left Glasgow on the 25th July and reached Seaforth, Ontario, on the 5th August. The welcome given to the Church's deputies was of the heartiest nature, and in their report they indicate how deeply touched they were by it. “In every place visited by us,” they say, “we were received with open arms. It is impossible to over-estimate their kindness to us, and though we were willing to get back to our beloved friends in Scotland when our duties were accomplished, we must confess that parting with our dear people there was like cutting off a hand or a foot. We can never forget them, and indeed, we don't desire to forget them” ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', VII, 299). Thus was brought about a happy connection between sympathisers with the Church in Ontario and the home Church. Year after year deputies visited the various

groups in Ontario and held converse with some of the excellent of the earth, both men and women, who are now at their happy rest.

DEATH OF REV. D. MACDONALD, SHIELDAIG

The first breach by death in the ministerial ranks of the Free Presbyterian Church took place in 1901 through the removal of Rev. Donald Macdonald, Shieldaig on 20th August of that year. Mr Macdonald, as already stated, took his stand by Mr Macfarlane when the Free Presbyterian Church was formed in 1893. He was a man of great spirituality of mind. When he had liberty in preaching, he carried his hearers along with him, and the more spiritually minded and exercised they were, the more did his message appeal to them. An account of his life was written by his friend, Rev. D. Macfarlane, and published under the Title, "Memoir and Remains of the Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig" (1903).

As the number of ministers was increased, it was decided at the Synod in July, 1902, in answer to an overture from the Northern Presbytery, that this Presbytery should be divided into two. The prayer of the overture was granted, and the names of the two Presbyteries were to be called Northern and Western.

FREE CHURCH APPROACH RE UNION

At the same Synod a communication from the General Assembly of the Free Church was next submitted, intimating that a Committee anent Union with the Synod had been appointed, with instructions to consider how the prayer of overtures anent union might be given effect to. The Synod, after considering the communication, agreed unanimously to the following motion moved by the Rev. Neil Cameron and seconded by the Rev. George Mackay: "The Synod respectfully acknowledge receipt of an extract minute of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland anent union with the Free Presbyterian Church, but considers the matter of union premature; declares its firm adherence to the position taken up by this Church in 1893, and its sense of the necessity of maintaining unimpaired the doctrines and principles set forth in the Deed of Separation, and further declares its willingness to receive any who may be ready to homologate the same" ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 8th July, 1902). The members present were: Revs. Donald Macfarlane, John R. Mackay, George Mackay, Neil Macintyre, Alexander Macrae, Ewen Macqueen, Donald Beaton, Neil Cameron, James S. Sinclair,

Alexander Stewart, John Macleod, with Messrs Neil Mackinnon, Portree; John Mackenzie, Gairloch; Alexander Maclennan, Raasay; Lachlan Maclean, Inverness; Angus Macdougall, Oban; Allan Maclachlan, Glasgow; and Walter R.T. Sinclair, Edinburgh, elders.

In 1903 at the November Synod a resolution was brought forward and a Committee appointed to prepare deliverances on the Bible and the Higher Criticism and on Creed Subscription. These deliverances were drawn up with special care. The Committee reported to the July Synod in 1904, when it was decided that the members of Synod should meet as a Committee at Inverness on 13th September ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 5th July, 1904). When the Synod met in November, 1904, the report was submitted and unanimously adopted¹⁸ (Ibid., 15th November, 1904).

FREE CHURCH SUCCEED IN CLAIM TO PROPERTY

The Free Church on its formation in 1900 made a claim for the property of the Free Church as the rightful heir. The case came before the Court of Session, and the Lord Ordinary, Lord Low, gave his decision against the Free Church. The case was appealed to the Inner Court, and here again the case went against the Free Church. An appeal was made then to the House of Lords. While the case was pending, Lord Shand died, and this necessitated a re-hearing. On 1st August, 1904, the House of Lords decided in favour of the Free Church minority by a vote of 5 to 2. The decision was received by the Rainy party with consternation. The man who had spent a considerable part of his ecclesiastical life in an endeavour to disestablish and disendow the Established Church of Scotland, had by his ecclesiastical policy at one stroke disendowed his followers of all the Church property they possessed. Thousands in Scotland rejoiced that the high-handed policy which had been resorted to in the Free Church Assembly under the leadership of Dr Rainy had met with well merited disaster. Free Presbyterians, while not placing too much stress on the legal decision, in view of the chequered career of the case in the courts, rejoiced that the decision confirmed their contention that the establishment principle was part of the constitution of the Free Church. A hue and cry was raised throughout the land by the dispossessed that plainly indicated, though heavily smitten, they were far from being in a chastened mood. They were up in arms; and a tornado of speechifying swept over the country, but as this belongs more

¹⁸ These deliverances are given in the Church Documents, pp. 8-10, and in the Free Presbyterian Magazine, IX, 282-284.

particularly to the general history of the Church in Scotland, we need not refer further to it meantime.

Our immediate purpose in referring to the famous decision here, is to direct attention to its effect on the Free Presbyterian Church. At the November Synod, 1904, the Rev. John R. Mackay moved the following resolution: "The Synod cannot pass unnoticed the decision of the House of Lords of 1st August, 1904, in the great Scottish Church case. The Synod would express its sincere satisfaction with that decision insomuch as by it the highest Court of Appeal in this land has sustained the view which has always been held in this Church, that the Establishment Principle was essential to the original Free Church constitution. The Synod would also express its satisfaction that by this Decision the Barrier Act of 1697 has been so interpreted as to do away with the semblance of reason which the respondents in this case sought to give for that extravagant and despotic claim of Church power advocated by them. The Synod earnestly hopes that no future legislation will overturn these features of the decision." This motion was seconded by the Rev. Alexander Macrae. Some of the members expressed dissatisfaction with the resolution, and while reluctant to dissent, yet they felt that they must do so.

At a later sederunt the Rev. George Mackay, Stornoway, tabled the following dissent in connection with the foregoing resolution: "We, the undersigned, on behalf of ourselves and as many as agree with us, while satisfied with the resolution of Synod, so far as it goes, feel called upon to record our dissatisfaction (1) that it does not sufficiently recognise that the judgment of the House of Lords in the Church Case, and the circumstances attending the same, may justly be regarded as a remarkable indication of the divine displeasure against the majority of the Free Church who entered the Union of 1900, for their grievous betrayal of truth, and (2) that it makes no direct reference to the present Free Church as the instrument, under divine providence, through which the decision has been obtained, and contains no adequate expression of kindly feeling towards it in its present difficult position. (Signed) George Mackay, minister at Stornoway; Alexander Stewart, minister at Edinburgh; James S. Sinclair, minister at Glasgow; Walter R.T. Sinclair, elder, Edinburgh; John MacNeilage, elder, Glasgow" ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 16th November, 1904).

At this Synod it was decided that the Rev. John B. Radasi be ordained and sent out as the Church's missionary to Matabeleland. Instructions were given to the

Southern Presbytery to proceed with his ordination, and on Wednesday, 16th November 1904, he was solemnly ordained. Such was the small beginning of a mission which has been signally blessed and which has far extended beyond its first beginnings.

SYNOD MOTIONS RE ATTITUDE TO FREE CHURCH

In 1905 the General Assembly of the Free Church sent down an overture to the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act re the Declaratory Act, Formula for Deacons, and Public Worship. This step encouraged those in the Free Presbyterian Church who wished closer relations with the Free Church to get the mind of the Synod on the situation as affected by the proposed legislation. When the Synod met in July, 1905, the subject was brought before the Court by several motions. 'The Rev. George Mackay, Stornoway, moved, and the Rev. Alexander Stewart, Edinburgh, seconded, the following motion: "The Synod desires to record its satisfaction with the proceedings of the last General Assembly of the Free Church, particularly the rescinding of the Declaratory Act of 1892, the withdrawal of permission to use instrumental music and uninspired hymns in public worship, and the repeal of the Act of 1884 anent the Formula for Deacons. Recognising the altered circumstances in the relations between the two Churches which hereby arise, and the responsibilities which these relations involve; and with a view to seriously considering the situation as between the two Churches in the best interests of the cause of Christ in Scotland, the Synod is prepared to appoint a Committee to confer regarding this matter with representatives of the Free Church."

Another motion, brought forward by Mr MacColl, elder, Glasgow, and seconded by Rev. John Robertson, was to the following effect: "The Synod having before it a motion bearing on the question of a conference with the Free Church, and having regard to the interests of truth and the peace of the Church, comes to an honourable understanding that this question of conferring with the Free Church be left in abeyance for two years at least." A third motion was moved by the Rev. Neil Cameron, Glasgow, and seconded by the Rev. Ewen Macqueen, Bonar, to the following effect: "This Synod, in view of overtures anent the Declaratory Act and Formula for Deacons passed as interim Acts and sent down to Presbyteries by the Free Church of Scotland, declares as follows: (1) In the preamble to the overture anent the repeal of the Declaratory Act, it is declared - 'Whereas this Church adheres, as she has always adhered, to her subordinate standards in terms of the Act of 1846

anent Questions and Formula.' By this statement the Free Church seem to justify their own actions since 1893, and by implication to condemn the separate position taken up then by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This action on their part makes it impossible for this Church to view the terms of said preamble in any other light than as fixing these Churches in their present separate positions. (2) The very unsatisfactory manner in which the said Church dealt with Professor Alexander, who in his book 'Demonic Possession' has cast most serious and grave doubts on the inspiration and absolute infallibility of certain portions of the Holy Scriptures, demands of all in this Church, who desire to maintain the integrity of God's Word, to hold fast the position taken up by this Church relative to the Holy Scriptures and the Higher Criticism. Therefore this Synod, while warning all of the extremely unsatisfactory position which the Free Church holds regarding the above serious matters, strongly advises our people to adhere steadfastly to the distinctive position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland."

After parties had spoken, the motions were put to the meeting with the following results: For the first - Revs. George Mackay and Alexander Stewart, ministers, 2; for the second - Revs. John Robertson, John R. Mackay, D.S. Cameron, ministers, and Messrs A. MacColl, Glasgow; D. Crawford, Ohan; and F. Macdonald, Shieldaig, elders - 6; and for the third - Revs. Neil Cameron, Ewen Macqueen, Alexander Macrae, Donald Beaton, Neil Macintyre, and James S. Sinclair, ministers, and Messrs Neil Mackinnon, Portree; Alexander MacLennan, Raasay; John Macdonald, Gairloch; Angus Mackay, Rogart; John Stewart, Lochcarron; Duncan Mackinnon, Bracadale, elders - 12. The Moderator (Rev. D. Macfarlane) declared the third motion carried as the Synod's finding on the subject. Revs. G. Mackay and A. Stewart stated that they dissented from the finding of the Synod, the former remarking that he would have accepted the second option, but as the third had become the finding of the Court, he would have to seriously consider his relation to the Church. Rev. John R. Mackay also stated that he dissented for himself, and would give in his reason in writing at next meeting ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 4th July, 1905).

At next sederunt of Synod the Rev. John R. Mackay handed in his dissent from the finding of the Synod anent the Free Church. He dissented for the sole reason that he was not prepared to homologate the view that the Free Church, in claiming as in the preamble to her Act annulling the Declaratory Act to have "always adhered to her subordinate standards in terms of the Act, 1846, anent

Questions and Formula”, was thereby necessarily setting up an unsurpassable and immovable barrier to a union between the Free Church and the Free Presbyterian Church. The Rev. George Mackay and the Rev. Alexander Stewart stated that they dissented from the attitude adopted by the Church regarding this question in general, and desired to be associated with Rev. John R. Mackay with regard to the matter on which he laid particular emphasis ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 5th July, 1905).¹⁹

LETTER BY REV. J.R. MACKAY TO NORTHERN CHRONICLE

The feeling in the Church generally ran high and was decidedly against union with the Free Church. It was probably owing to this that Rev. John R. Mackay considered it necessary to write a letter to the press explanatory of his attitude at the Synod. In this letter he says:

“I beg, with some diffidence, to offer a word of personal explanation. Some may possibly think, because I could not see my way to go all the length of the motion anent the relation of the Free Presbyterian Church to the Free Church which became the finding of the Synod last week, that I have, therefore, fallen out of hearty sympathy with the Free Presbyterian Church, or that I am ready to unite with the Free Church. Whoever thinks either the one or other of these things is entirely mistaken. I hold, on the contrary, that there is a plain, unmistakable call to us as a Church to stand solidly against union with the Free Church as she is at present. For one thing, I count that the Free Presbyterian Church was honoured to bear witness with special emphasis for the fundamental doctrine of the divine authorship, and consequent infallibility, of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and we ought never to join any Church whose testimony for that doctrine is not given with absolute clearness, as with a silver trumpet. Now this is not yet done in the Free Church. It is true that they have professed to accept the words of their Moderator (Mr Macleod, Oban) 'that the Bible is, not merely contains, but is the Word of God' as the profession of the Free Church on this head. But actions and not professions are

¹⁹ In an article which appeared in the Free Presbyterian Magazine, X, 213, from the pen of the Rev. Neil Cameron, he writes: “Some have charged the last Synod's finding with having fixed the F.P. Church to a position of perpetual separation from all other Churches, however pure they may be in doctrine and principle. The F.P. Church has not been committed, and we trust shall never be committed, to hold such a position. Nevertheless she has been committed to hold both the Word of God as absolutely infallible, and the Confession of Faith in all its articles as agreeable thereto; for all her office-bearers are bound by a solemn promise to this. More is not required of any and less should not be tolerated within her communion.”

what Churches as well as individuals are judged by. Now their actions in connection with this fundamental doctrine appear to me to have placed them quite in a quagmire. Professor Alexander's book, 'Demonic Possession', shows him to have been at the time that book was written a writer occupying a position far down on the rationalistic stream. The book 'Demonic Possession', was already printed and published, when responsible, representative men of the Free Church proceeded to ask Dr Alexander to become their theological tutor or professor. These men now, in deference, they say, to Highland opinion, ask Dr Alexander to withdraw his book, but although they have retained his services in the Professorship, they have not asked him to express his profound sorrow, as became him, that his book in so many places called in question the truth of the Scriptures, which are themselves God-breathed. That being so, and I have dwelt upon only one of several reasons, I, for my part, would earnestly plead with our people everywhere to maintain our own distinctive Free Presbyterian position firmly, and our congregations intact" ('Northern Chronicle', 12th July, 1905).²⁰

REV. JOHN MACLEOD'S MOTION: THREE MINISTERS LEAVE CHURCH

When the Synod met in November, the question of relation to the Free Church was carried a step further by a motion moved by the Rev. John Macleod and seconded by Mr W.R.T. Sinclair, elder, Edinburgh, to the following effect: "Whereas the Free Church, by its legislation, which is in process of being carried through, is aiming at the thorough removal of the constitutional impediments which stand in the way of union with this Synod; and whereas some words occur in their overture repealing the Declaratory Act of 1892, capable of being interpreted as a censure of the Free Presbyterian position relative to said Act; this Synod, in view of these circumstances, appoint a Committee to meet with a Committee of the Free Church to discuss the subject, and to report in full to next meeting of Synod; and, furthermore, in view of the uncertainty occasioned by the conclusion of a recent case, they instruct their Committee specially to inquire what position the Free Church take up with regard to the inerrancy of Holy Scriptures." The motion was supported in speeches by the Revs. A. Stewart, Edinburgh, and G. Mackay, Stornoway.

²⁰ This letter was reprinted in the Free Presbyterian Magazine, X, 127.

Rev, Neil Cameron, Glasgow, next proposed an amendment as follows: “This Synod refuses to consider any motion for union with any Church which does not hold the absolute infallibility of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, both in her profession and practice; it reaffirms its adherence to the motion which became the finding of the Synod last July anent union with the Free Church; and it warns the office-bearers of this Church of the danger of following divisive courses contrary to the solemn engagements under which they came at their ordination; and, further, it instructs the Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions to maintain order and discipline in the several congregations under their charge, in accordance with the constitution of this Church, as necessity may arise.” In support of his motion, Mr Cameron said he was not opposed to union, and as soon as a Church could be found fulfilling the requirements of the motion he had submitted he would consider it his duty to consider the matter of union with it. Rev. A. Macrae, Portree, seconded. The amendment was supported by Rev. J.R. Mackay, Inverness, and Messrs Neil Mackinnon, Portree; Lachlan Maclean, Inverness; and Duncan Crawford, Oban, elders. After Mr MacLeod had replied, the motion and amendment were put to the meeting with the following results: For the motion - Revs. John MacLeod, Alexander Stewart, George Mackay, ministers; and Messrs W.R.T. Sinclair and Hugh Thomson, elders - 5. For the amendment - Revs. Neil Cameron, Alexander Macrae, John R. Mackay, Neil Macintyre, John Robertson, James S. Sinclair, ministers; and Messrs Neil Mackinnon, Lachlan Maclean, Duncan Crawford, Alexander Maclellan, John Macdonald, Stornoway; John Macdonald, Gairloch; Murdo Murray, William Maclean, John Auld, Murdo Macdonald, John Stewart, and Duncan Mackinnon, elders - 18. The Moderator (Rev. D. Beaton) declared the amendment carried.

Rev. John MacLeod then tabled the following dissent: “We, the undersigned ministers and elders of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, on our own behalf and on behalf of as many as adhere to us, dissent from the finding of the Synod anent conference with the Free Church, inasmuch as by refusing even to hold it conference, a policy of disunion and division is being pursued, and what does not justify the making of a separation does not justify the maintaining of it;²¹ and, moreover, we feel ourselves at liberty, either

²¹ When Ebenezer Erskine was invited in 1735 by the Stirling Presbytery to become their Moderator after the sentences of the Commission of Assembly in 1733 against the four Secession Brethren had been removed, he replied: “Some brethren call us to come in and help them against the current of defection. But now that the hand of Providence has taken us out of

jointly or individually, to do whatever we can by conference to heal the breach between the two branches of the Free Church of Scotland adhering to its Disruption position.” (Signed) - John Macleod, George Mackay, Alexander Stewart, ministers, and Hugh Thomson, elder. It was agreed to appoint a Committee consisting of Revs. N. Cameron, J.S. Sinclair, and J.R. MacKay to answer the dissent. This Committee presented their reply to the reasons of dissent at next meeting of Synod (July, 1906). The reply was as follows: “(1) In reply to the charge that by refusing even to hold a conference with the Free Church, the Synod is pursuing a policy of disunion and division, we remark (a) that the conference suggested was not a conference about things in general, but simply a conference to consider the feasibility of union between the two bodies; (b) and that the Free Presbyterian Church could not entertain the idea of uniting with the Free Church, because, for one thing, in its practice it has proved itself disloyal to the fundamental standard, that is, Holy Scripture. (2) In regard to the assertion that what does not justify the making of a separation does not justify the maintaining of it, we have simply to observe that, according to the rule of Scripture, if a Church at a certain date in its history gets repentance from a condition of backsliding, and by grace is enabled to revert to the position of purity from which the declension started, such a Church is not at liberty, for the sake of number or external unity, to seek alliance with a body which has refused to go in for more than half a reformation. - John R. Mackay; Neil Cameron; James S. Sinclair.” At a special meeting of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church held on 19th December, 1905, an application from Revs. John Macleod, M.A., Alexander Stewart, George Mackay, and Mr John Sinclair, divinity student, to be received into the Free Church was read. The motion for granting the application was “carried by acclamation”.

PETITION AGAINST CLAUSE V OF CHURCHES (SCOTLAND) BILL

In 1905 the Church of Scotland which had been preparing for a change in her relation to the Confession of Faith, unexpectedly found an opening by getting a clause tacked on to the Churches (Scotland) Act. This ecclesiastical move in

the current against which we are swimming, and set us upon the reformation ground by a solemn testimony and constitution, it would be vain for us to endanger ourselves by running into the current again, unless our reverend brethren, who call for our help, can persuade us that our so doing will turn the current and save both them and ourselves, and so preserve the Lord's work and testimony. In my opinion, it would be by far much safer for these brethren to come out of the dangerous current to us, than for us to come back to them, Jer. xv. 19, 21” (Fraser's Life and Diary of the Rev. E. Erskine, A.M., p. 400).

taking advantage of the troubles of her neighbours, exposed those who were at the head of this movement to well-deserved criticism. At the July Synod in 1905 a Committee was appointed by the Synod to draw up a petition to Parliament in connection with Clause V²² of the Bill. The petition was as follows:

“The Synod, observing that a Bill has been introduced into Parliament with the object, inter alia, of giving the Church of Scotland liberty to alter its relation to the Confession of Faith, begs most earnestly to urge upon your Honourable House the importance of maintaining the presently existing arrangement between Church and State, and that in view of the following considerations: (1) The Act of 1693 was designed to ensure that all entrants into office in the Church honestly accepted the Confession of Faith, and would faithfully maintain its doctrines. (2) Although it is strongly affirmed at present that the liberty desired does not in any wise touch the Confession itself; yet it is clear from the speeches of representative men in the Established Church that they aim at being relieved from the Calvinistic doctrines of the Confession - doctrines which have been highly blessed of God to the good of this country - the attainment of which aim will involve to all practical intents and purposes the virtual repudiation of the Confession as the subordinate standard of the Church. (3) It is no secret that there are Rationalistic and Ritualistic elements in the Established Church; and the present demand, if granted, will undoubtedly give a great impetus to those dangerous forces. (4) It is also evident that, if this unsettling change be sanctioned, it will pave the way for the disestablishment of the National Church, and therefore for the removal of one of the mainstays of the Protestantism of this country. It will also give a strong impulse to the Romanising party in the Church of England to seek a similar liberty within that Church. (5) It is the conviction of this Synod that it is a very hazardous experiment to place upon the Statute-Book an Act which will certainly alienate the sympathies of those people in Scotland outside the Established Church who highly value the Establishment principle, and desire to see it practically and permanently maintained in the country. Wherefore this Synod, believing that the glory of God and the good and peace of the nation are involved in this

²² The Clause reads as follows: - “The formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith required from ministers and preachers of the Church of Scotland as by law established and from persons appointed to Chairs of Theology in the Scottish Universities and the Principal of Saint Mary's College, St Andrews, respectively, shall be such as may be prescribed by Act of the General Assembly of the said Church with the consent of the majority of the Presbyteries thereof. The formula at present in use in any case shall be required until a formula in lieu thereof is so prescribed.”

matter, begs to enter its earnest protest against the proposed legislation in Clause 5 of the Churches (Scotland) Bill, and prays that your Honourable House may refuse to give your sanction to said legislation."

CHAPTER 9

Controversy re Dr Alexander's "Demonic Possession" - 1907-1909: Deceased Wife's Sister Act, etc. - Church's relation to Second Reformation attainments - Case of Mr Peter M. Chisholm - Resolution re Close Communion - 1913-1914.

CONTROVERSY RE DR ALEXANDER'S "DEMONIC POSSESSION"

As Dr Alexander's 'Demonic Possession' and the attitude of the Free Church to the author has occupied a very prominent place in the controversial discussions between the Free and Free Presbyterian Churches, it may be advisable to give a brief summary of a few of the leading points connected with the controversy. The book appeared in February, 1902, while Dr Alexander was still connected with the United Free Church. In April of that year a short paragraph appeared in the 'Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland', but it gave no indication of the erroneous teaching in the book. In 1904 Principal Donaldson wrote a damaging criticism to which the United Free Church, for its own ends, gave the widest publicity. Criticisms by Free Presbyterian writers also called attention to the higher critical tendency of the book. On 23rd November, 1904, Dr Alexander wrote a letter to the 'Glasgow Herald'. It made no attempt to meet Dr Donaldson's criticism, neither did it contain a word of regret for the view of Scripture that had been adopted as a working hypothesis in 'Demonic Possession'. After this it was announced that Dr Alexander was to bring out a second edition of his book in which he would answer his critics.

In February, 1905, however, Dr Alexander wrote to the 'Scots-man' saying that owing to the work involved in a summer session, he could not bring out the second edition as he intended. He said that on the first appearance of his book reviews appeared in the 'British Weekly', 'Bookman', 'Missionary Record of the United Free Church', and the 'Critical Review', but none of these charged him with Higher Criticism. He acknowledged that certain things in his book were "unnecessary and immature speculations". He admitted that in meeting the Higher Critics on their own grounds he left one or two references quite unwittingly somewhat unguarded, but denied that he ever postulated the importation of heathenism from Babylonia or elsewhere into the pure religion of Israel, or deutero-Isaiah, or mutilation of the Scriptures, or alleged discrepancies as annulling the historicity of the Bible narratives. The Free Presbyterians contended that it was quite evident from the foregoing that Dr Alexander did not consider the book sufficiently erroneous to withdraw it from

circulation, neither did he indicate that he had any such intention. As a guarantee of his fidelity to the Confessional doctrine, he announced that he signed the Confession when he was licensed and again when he was appointed Professor in the Free Church, but he did not explain that the first signing of the Confession did not keep him from publishing the higher critical sentiments in 'Demonic Possession', and why should the second signing be more effective it was argued? Owing to the uneasiness felt by the criticism made against the book, the matter came before the General Assembly of the Free Church in 1905. The Rev. D.M. MacAllister in submitting the report on the Training of the Ministry, intimated that Dr Alexander had withdrawn his book from circulation. It was a book, he said, which was published before Dr Alexander had any connection with the Free Church, and "he had seen his way very clearly to withdraw it in deference to the requirements made in various parts of the Highlands". The Rev. Angus Galbraith in speaking to an overture sent by the Presbytery of Lochcarron and the Synod of Glenelg, said that he deprecated the raising of strife again, but could not overlook the anxiety of brethren and of the people with whom they came in contact. He had read the book, but it was far too learned for him. He could not understand a lot of it, but as far as he could understand it, he could not see anything terrible in it. (Laughter.)²³ He had since heard Dr Alexander, and he was delighted to hear him. He could scarcely believe Dr Alexander was the author of the book at all. The Rev. William Mackinnon, Gairloch, also bore testimony to Dr Alexander's soundness in the faith. The Rev. Murdo Mackenzie, Inverness, said he had read the book, and it seemed to him to be a history of ghosts. (Laughter.) Anyone who had read the book could not but come to the conclusion that it was not worth the time Dr Alexander wasted on the production of such a book. There were no doubt some things that were objectionable in the book, but Dr Alexander had with- drawn it and had seen the absurdity of his production. The Rev. Murdo Macqueen, Kiltarn, said there was a considerable amount of anxiety with regard to the book. He was greatly pleased to see a letter in the public press from Dr Alexander which was so far of the nature of a public apology though it did not relieve him absolutely. He thought that something further was

²³ At a meeting of the Inverness Free Presbytery held in the spring of 1905, the Rev. D. (now Professor) Maclean, Moy, is reported as saying "he had read the book all through. He had a glance at the book in 1902, and he read it altogether quite recently, so he was not ignorant of its contents . . . There were some expressions in the book from which he differed, but the effort made by Dr Alexander was directly opposite to those who were naturalistic and rationalistic ... There was not a word, except perhaps a slight expression used in one place, which went to show that Dr Alexander in any way doubted the infallibility of the Bible." ('Northern Chronicle', 8th March, 1905.)

desiderated, and that was that the book should be withdrawn. He did not know that the book would have been withdrawn yet but for the overtures. Professor Kennedy Cameron said it was only fair to Dr Alexander to say that the book had been withdrawn before the overtures saw the light. He moved that as a reply to the overtures that the Moderator's (Rev. Ewan Macleod, Oban) address dealing with the Scriptures should be adopted and ordered to be printed and circulated among their members. This motion was unanimously adopted. A member of Assembly asked that Dr Alexander should give "an apology before the House", but this was ruled out of order.

From the Free Presbyterian standpoint it was argued that the withdrawal of 'Demonic Possession' by Dr Alexander "in deference to the requirements made in various parts of the Highlands" was most unsatisfactory. It was further contended that a number of statements made by some of the leading ministers of the Assembly indicated a lack of understanding - some of them admitted this themselves - of the serious nature of positions taken up in the book, and that they dealt too lightly with a serious question.²⁴ In 1905 at the special meeting of Commission when some of the Free Presbyterian ministers were received into the Free Church, Dr Alexander made the following statement: "Some men have entered into their faith without a struggle; others have had to wrestle with intellectual doubt. I am of the number of the latter. I was once plunged into that sunless gulf. I, here, today testify to the long night vigils: to the prayer that was but a despairing cry. By the grace of God I emerged from that deep distress: but how? It was by grasping in the strength of God that fundamental doctrine of our holy religion - namely, the utter infallibility of the Word of God. To some that doctrine has become as an idle tale; to me it is the profoundest, the most vital of all convictions. Take away from me the utter infallibility of Scripture, and you take my all. I sink again into the sunless gulf of doubt, from which I know no way of escape. Do not marvel if I say that with all my brethren here; and, indeed above them all, I cherish as more precious than life itself, the absolute infallibility of the Word of God. I have there cast the anchor of my hope; it entereth into that which is sure and steadfast, even into that which is within the veil." Free Presbyterians while

²⁴ A significant admission is made in the following sentence which appeared in the December (1905) issue of the 'Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland': "Assuming that the charges against Professor Alexander's book on 'Demonic Possession' are well founded (and the Professor's withdrawal of the book from circulation is tantamount to an acknowledgment that they are)."

admitting the significance of this statement were not satisfied with it, because (1) it contains no express repudiation of the errors contained in 'Demonic Possession', and (2) it is not stated when Dr Alexander emerged from the deep distress he refers to - whether before or after the publication of his book. If it was before 'Demonic Possession' was written, the statement loses any significance it had. It was pointed out that at his ordination he had affirmed the infallible truth of Scripture while his book was still in circulation. It was further argued by Free Church advocates that the Free Church was not blameworthy in not taking Dr Alexander to task "for something done before he was subject to her judicatories".²⁵ "To this Free Presbyterians replied that such a position set aside discipline altogether in such cases, and they further pointed out that even though such a position could be maintained, which they denied, that it would not apply to Dr Alexander's case, as the "something done" by Dr Alexander existed after he had been accepted by the Free Church."²⁶

1907-1909: DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER ACT, ETC.

The Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act, as it was popularly called, legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, was passed into law by the British Parliament in 1907. As this Act was not only contrary to the law of the land, but also in opposition to the Bible teaching and the Confession of Faith, the November Synod of 1907 appointed a Committee, consisting of Revs. J.R. Mackay, Neil Cameron and James S. Sinclair, to draw up a statement protesting against the Act ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland', 12th November, 1907). The Committee's deliverance indicated that the Synod had protested against the Bill while it was before Parliament. The Act, it was pointed out, was contrary to God's Word which forbids marriages within certain degrees of "near kin", both on the grounds of consanguinity and affinity, and that the prohibition of affinity goes out equally far with that on the ground of consanguinity (Lev. 18, v. 6-18). The Committee further pointed out that the Act was contrary to the Confession of Faith (chap. xxiv, sec. iv), and reminded Parliament that this was the law of Scotland. Further, it is intimated that "the Synod gives public notice to all concerned that the ministers of this Church shall not be at liberty to perform marriage except in strict conformity with the Confession of Faith, and that Church privileges shall

²⁵ 'Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland', December 1905.

²⁶ For the Free Presbyterian view see 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', x. 99, 333.

not be extended to any who contract marriage under the licence given by the said Deceased Wife's Sister Act" ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XIII, 69).

At the end of 1907 the first meetings of the London congregation took place. A number of friends who had sympathies with the Free Presbyterian Church met together and asked for supply to be sent to them, and from that day on until the present (1933), Free Presbyterians have had a place in the great city where they might meet and worship God after the manner they had been accustomed to in their native land.

On 8th December, 1908, in reply to a question put by a Roman Catholic peer in the House of Lords, Lord Crewe speaking for the Government intimated that legislation in favour of a change in the King's Protestant Declaration was to be submitted to Parliament. At the July Synod, 1910, a strong protest was made by the Synod against the Government's attempt to virtually abolish the Royal Protestant Declaration. The Rev. D. Macfarlane, Dingwall, moved that a Fast Day be kept in view of the proposed change, and the Synod agreed to this. The new Accession Declaration Act was put on the statute book at the end of July of the above year. It is as follows: "I ... do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify and declare that I am a faithful Protestant and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the Throne of my Realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my powers according to law." The new Declaration makes no reference of condemnation of the doctrines of the Roman Church as the old did, and met with the hearty approval of Roman Catholics as far as it went.

Owing to uncertainty in some places as to the attitude of the Church to prayer at the grave²⁷ a motion, moved by Rev. Ewen Macqueen and seconded by Rev. Norman Matheson, to the following effect was passed at the July Synod, 1909: "Seeing that there appears to be some uncertainty in some places as to our attitude regarding prayer at the grave, the Synod resolve to make it plain to all their people that as it is not the practice of this Church to engage in prayer at the grave, they advise them not to ask or encourage others to do so, but to adhere to the Directory for Public Worship on that point" ('Record of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 6th July, 1909).

²⁷ On the subject of Prayer at the Grave see articles in 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', XIV, 220; XXXIV, 208.

CHURCH'S RELATION TO SECOND REFORMATION ATTAINMENTS

During 1909 some discussion was going on in the Church as to its relation to the Covenants. It was said that a change was contemplated in the constitution of the Church, and that this pointed in the direction of a renewing of the Covenants. At the November Synod, 1909, the Rev. Neil Cameron made a statement in which he pointed

out that all that was intended was the issuing of a “declaration setting forth our firm adherence to the great and fundamental doctrines of the Reformation, and our appreciation of the fidelity and fortitude of the men who were the instruments used by the Lord for the achievement of such a blessed deliverance in our land” ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 16th November, 1909). The question of the advisability of the Synod issuing a declaration on Reformation attainments was remitted to next Synod (July, 1910). At this Synod Mr Cameron read a historical paper dealing with the First and Second Reformations and the Revolution Settlement, and made reference also to the state of things in the Churches of the present day. After some discussion the Synod agreed to approve the first part of the paper which dealt with the subject which had been under discussion at last meeting of Synod. A Committee, consisting of Revs. D. Macfarlane, J.R. Mackay, and Neil Cameron, was appointed with full powers to revise the same and to issue it as a declaration of the Synod ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland', 5th July, 1910). The Declaration was printed in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', and as it occupies six pages, it is too long to be given here. It gives a long quotation from the Free Church Act of 1851²⁸ - “Act and Declaration anent the Subordinate Standards” - in which the Free Church's attitude to the Revolution Settlement is set forth, and the Declaration concludes by saying: “The Synod heartily concur in the above statement of the Church in 1851, and they declare that, in their humble judgment, the fact that the Recissory Act has been left un-repealed on the Statute Book leaves the Presbyterians of Scotland in a dangerous position, and that effective steps should be taken for its repeal along with all the other pernicious cognate Acts of that period of our history” ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XV, 147, 292).

CASE OF MR PETER M. CHISHOLM

²⁸ This Act will be found in 'Authorised Standards of the Free Church', pp. 5-15.

In 1912 considerable disturbance was made by Mr Peter M. Chisholm, an Arts student of the Church. The case as presented to the November Synod (1912), was that Mr Chisholm had been called before the Southern Presbytery to answer a complaint that had been made against him for having made in St Jude's pulpit (in the absence of the minister) hitherto unheard of reflections upon, among other things, the recognised practice of the Church in certain particulars - such as the employment of elders to speak from the Word at Church services. At the Presbytery Mr Chisholm refused to express regret for what he had done, and the Presbytery unanimously decided that until Mr Chisholm would apologise and submit to the Church courts, he would be deprived of the privilege of preaching. He had appealed to the Synod against the decision. As Mr Chisholm had failed to give in Reasons for his Appeal within the stipulated time, the Synod decided that the Appeal fell to the ground. It was pointed out that the Synod still regarded Mr Chisholm as a student of the Church and as a member in full communion with the Church. All the sentence of the Presbytery implied was that Mr Chisholm was deprived of the privilege of preaching to our people until he gave satisfaction to the Southern Presbytery. It was further pointed out that the case of a student and a licentiate or probationer was different. In the case of the latter licence could not be withdrawn without a regular process proving against him fault of life or doctrine. In the case of a student, however, it was asserted that a mere act of imprudence would justify a Presbytery in depriving him of preaching during the Presbytery's pleasure. The Synod instructed the Southern Presbytery that unless Mr Chisholm satisfied the Presbytery within a specified time, his name was to be removed from the roll of students.²⁹ Mr Chisholm left the Church and held services for those who sympathised with him. He afterwards joined the Free Church. In 1913 Mr Chisholm issued from the press his 'Defence of Reformation Principles in relation to the Free Presbyterian Student Case', in which he sets up a defence for his action.

The Synod thereafter considered a petition from the Southern Presbytery, asking for a deliverance by the Synod on the subject of the general practice of the employment of elders to speak from the Word at Church services. In this connection the Synod passed the following resolution: "The Synod, after full and serious deliberation. of the remit from the Southern Presbytery as regards

²⁹ A summary of the history of the case as it came before the Southern Presbytery was published in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', XVIII, 26, where the subject is treated in a fuller way than can be done here.

the practice of the Free Presbyterian Church in asking elders to address the people publicly, have come to the following conclusions: - (1) The Synod desire to thank the elders of the Church for the hearty response they have given to the urgent call of the ministers to come to their aid by conducting public services throughout their bounds; and, further, to state that the Synod are not aware of any detrimental effects that have followed the indefatigable labours of the elders in their efforts to assist the ministers to have services conducted (in the absence of ministers or missionaries) in all places for public worship within the Church. (2) The Synod are not aware of having violated any principle of God's Word, or of the practice of the Church of the Reformation in Scotland, by asking elders, in cases where need required, to hold and address meetings for Christian fellowship in their districts and, when called upon to do so by the ministers of the Church, beyond their districts. (3) The Synod declare that the elders of the Church have always kept the place assigned to them, and have not usurped the distinctive duties of the ministry, and consequently the Constitution of the Church has not been violated. (4) The Synod deplore the ill-advised attack made upon the elders by certain individuals, and the uncalled-for disturbances caused in a few congregations by such statements. The Synod advise their people not to allow anyone to disturb their minds, as they are all aware that elders have been addressing meetings in Scotland for many generations in the past, and that their being asked by the Church to do so is neither an innovation nor an unscriptural principle" ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 12th November, 1912).

RESOLUTION RE CLOSE COMMUNION

Another Resolution of interest to the Church was passed at the same Synod on the subject of Close Communion. The deliverance was as follows:

"The Synod would record their strong disapprobation of the conduct of some individuals connected with this Church, who have circulated unfounded charges among our people about the meaning of a resolution passed by the Synod in November last year. The resolution reads as follows: 'That the Synod approve of the procedure adopted by Mr Macintyre at Winnipeg in the matter of admitting persons to the privilege of the communion, and give it to be understood that, while this Church does not hold close communion, none are to be admitted to the privilege mentioned but such as are known as God-fearing persons by a majority of those responsible for admission.'

“The Synod declare that the meaning attached by them to the above resolution is as follows: (1) The office-bearers of the Church in Canada, having sent a request to the Synod to give a deliverance in regard to the position held by this Church about communion, the Synod gave it to be understood that neither the Church of the Reformation, nor the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, held or hold close communion; (2) the Synod gave it to be understood that none are to be received to the Lord's Table in this Church but such as are known as God-fearing persons; and that none shall be admitted without the approval of the majority of the Kirk-session. That this has been all along the way of admission to the Lord's Table in the Free Presbyterian Church will be quite manifest to all their people; (3) the Synod would also declare that it flows from ignorance, or something more blameworthy on the part of some, to have spread a report to the effect that the Synod, by foresaid resolution, had changed the Constitution of the Church and opened a wide door to receive members wholesale from other Churches to the Lord's Table. The people of this Church may rest assured that the Synod did not and does not intend to open the door to communion, in the least degree, wider than it has been in the Reformed Church of Scotland since the Reformation, and in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland hitherto” ('Records of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church', 12th November, 1912).

1913-1914

In 1913, the year before the outbreak of the Great War, the Rev. Duncan Mackenzie had proceeded as the Church's deputy to Australia. His visit there cheered those who were sympathetic with the stand made by the Free Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Walter Scott who became a minister of the Church and was afterwards settled at Chesley, Ontario, kept the home Church in touch with the friends in Australia. A request was sent to the Synod in 1914 to allow Mr Mackenzie to remain three months longer than had been stipulated, but the Synod would only consent to one month. As the Great War, however, broke out immediately, Mr Mackenzie's homecoming was considerably delayed.

Previous to 1914 the Synod met half-yearly, but a motion was passed in the above year changing the half-yearly into an annual meeting. This has continued up to the present (1933). Year by year the volume of the work was increasing, and as the Church's activities spread to other lands, there was naturally a considerable increase in the work to be disposed of by the Synod. As it was not

so convenient for members to attend twice a year to deal with the Synod work, it was thought that a better attendance would be the outcome of an annual meeting.

CHAPTER 10

The Great War - Free Church move for union - Free Church reply to statement of differences - Synod rejects the idea of union - Three ministers go over to Free Church - Prohibition controversy.

THE GREAT WAR

The year 1914 will go down in the pages of history as the year when the nations of Europe came into the death grip of the mightiest struggle ever waged between nations. As so many of the young men of the Free Presbyterian Church answered their country's call, every effort was made to look after their spiritual welfare as far as it was in the power of the Church to do so. Prayer was made for them continually, and while in training in England before being sent to France or before joining the ships, services were arranged for them, and ministers of the Church were sent to preach and to visit them. Among the host of evils let loose by the War the Church endeavoured to do her duty in warning her young men against them. She also time and again sent protests against Sabbath breaking to those in authority. The reports of the Mission to the Forces was published in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine' and make very interesting reading. Later on two of our ministers, Rev. E. Macqueen and Rev. A. Sutherland, were appointed chaplains. Our Church, like other Churches, lost not a few on sea and on land of promising young men. Among these may be mentioned two students - John Mackenzie, North Tolsta, and Murdo Macfarlane, a nephew of the Rev. Donald Macfarlane, Dingwall.

When the Synod met in 1915, it was reported that the first twenty-four psalms in metre had been translated into Kafir. The work had taken a number of years and was gone about in a very careful way. The Rev. John Bokwe was the translator. He had finished the whole collection, but Principal Henderson, Lovedale, considered it advisable that the work should undergo a thorough examination before being printed for public use. The twenty-four psalms were issued from the Lovedale Printing Press, and in a review which appeared in 'The Christian Express' (Lovedale) Mr Bokwe's work is referred to as "a piece of good work", Psalms 16 and 22 being singled out as "examples of idiomatic and euphonic Kafir" ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XX, 390).

FREE CHURCH MOVE FOR UNION

In 1916 at a meeting of the August Commission of the Free Church General Assembly, Professor Kennedy Cameron made a statement in which he said that

he was in a position to say that if they moved again for union with the Free Presbyterian Church, they would get a better reception. When the Synod met in 1917, the Clerk (Rev. James S. Sinclair) read a communication which he had received from Professor J. Kennedy Cameron, Clerk of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church. The communication intimated that the Commission had appointed a Committee to confer with any Committee which might be appointed by the Free Presbyterian Church on all that may at present be regarded as obstacles to co-operation or union between the two Churches. After the reading of the foregoing communication the Rev. Neil Cameron moved as follows:

“The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland respectfully acknowledge receipt of a communication from the Free Church Commission of August, 1916, intimating that a Committee had been appointed to confer with representatives of the Free Presbyterian Church as to the removal of obstacles which may stand in the way of union between the two Churches. The Synod, while not definitely committing itself to the opinion that the Free Church Commission acted wholly within its powers in originating this movement, desires to draw the attention of all concerned to the following statement of the Synod's position, and of some of the outstanding differences between the two bodies. The Synod, while recognising the obligation that lies on Christian denominations to seek union in the truth, considers that meanwhile it would be futile to appoint a Committee to meet with the Free Church Committee, and is of opinion that the interests of the case are best served by a statement of differences as follows:

(1) The Free Church has never explicitly condemned the views advocated by Dr W.M. Alexander, one of her professors, in a book named 'Demonic Possession', views destructive of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, nor has she called upon Dr Alexander to state publicly in distinct and unequivocal terms that he repudiates the book and sincerely regrets the anti-scriptural opinions expressed therein, and by her unfaithfulness in this respect, has called in question her own loyalty to the doctrine of the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God.

(2) The Free Church, in an Act of 1905, rescinding the Declaratory Act of 1892, inserted a clause in the preamble of the said rescinding Act, namely, 'as she has always adhered', which bears the construction that the Free Church in her corporate capacity had always adhered to the Confession of Faith and other

subordinate standards as adopted by the Free Church in 1846, and which clause may be reasonably construed as a censure of the position of the Free Presbyterian Church relative to the Declaratory Act of 1892, the said Act having been the overt ground of its taking up a separate position in 1893. The representatives of the Free Presbyterian Church have always maintained that the adoption by the Free Church in 1892 of this Declaratory Act was a serious departure by said Church from the Confession of Faith and other subordinate standards. The present Free Church, by the clause referred to, has raised a standing barrier between her and the Free Presbyterian Church.

(3) The Free Church, since 1900, has thrown open the door of admission to her ministry very indiscriminately to men out of a great variety of Churches, and this latitudinarianism has also raised a barrier between her and the Free Presbyterian Church.

(4) The Free Church has been lax in her general discipline and practice, and differs from the Free Presbyterian Church in such matters as Church Bazaars and Sales of Work, Church Soirees and Social Meetings, Prayers at the Grave, and to mention a particular case of discipline, the failure on the part of her Assembly to remove a Popish symbol from one of her Church buildings.

The Synod, in adopting this statement, declares that it does so with a sincere desire for the glory of Christ the Head of the Church, the integrity of His Word in profession and practice, a clear testimony for the truth as embodied in the Confession of Faith and other subordinate standards, and the general welfare of Christ's cause in Scotland and throughout the world. The Synod instructs its Clerk to forward a copy of this statement to the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Free Church."

Rev. D. Macfarlane, Dingwall, who left the chair for the purpose, seconded the motion. Thereafter, Rev. J.R. Mackay, Inverness, moved the adoption of another motion as follows: "The Synod acknowledge receipt of Resolution of the Free Church Commission of General Assembly, intimating the appointment of a Committee by said Commission to confer with any Committee which may be appointed by the Free Presbyterian Church on all matters that may at present be regarded as obstacles to co-operation or union between the two Churches. The Synod, while recognising the obligation that lies on Christian denominations, occupying the same field, and owning the same scriptural creed, to endeavour to walk in the utmost Christian amity, conclude, in no spirit of prejudice and in no opposition to the end desiderated in the said

resolution on a clearly defined scriptural basis, that meanwhile it would be futile to appoint a Committee to meet, with the Free Church Committee, until:

(1) The Free Church owns that Dr Alexander's book, 'Demonic Possession', is heretical and calls upon Dr Alexander to state in distinct and unequivocal terms that he both repudiates the book and genuinely regrets the unscriptural sentiments expressed therein. (2) The Free Church acknowledges that the Declaratory Act of 1892 was de facto law in 1893, and deletes the words, 'as she has always adhered', occurring in the preamble to the Act rescinding the Declaratory Act, for the reason that the said words are open to an indefinite interpretation, and they are capable of being construed as a censure of the position of this Church, relative to said Act; or otherwise take means to perfectly neutralise the effect of the said words by what may be accepted as the equivalent of their deletion, in so far as the words in question may constructively amount to a condemnation of the Free Presbyterian action in 1893. (3) The Free Church expresses her willingness to homologate Deliverances passed by this Synod on such matters as the Bible and the Higher Criticism; Creed Subscription; Prayers at the Grave; Church Bazaars; and Church Soirees, copies of which are herewith supplied. The Synod, in agreeing to the terms of the foregoing reply, supremely view the glory of the ever-living Head of the Church, the integrity of His Word, both in profession and practice, the necessity of maintaining clear testimony for the truth as embodied in the Confession of Faith and other subordinate standards, and the general welfare of Christ's cause at home and abroad; and they forward it in the most respectful and courteous spirit." The Rev. Alexander Macrae seconded the motion.

Mr Macrae, in seconding the motion, referred to some of the existing barriers, the removal of which, in his view, constituted an indispensable condition to having further official relations with the Free Church. The first of these was the case of Dr Alexander. The case, he said, presented an example of defective discipline, "and until the Church acknowledges the book to be heretical and its author states in distinct and unequivocal terms that he both repudiates it and genuinely regrets the unscriptural sentiments expressed therein, a standing barrier to closer relations, for which we can have no manner of responsibility is bound to exist." The second point was the statement in the preamble to the Free Church Act rescinding the Declaratory Act. "The Declaratory Act," he said, "was an Act regulating the procedure and administration of the Church in all its judicatories. It was operative in all her courts, effectually binding the hands of

the minority, who, I never believed, accepted it as an expression of their own personal beliefs. They were under no compulsion to do that. But I believe it was so operative in the administration of the Church, that the dissentients could neither maintain nor defend, in their official or corporate capacity as members of the Courts of the Church, the whole doctrine of the Confession. In fact they were obliged to license and ordain men who held, taught, and preached the doctrines of the Declaratory Act. Even young probationers who professed opposition to the Act would not be allowed, at their ordination, to have anything placed on the records of. Presbytery against it; otherwise, ordination would be denied to them. The Presbytery of Inverness, in the Dores case, afforded a concrete example. There was a cognate case in the Presbytery of Dornoch. Other Presbyteries and, if I rightly remember, some Synods, as inferior courts, were obliged to delete their protests from their records. In view of these facts, I am forced to cling still to the view that, in their official capacity they were helpless; and, however much they might wish it to be otherwise, the facts showed that they could not, in that respect - I mean officially - adhere to the whole doctrine contained in her subordinate standards in terms of the Act, 1846. I may be mistaken, but to my mind, it is very regrettable that, when ultimately, in providence, the Free Church had it in their power to rescind the Declaratory Act, they did not do it simpliciter, or used in the preamble to the Rescinding Act only the words, 'this Church adheres'. I do not say that in adopting the additional and unfortunate phrase, 'as she has always adhered', the Church meant criticism of our position relative to the Declaratory Act. The Commission of her Assembly already made a pronouncement denying the fact; but a mere pronouncement of the nature made does not meet the situation. Objectionable words are adopted, charged with all the power that legislation under the Barrier Act can give. They belie the Church's previous record of helpfulness under a regime likeable or unlikeable to her. But in view of the facts of past experience, to which we cannot possibly shut our eyes, no arrangement short of the formal deletion of the words in question, or, of what may be reckoned the equivalent of their deletion, can, in my view, give satisfaction. It is, even now, in the power of the Free Church to have this effected; and if this approach be of the character that I fondly hope it is, they will effect it. But until these words be effectively neutralised, they certainly

constitute a barrier to closer relations” ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXII, 111-112).³⁰

After the motions had been spoken to by several members of Synod, the Moderator (Rev. D. Macfarlane) then put them to the Synod, with the following results: For Rev. Neil Cameron's motion - Revs. Neil Macintyre, Ewen Macqueen, D. Beaton, Donald Graham, Alexander Mackay, D.A. Macfarlane, Neil Cameron, and J.S. Sinclair, ministers; with Messrs J. Macdonald, Gairloch; M. Urquhart, Dingwall; Charles Maclean, Inverness; M. Campbell, Oban; A. Mackenzie, Stornoway, elders - 13. For Rev. J.R. Mackay's motion - Revs. Alexander Macrae, Andrew Sutherland, and J.R. Mackay, ministers; with Mr D. Fraser, St Jude's, elder - 4. Mr F. Macdonald, elder, Shieldaig, did not vote for either motion. The Moderator, Rev. D. Macfarlane (who was precluded from voting by his position as Moderator), declared that Mr Cameron's resolution was the finding of the Synod. After the decision was announced, Rev. J.R. Mackay said he had neither the intention of leaving the Church, nor recording his dissent. He had simply taken the best way he had thought fit of expressing his mind.

FREE CHURCH REPLY TO STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCES

At the November Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church, the Committee of Assembly anent Relations with the Free Presbyterian Church submitted a statement by way of reply to the Synod's Statement of Differences. On the subject of Dr Alexander and the preamble of the Act rescinding the Declaratory Act, the Assembly's Committee said:

“(1) That the Church, through this Commission, points out that Dr Alexander, on his admission to the Church as a minister in 1903, and on his appointment as Professor in 1904, avowed his whole-hearted endorsement of the Church's unequivocal repudiation of anything and everything inconsistent with the infallibility of Scripture. That in 1905 the Training of the Ministry Committee drew his attention to certain views in his book, 'Demonic Possession', published in 1902, which were complained of as a departure from the Confessional doctrine of the Church on the infallibility of Scripture, and which, had they been maintained, would have had to be dealt with as a departure

³⁰ The speeches of the movers and seconders of the above motions were printed in full in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXII, 97-115.

from the doctrine; and he thereupon frankly expressed his regret for any reflections which the book was fitted to cast on the infallibility of the Word of God, and withdrew it from circulation. That the General Assembly, on receiving this report from their Committee, felt justified in bringing the proceedings initiated in connection with this matter to a close; that in 1906 he publicly re-affirmed his belief in the inerrancy of Scripture in the supremely emphatic words: 'I cherish as more precious than life itself the absolute infallibility of the Word of God'; and this teaching, ever since his entrance into the work of his Chair, in which he has the full confidence and goodwill of the Church, bears unimpeachable testimony to the sincerity of his personal belief in the absolute infallibility of the Scriptures. The Commission (of which Dr Alexander is a member), consistently with all this, regret whatever hurt was done to truth and the religious beliefs and feelings of God's people within and without the Church by certain views expressed in the book referred to.

(2) That the Church admits that the Declaratory Act (1892) was de facto and de forma an Act of this Church, whose statements constituted a serious departure from the Confession of Faith and subordinate standards, as is evidenced by its unconditional repeal through the Rescinding Act of 1906; but the said Declaratory Act having become an Act of the Church *ultra vires* cannot be regarded as a *de jure* Act; that the Church reaffirms solemnly that the phrase in the said Rescinding Act - 'as she has always adhered' - does not, in the light of ascertainable data, imply, and was not intended to imply a censure on the Free Presbyterian Church, but was intended, and is hereby declared, to bear, only the construction of recording an historical fact that this Church did, under the above-named conditions, adhere, as she now does under freer circumstances adhere, to her subordinate standards in terms of the unchanged Question and Formula of 1846; but, in the event of union between the two Churches being consummated on this basis of 1843, this statement would consequently disappear, and the united Church would not in any way be held responsible for it."

The Committee also dealt with the question of bazaars, sales of work, prayers at the grave, etc. ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXIII, 18, 19).

SYNOD REJECTS THE IDEA OF UNION

When the Synod met in July, 1918, after the foregoing Reply had been read, the Rev. John R. Mackay³¹ submitted the following motion which was seconded by the Rev. Alexander Macrae: "The Synod acknowledge receipt of the Free Church's Deliverance relative to union, being a reply to a statement, relative to the same subject-matter which the Clerk of this Synod forwarded in May, 1917, to the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Free Church, and cordially acknowledged the kindly mind which this reply manifests towards the Free Presbyterian Church. Further, the Synod, considering: (1) the obligation that lies upon the denominations living in the same district and making the same identical confession as to doctrine, worship, and government, to strive to obtain visible unity; and the nature of the Free Church's reply now received; in which (a) they express themselves as willing to form with the Free Presbyterian Church one Presbyterian body with it on the basis of the standards of the Free Church as held and understood in 1843; in which (b) they reiterate their own unequivocal repudiation of everything inconsistent with the inerrancy of the Scriptures; in which (c) they in substance declare that it was under the motion of a man who fully understood that it was the Free Church's intention to abide by this high doctrine of Holy Scripture that they took on Dr Alexander as a teacher of their students in 1904; that it was on that understanding he accepted office, and that his practice as a teacher of their students has all the time been as good as his promise; in which (d) they acknowledge that Dr Alexander's withdrawn book 'Demonic Possession', did contain views that constituted a departure from the teaching of the Confession of Faith, and from the publicly professed doctrine of the Free Church herself, relative to the infallibility of the Scriptures, a departure so serious as would have called for the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline had those views been persisted in; in which (e) Dr Alexander in particular and the Free Church as a whole express regret, not only for whatever hurt was, through this departure from the teaching of the Confession, done to the beliefs and feelings of God's people, but also for whatever hurt was in this way done to truth; and in which (f) they express their willingness to draw out with us, and to act upon, rules relative to social meetings, sales of work, and burials, that will be in harmony

³¹ *It may be here stated that some months prior to this the Rev. J.R. Mackay issued a pamphlet "The Free Church and the Free Presbyterian Church: The question of their Union Discussed". Its purpose is indicated by its sub-title. Mr Mackay put forth every argument he could think of to make out a case for union, but he failed to convince his brethren or the people of the Free Presbyterian Church. His arguments were dealt with briefly in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXIII, 22, and, also in a pamphlet - 'A Reply by Lovers of Truth'.

with our common standards: Resolve (1) that a Committee, representative of the whole Synod, be appointed to confer with the Committee of the Free Church on Union concerning these matters; (2) that the Synod's Committee, after conferring with the other Committee, give in a report of their impressions of this conference to the Synod; and (3) that until the Synod has had time to consider that report, no further steps, 'pro' or 'con', be taken by the Free Presbyterian Church in this matter of Union with the Free Church.” The Rev. Neil Cameron moved the following motion, which was seconded by the Rev. D. Macfarlane: “The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland reaffirms the deliverance adopted in 1905, to the effect that this court cannot consider a proposal for union with any Church which does not hold, without the least dubiety, both in profession and practice, the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, including the most fundamental doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, along with the Form of Church Government and Form of Worship and Discipline of this Church. The Synod, having seriously considered the Reply of the Commission of Assembly of the present Free Church, drawn up in November, 1917, in reference to the 'Statement of Differences' sent by this Synod to said Assembly in the previous May, has come to the conclusion that, as that Reply is largely made up of evasive statements and suggestions of compromise, no useful purpose can be served by continuing this correspondence. The Synod, therefore, resolves that, in view of all the circumstances, the correspondence now take end.” The Clerk (Rev. J.S. Sinclair), who supported Mr Cameron's motion, called the attention of the Revs. J.R. Mackay and A. Macrae to certain terms of their own motion at the previous Synod, namely, that the Synod conclude “that meanwhile it would be futile to appoint a Committee to meet with the Free Church Committee, until (1) the Free Church ... calls upon Dr Alexander to state in distinct and unequivocal terms that he both repudiates the book and genuinely regrets the unscriptural sentiments expressed therein”; and then until “(2) the Free Church expresses her willingness to homologate Deliverances passed by this Synod on such matters as the Bible and the Higher Criticism, Creed Subscription, Prayers at the Grave, Church Bazaars, and Church Soirees.” The Clerk then pointed out that these conditions had not been fulfilled by the Free Church in its procedure or Reply since last meeting of Synod, and that therefore the Revs. J.R. Mackay and A. Macrae were now acting inconsistently with their previous motion in advocating immediate conference, apart from

the fulfilment of these conditions. Their own previous motion placed a block on the line of their present movement.

When the motions were put to the meeting, the voting showed the following result: For Mr Mackay's motion there voted - Revs. Alexander Macrae, Andrew Sutherland, Norman Matheson, and J.R. Mackay - total, 4. For Mr Cameron's motion - Revs. D. Macfarlane, D. Beaton, Neil Macintyre, E. Macqueen, A. Mackay, D. Graham, D.A. Macfarlane, Neil Cameron and J.S. Sinclair; with Messrs John Macdonald, Gairloch; Neil Mackinnon, Portree; Alex. Mackenzie, Lochbroom; John Stewart, Lochcarron; Alex. Mackenzie, Stornoway; Donald Mackenzie, Lochinver; Angus Stewart, Inverness; Murdo Urquhart, Dingwall; Alexander Gray, Lairg; Angus Macrae, St Jude's, Glasgow; and Murdo' Campbell, Oban - total, 20.

THREE MINISTERS GO OVER TO FREE CHURCH

The next step in the movement towards the Free Church took place when it was announced at the November Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church, that a Declaration had been drawn up by certain ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church, the acceptance of which by the Commission would put them in a position to ask admission into the Free Church. The Declaration was as follows:

“We, the undersigned ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, being convinced that our brethren of the Free Presbyterian Synod, by the attitude of extreme aloofness which they persist in manifesting towards the Free Church – a Church whose Christian people live in the same districts as our own, whose standards are identical with our own, and whose testimony for the Crown Rights of the Redeemer is one with that of the Church of Christ in this country in her purest days - are acting in a manner that is not in keeping with the teaching of our Confession relative to the fundamental doctrine of the Communion of Saints, consider it to be our duty to ally ourselves with the said Free Church provided it concurs with the following affirmations: (1) That in entering the Free Church we are carrying with us our entire testimony with unfettered liberty to contend for it in all its parts. (2) That it is the genuine opinion and judgment of the Free Church that the absolute truthfulness of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the principle upon which, as upon a basis, all her teaching is built; and that she would regard any deviation from this principle, or any such equivocal or hesitating utterance as would cast doubt on an *ex animo* belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, in the teaching

of any of her professors or ministers, as wholly inconsistent with the Church's standards and declared testimony, and, accordingly, not to be suffered or tolerated. Further, that not only has the work entitled 'Demonic Possession' been by its author withdrawn from circulation, but that it was and is regretfully acknowledged by the Church, and not least by its author, to have given expression to views that are not in keeping with this fundamental principle of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. (3) That the Free Church abides by her offer to the Free Presbyterian Church to form with her one Presbyterian body, in which the constitution of the united body shall be so enunciated as that it will be evident that no one in the united body which, please the Lord, may yet be, will have any direct responsibility for the clause in the Act rescinding the Declaratory Act 'as she has always adhered' - a clause which has given an offence (which it was not intended to convey) - to brethren of the Free Presbyterian Church. (4) That the Free Church resolves to oppose everything that is either idolatrous or superstitious, mercenary or frivolous, in the Church of God, and she is prepared to denounce any practice which, after a full and free discussion, will be shown to be either unscriptural or unconstitutional.”³²

This Declaration was accepted by the Commission of the Free Church Assembly as an expression of the mind of the Free Church on the matters it dealt with. A motion was then moved and carried that Revs. John R. Mackay, Alexander Macrae, and Andrew Sutherland be admitted as ministers of the Free Church. The departure of these brethren made a painful impression, but notwithstanding the unique place that some of them enjoyed in the affections of Free Presbyterians, it was again made clear to everyone that the people of the Free Presbyterian Church were not to follow them into the Free Church.

PROHIBITION CONTROVERSY

The Synod was soon to enter on another controversy which was destined to give considerable trouble. During the War the Rev. Duncan Mackenzie called attention to the evil of drunkenness and submitted a motion which was seconded by the Rev. Ewen Macqueen and agreed to by the Synod (1918), to the following effect: “The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland respect fully asks the Government, on account of the evils of strong drink, to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors, as long as the present War lasts, and

³² For a criticism of this Declaration see 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXIII, 274-305.

for all time coming thereafter.” Mr Mackenzie explained that his motion did not mean prohibition of what was required for absolutely necessary and medicinal purposes. Two years later the subject was again brought to the notice of the Synod in connection with the coming into operation of the Temperance (Scotland) Act of 1913. The subject of prohibition under the Act was discussed, and while it was the mind of the Synod that there should be no interference with what was necessary for medicinal purposes, a circumstance expressly provided for by the Act, yet it was considered highly desirable in view of the grievous drunkenness among the young and among others that prohibition should be carried. A motion accordingly was brought forward by the Rev. Neil Cameron, seconded by the Rev. D. Mackenzie, and spoken to by Rev. Neil Macintyre and others, which was to the following effect: “That the Synod strongly recommend Free Presbyterians as a whole to vote whenever opportunity offered for the total prohibition of the sale of strong drink.” It is doing no injustice to most of the Synod's critics in this matter to say that their criticism was made without ever having read a line of the Temperance (Scotland) Act. Two years afterwards, owing to some criticism, the following motion was brought forward by the Rev. Neil Cameron and seconded by the Rev. D. Graham: “The Synod renews its attitude taken up on the drink question as set forth in their resolution passed by the Synod in 1920, when they affirmed that it was highly desirable, in view of the grievous drunkenness among the young, as well as others, that Prohibition or No Licence, as indicated by the Temperance (Scotland) Act, 1913, should be supported by our people.” There was no counter motion, but the Rev. William Matheson in dissenting from the motion expressed his views at considerable length in condemnation of the general principle underlying Prohibition. He gave in his reasons for dissenting, and the Synod appointed a Committee consisting of Revs. N. Cameron, M. Gillies and D. Beaton, to answer the reasons, and instructed the Committee to have the Reasons and their Answers printed in the Magazine. The Reasons with the Committee's Answers are as follows:

I. The Reasons: “For ourselves and all who may associate themselves with us herein, we solemnly enter our dissent from the finding of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland of 1922 anent the resolution in the matter of the Scottish Temperance Act, as, in effect, reiterating the same position as formerly, and for the following, amongst many reasons, we do so:

(1) We cannot discover any grounds whatever in the Word of Scripture for such a measure, but contrariwise (e.g. Deuteronomy, 14th chapter,

verses 23-26: I Tim., 4th chapter, verses 1-3, and particularly our Lord's first miracle at a marriage feast), and we must keep our conscience clear, holding the Word of Scripture as our only rule of faith and manners.

(2) There are two antagonistic and diverging explanations of excess in the use of things. The one is that the root of excess is the use of the thing. The other is that the root of excess is the lust of man's heart. The one dishonours the use of the thing. The other honours the use of the thing as an institution of God, but lays the entire responsibility upon man for his excess with all its consequences. This resolution meant the acceptance of the Prohibition principle which lays the blame upon the use, not on lust, which is the doctrine of the Word of Scripture. It is an attempt to assail the abuse of the thing by striking at the use of it and therefore contemns the line of justice or truth which divides forever between the right and the wrong.

(3) The Divine basis of law is justice, and civil government is ordained of God to protect the righteous to the utmost limit in the enjoyment of all benefits and bounties and to bring only the wrong-doer under penalty, and that only for his actual wrong- doing. The aim of this resolution is to protect society from evil by encroaching upon the liberty of the righteous as well as of the unrighteous in these enjoyments. It is therefore a denial of the absolute inviolability of justice and truth - the key to Christ's death on Calvary.

(4) By dishonouring the use of intoxicating beverage, as if that had anything whatever to do with excess, this resolution casts a stigma upon the moral character of our Lord, who, by His conduct, His doctrine, and His ordinance, set the seal of His approval upon the use of intoxicating beverage. Upon all excess, which springs ever from lust alone in the heart of man, the_ woe of violated justice falls.

(5) The principle of prohibition, accepted in this resolution, though only in one stage of its progressive application, is the same as that underlying Fret: Love and Communism. The misery springing from sin which is the product of lust, is laid at the door of the Divine Constitution of things, not at the door of man's own heart (James, chapter 1, verses 13-16). The principle, as applied to the use of intoxicating beverage, is the spear-point of Satan's thrust aimed directly at the heart of our Lord, a thrust

which aims to overthrow the moral foundations of Scripture and substitute for the Will of God, which is justice, as our guide, the will of humanity as expressed in the popular vote, or, it may be, otherwise."

II. The Answers: "After perusal of the above dissent and reasons of the Rev. William Matheson from the motion anent 'no licence', passed by the Free Presbyterian Synod in 1920, we came to the conclusion that his arguments are the best on the side of the strong drink trade we had heard yet in Scotland, though we readily admit it was not for this end that he used them. But he has placed in the hands of the drink trade and those who sympathise with them a weapon which they will not be slow to use. Mr Matheson has had no compunction in placing the motion passed by the Synod as being in direct line with the principles of Bolshevism, Communism, and Free Love. The Committee are amazed to see the inference drawn, without the least proof (being based only on imaginary assumption) by Mr Matheson from his resolution, that it casts a stigma on the moral character of our Lord, and also that the qualified principle of prohibition accepted in the resolution is the spear-point of Satan's thrust aimed and directed at the heart of our Lord. The Committee feel that these unwarrantable and unreasonable charges, made against the Synod's unanimous finding (Mr Matheson excepted) require of him irrefutable proof, or else unconditional withdrawal. The Committee did not realise the serious nature of the charges brought against the Synod's finding in these statements, until they had time to examine his paper handed in. That the abuse of strong drink has been responsible for an enormous amount of misery and degradation in the lives and homes of drunkards in this country, Mr Matheson must and does readily admit. The difference between his ideas and the resolution of the Synod lies in the way of dealing with this terrible scourge. He holds that the principle of justice set forth in God's Word is against restricting the free use of it as a beverage to any man, and that the abuse of it arises from the lusts of men's hearts. The Committee fully concur with the fact that the lusts of men's hearts are the root of all evil. The way in which he proposes to deal with these lusts is to give those who have become perfect slaves to them, unrestricted liberty for fear that the sober man should be interfered with in the use of it as a beverage. He would not reduce one of the public-houses on our streets to save the man who has become a slave to the lust of strong drink from bringing himself and his wife and children, after enduring indescribable misery, to an early grave. His only remedy is to penalise the man. He holds that the principles of justice and truth demand that there should be no interference

with this trade be the consequences what they may. According to Mr Matheson's reasoning, all government control should be done away with, and unrestricted liberty given, which would lead to free distillation, and this as known in former days would bring widespread moral degradation which no Christian or patriot would like to see renewed. On Mr Matheson's own principle, that the root of the evil is not in the use, but in the abuse, the Committee would point out that the true meaning of the Temperance (Scotland) Act is, that it honours the use (however imperfectly) by making provision for removing the abuse.

The Synod's resolution means that public-houses on our streets should be closed. The resolution does not condemn the Scriptural use of strong drink, neither does it hint that a sober and restricted use is dishonourable. The Act gave three alternatives:

(1) No change; (2) Limitation; (3) No Licence. Under 'no licence', strong drink is still obtainable with food in hotels and restaurants, also at clubs, or by purchasing two gallons. This is the principle of prohibition to which the Synod's resolution refers; the Synod did not commit itself to absolute prohibition, neither do we believe it will do so. Does Mr Matheson not go too far in his assertion that the Word of God allows the free use of strong drink as beverage, but as a principle of justice, condemns any form of prohibition? There are certain creatures of God which are lawful and useful, but from their very 'nature must have a limited or restricted use, and herein we recognise a law founded in the nature of the thing itself. For instance, cocaine, which compels by its very nature restrictions, not merely the abuse, but also in the use. Strong drink comes under the same law. In Leviticus 10, v. 9, the Lord commands: 'Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die.' We believe this restriction binds men's consciences still. We see again in Jeremiah 35, v. 6 - 'We shall drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us saying, "ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons forever"'. Did the Lord charge Jonadab for prohibiting his posterity from drinking wine, with acting in direct opposition to justice and truth? No; but on the contrary we find at the 18th verse: 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father ... Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever.' This commandment which they obeyed was prohibition in the truest sense of the term and shows that the Word of God does not support the idea that any interference with the use of

strong drink is such a congeries of crimes as . Mr Matheson assumes, and that his charges are foundation-less so far as the Word of God is concerned. Further, the Lord commends not merely the obedience in this case, but the prohibition. The argument as to the miracle performed by our Lord at Cana of Galilee when he turned water into wine, leads us to remark that if "we were more spiritually minded, we could see a miracle in every bunch of grapes although exerted by ordinary means. We admit that this miracle was performed to provide the beverage required, but we recognise in it something very much higher, as Scripture reveals: 'And manifested forth His glory.' It adds nothing to the proof we possess, that the Lord has provided wine from the beginning for the use of man, neither does it help Mr Matheson as proof that there should be no restriction placed on its abuse.

The Committee would warn with all seriousness their fellow-men of the most dangerous and soul-destroying false doctrine that if a man who had been drinking to excess cease entirely to do so, he is thereby saved for: 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' Also let men beware of falling into the dangerous conclusion that it is a disgrace for a man to partake of strong drink, as a beverage, i.e., in sobriety. While recognising to the fullest extent the law of Christian liberty regarding things indifferent, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that Scripture sets before us certain principles which restrict and regulate that law. From among these may be mentioned the principle of self-denial as set forth in I Corinthians 7, v. 12-13: 'But when ye so sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' Romans 14, v. 21: 'It is neither good to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby they brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak.' The Committee would point out that (1) God prohibited wine as in Lev. 10, v. 9; (2) Man prohibited wine as in Jer. 35, v. 6, of which God approved; (3) Brotherly love inculcates it, Rom. 14, v. 21" ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', xxvii, 85-89).

When the Synod met in 1923, it was reported to the Synod that Mr Matheson had criticised the Committee's Answers and that his paper had been sent to all the members of the Synod by the Clerk. It had not been published in the Magazine owing to a decision come to that "no controversial correspondence be admitted into the Magazine". Mr Matheson had, since he sent the above communication, issued a Circular Letter to members of the Synod with the following questions: "(1) is our Synod to continue to be responsible for

endorsing Prohibition? (2) Is our Synod to endorse the doctrine that civil law ought to deal with lust, with all that this involves, by accepting the answers of the Committee as they stand?"

The Synod's Business Committee decided that the following reply be sent: "In answer to (1), No; in answer to (2) Civil law does not take to do with lust until it has manifested itself in the outward act." Thereafter the Rev. Ewen Macqueen brought forward the following motion which was seconded by Mr Finlay Macdonald, Ardheslaig, Shieldaig: "This Synod adheres without a change to last Synod's resolution on this question and takes no further notice of the attitude of the Rev. William Matheson regarding this question." In speaking to his motion, Mr Macqueen pointed out that the word "prohibition" was used in the sense of "No Licence", one of the options allowed to voters under the Scottish Temperance Act, but though this had been made clear, Mr Matheson was determined to fix us down to "prohibition" as defined by himself, and refused to take the explanation which had time and again been given in this matter.

The report in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine' gives the following account of the further discussion of the subject at the Synod:

"Other members expressed their minds, and it was pointed out that the Scottish Temperance Act was not a Total Abstinence Act; it was an Act, to use its own words in the preamble, 'to promote Temperance in Scotland by conferring on the electors in pre-scribed areas control over the grant and renewal of certificates'. Where the No Licence vote carried, it gave the power to the people that had hitherto been in the hands of the Licensing Courts. The Act did not interfere with the manufacture of liquor nor with its transport. It did not interfere with its use in the home either for medicinal or beverage purposes, nor in hotels with meals. But where a No License vote had been carried, it prohibited totally the sale of liquor in public bars and in licensed grocers' shops, as distinguished from what took place when a limitation vote was carried, which only reduced the number of licensed places, or partially prohibited the sale of liquor in the above places in the prescribed area. The act also allowed wholesale licences in the areas where No Licence had been carried. No one regarded the Act, it was said, as perfect, but it is well in this matter that its provisions should be clearly understood, and not confused with the American and Canadian legislation on the matter with which some of the members said that they were in sympathy with Mr Matheson's attitude to it. As far as the No Licence areas were concerned, the Scottish Temperance Act

did not say, 'You shall not taste liquor', but 'You shall not get it at a public bar or from a licensed grocer'." (Vol. XXVIII, p. 70.)

CHAPTER 11

Church of Scotland Enabling Bill - Rev. W. Matheson's breach of resolution on Church Privileges - Communication from Ontario Kirk-Session re Sabbath use of public conveyances - Rev. R. Mackenzie's reply to Session's resolution - Ontario congregation's action takes it outwith Church.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND ENABLING BILL

When the Church of Scotland Enabling Bill³³ was before Parliament in 1920, the Synod appointed a Committee to draw up a memorial to be presented to the Government. In this memorial it is stated that the Free Presbyterian Church represents the Free Church of Scotland as settled in 1843, and that it represents that Church in direct historical, and constitutional continuity. It further stated that the Free Presbyterian Church held the position set forth in the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of the Church of Scotland in 1842, and the Protest of 1843, and that in accordance with these documents, it held the principle of the National Recognition of Religion as opposed to Voluntaryism. It further entered a claim for the Free Presbyterian Church as the legitimate and consistent successor of the ancient Church of Scotland, which accepted the Confession of Faith in 1647, a Confession which was acknowledged by the state as "the public and avowed Confession of this Church" in 1690 and at subsequent dates.

The memorandum pointed out that the Established and the United Free Churches did not adhere to the Confession of Faith and the Standards of the Church of Scotland, according to the original terms, but by Declaratory Acts had altered to a grave extent the original relation, and modified the formula of subscription, so that ministerial and other subscribers stand in a very indefinite relation to these standards. The Articles presented to Parliament are characterised as of the most latitudinarian description, allowing the prospective united body to depart almost completely from the Protestant and Presbyterian principles and doctrines of the true Church of Scotland, and an emphatic protest is made against the Enabling Bill. In regard to the endowments of the Established Church, it is asserted that these are the common property of the Presbyterians of Scotland and should not be considered as belonging exclusively to the Church of Scotland. It is also

³³ The object of the Bill was to declare the lawfulness of the Articles Declaratory drawn up by the General Assembly of the Established Church in view of the contemplated Union.

asserted that these endowments cannot consistently and legitimately be held by any who do not adhere to the constitution and standards of the Church of Scotland, and that the present movement for the relaxation of the standards with the consent of the State, involves a forfeiture of the Endowments; and if they are transferred to the united body (Established Church and United Free Church) on the proposed basis, they are given to those who have forfeited all claim to them, and the rightful heirs are deprived of their inheritance. The glaring inconsistency of the United Free Church participating in these Endowments is referred to, as the majority of its members were for many years rank Voluntaries who strongly protested against these ecclesiastical Endowments as unjust and unscriptural. The Memorialists conclude by asking the Government to consider the valid claims of the people in many parishes who are outside the pale of the present Established Church, and finally they present to Parliament in the name of the Free Presbyterian Church the Claim, Declaration and Protest of the Church of Scotland in 1842, and the Protest of 1843, and appeal to the legislature to do justice to the claims of truth and righteousness in connection with the various interests involved ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXV, 175-177). The Bill against which this protest was made became law in 1921.³⁴

REV. W. MATHESON'S BREACH OF RESOLUTION ON CHURCH PRIVILEGES

The Free Presbyterian Church all along had laid special stress on Sabbath observance,³⁵ and in 1921 the following declaration anent Church Privileges was made by the Synod:

"The Synod declares in accordance with former resolutions that Church Privileges, such as Baptism, are not to be given to any who engage in Sabbath work (other than works of necessity or mercy), or who travel by trains or cars run in systematic disregard of the sacred day. The serious and careful consideration of Kirk-sessions is to be given to special cases, such as that of a husband who has ceased to acknowledge the Christian religion, or who refuses to adhere to the above standard of Sabbath observance, but whose wife (desiring baptism) fulfils the demands of this declaration and is otherwise exemplary."

³⁴ It is printed in full in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXVI, 145.

³⁵ See 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', xxxvii, 415, 492

In 1927 the Rev. Neil Macintyre, as Convener of the Canadian Mission Committee, read correspondence at the Business Committee of the Synod which had passed between Rev. William Matheson, Chesley, and himself. At the following sederunt of Synod the Rev. Neil Cameron moved as follows: "The Synod express strong disapproval of the conduct of the Rev. William Matheson, Chesley, Ontario, inasmuch as he admitted to the Lord's Table and Baptism at Winnipeg, parties debarred by findings of this Synod anent Sabbath observance, and also by the lax and modern views revealed in correspondence with him about this matter; and, while the Synod refrain from taking further steps as to his conduct in the matter referred to, they warn him and all concerned that the findings of the Synod must be honoured."

When the Synod met in 1928, the Clerk read communications from Rev. William Matheson, the Ontario elders, and the Winnipeg Kirk-session; a letter received from the Rev. James Tallach was also remitted by the Southern Presbytery to the Synod. After discussion the following became the unanimous finding of the Synod: "The Synod reaffirms its adherence to its resolution on Church Privileges printed in 'Church Documents' of 1923, viz.: The Synod declare, in accordance with former resolutions, that the Church's privileges, such as admission to the Lord's Table and Baptism are not to be given to anyone who engages in Sabbath work (other than works of necessity and mercy) or³⁶ who travel by trains or cars run in systematic disregard of the Lord's Day." This was followed by another motion unanimously agreed to: "The Synod require all who receive Church Privileges in this Church to honour this reaffirmed declaration, and such as may infringe on the Synod's ruling shall be dealt with by the courts of the Church, and that the attention of all adherents of the Church is seriously drawn to this matter."

At this Synod a paper on the "Synod's Statement in Reference to Church-going by Public Conveyances on the Sabbath"³⁷ was approved of by the Synod. The paper was drawn up by the Rev. R. Mackenzie, M.A., Gairloch, and discussed at considerable length by a special Committee, consisting of the whole Synod. The following year a communication from the Kirk-session of Ontario was read at the Business Committee of Synod, intimating that they were not to

³⁶ "or" was substituted for "and" to avoid misunderstanding ('Free Presbyterian Magazine', XXXIII, 96).

³⁷ This Statement is printed in the Appendix.

recognise the Synod's Declaration on Church Privileges. A letter in reply from Rev. R. Mackenzie was also read.

Ontario Kirk-session Communication –

“At Chesley and in the house of Rev. William Matheson there on the evening of Wednesday, September 19th, 1928, the Kirk-session of the Ontario Congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Canada met and was constituted. Sederunt with Rev. William Matheson, Moderator; Messrs Hugh Scott, Ailsa Craig, Clerk of Session; Alexander Macfarlane, Chesley; and Murdoch Matheson, Lochalsh, Ruling Elders.

“The minute of last meeting was read and confirmed. The Moderator then introduced, the matter of certain resolutions of the Synod anent the use of public conveyances for churchgoing on Sabbath, which the Clerk of Synod had officially intimated to him and also to the Clerk, and which had since been published in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine'. The draft of a resolution embodying what had been agreed upon tentatively by the members of Session at a previous unofficial conference was then presented with certain amendments and additions, and, after due prayerful deliberation, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed that, whereas we are bound in conscience and before God and men by our ordination vows, (i) To recognise the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the only rule of faith and manners. (ii) To own and declare sincerely the Confession of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies of this Church, to be the confession of our faith, and to own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which we will constantly adhere to. (iii) To approve of the Deed of Separation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland adopted at its first Presbytery of Portree, August, 1893: and (iv) To observe uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all public ordinances within this Church, as the same are at present performed and allowed: and whereas (1) The Synod has failed to show any authority from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments for the Declaration anent Church Privileges, being XIV in 'Church Documents', as amended and as said to be reaffirmed by the Synod of 1928, in that part of section thereof referring to 'travel by trains or cars run in systematic disregard of the Lord's Day', as interpreted by the Synod to embrace in its reference, and to debar the use of public conveyances for

churchgoing on Sabbath; and whereas (2) We are convinced that said Declaration as thus interpreted is not only without, or beside, the Word of God, but is plainly contrary thereto, as (a) While we rejoice that we do so entirely agree with the motives and aims, and so closely with the prohibitory interpretations of the Synod's Statement in Reference to Churchgoing by Public Conveyances on the Sabbath, and while we sincerely agree in 'allowing for the extreme exigencies of necessity and mercy' (Sec. iii of above Statement), we cannot refuse to recognise also that no such exigency can surpass in urgency the need of the human soul, and that ' . . . it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them 'that believe' (I Cor. 1, v. 21): (b) Having accepted this concession of the Synod, we are compelled to recognise further that no exigency can possibly make lawful what is wrong in itself. Thus we agree that the act of using a public conveyance on the Sabbath is not wrong in itself. We have then to find the ground of condemnation elsewhere than in the mere act. We are thus compelled to look for the ground of condemnation in the sphere of motive. But we cannot find any such ground in the motive of the party who uses public conveyances on the Sabbath for churchgoing only. On this Sabbath question we are commanded to 'judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment' (John 7, v. 24), and cannot hold this party in any way responsible for the reprobate actions or motives of the one who runs a public conveyance for gain on Sabbath. To do so would be unjust and unscriptural. (See 'meat and drink' passages of the Epistles of Paul.) Our acceptance of this concession of the Synod's Statement has, therefore, left us without just and scriptural ground of condemnation of the use of public conveyances for churchgoing on the Sabbath: and (c) While we heartily recognise that the Apostle urges abstinence from actions, with respect to which we have liberty, on the ground of conscientious scruples of fellow-believers, we recognise, however, that he carefully safeguards the principle, '... for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?' (I Cor. 10, v. 29.) He does not, therefore, 'in such cases, curtail our liberty. He does not command abstinence. He simply exhorts to it. Nor has the Lord given His Church any authority in such cases to command abstinence. We have authority only to exhort to it: and whereas (3) The doctrine of the Confession of Faith (chap. xx, Sec. 2), is that 'God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from

the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith and worship. So that to believe such doctrines or to obey such commandments out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience, and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also': and whereas (4) The Deed of Separation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland explicitly proclaims adherence to 'the whole principles embodied' in 'the Acts of Assembly of the Church of Scotland prior to 1843', among which Acts is the Act of 1697, commonly called the Barrier Act, an Act to regulate the procedure of the Church in interpreting the fixed constitution of the Church: and whereas (5) 'The whole principles' of the Barrier Act, which Act applies these principles to the functioning of the Assembly itself, apply as readily to the functioning of the Synod as the Supreme Court of the Church, and require 'that before any General Assembly of the Church shall pass any Acts, which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church' 'General Assemblies be very deliberate in making of the same, and that the whole Church have a previous knowledge thereof, and their opinion be had therein, and for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation, or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine or worship, or discipline or government thereof': and whereas (6) The whole Church had not previous knowledge, thereof, nor was their opinion had therein, nor were Presbyteries consulted thereanent, prior to the effort of the Synod to enforce said declaration, as interpreted to embrace in its reference and to debar the use of public conveyances for Sabbath Church-going, as a binding rule and constitution to the Church, and thereby the matter became prejudiced, and such procedure, if allowed and established, would subvert the constitution of the Church: and whereas (7) In the administration of the public ordinances at the time of our ordination it was allowed, and, to our knowledge, practised, to grant privileges of the Church to persons who used public conveyances for Sabbath Church-going within this Church, with the one published exception wherein the authority of the higher courts of the Church seems to have been usurped, and uniformity of administration of public ordinances to have been ignored: therefore be it, and it is hereby resolved, that we, as a Court of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, jealous for the authority and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Great King and Head of the Church, and in all goodwill and fidelity toward all other courts of the Church, faithfully, firmly, and fully, asserting, maintaining, and defending the Testimony and the Constitution of the said Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, according to our ordination vows, refrain from recognising the said Declaration as interpreted to embrace in its reference and to debar the use of public conveyances on the Sabbath for Church-going purposes, in that part or section thereof, referring to 'travel by trains or cars run in systematic disregard of the Lord's Day', as a binding rule and constitution of this Church:

That the Clerk of Session send a duly certificated copy of this resolution to the Clerk of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland: and that a copy of the same be forwarded to the Editor for publication in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine'. This minute of the meeting was read and adopted. The meeting was then closed with prayer. Extracted by Hugh Scott, Clerk of Session."

REV. R. MACKENZIE'S REPLY TO SESSION'S RESOLUTION

Mr Mackenzie's Reply:

"A copy has been given me of a recent resolution of the Ontario Kirk-session relative to the Synod's attitude on the question of churchgoing by public conveyances on Sabbath. As in the providence of God I shall not be present at the first meeting of Synod, at which this resolution is likely to be dealt with, and since I am anxious not to appear to shirk responsibility in the matter, it has occurred to me that I should communicate to my brethren in the Synod my views on the subject.

The resolution referred to seems to me to contain no new arguments worthy of consideration in favour of the position taken up by the Ontario Kirk-session unless those which appear in Sections (2) (a) and (b). These, on account of their being related to certain words occurring in the Synod's 1928 Statement which the Session construe, no less erroneously than gratuitously, as a 'concession of the Synod', and on account of their being otherwise cleverly and plausibly stated, are of a kind likely to influence the minds of such as are either unable or unwilling to examine them critically. That they involve fallacies which render them of no avail whatsoever to invalidate the Synod's position

will no doubt have appeared to you. At any rate, that is the view I am led to take as the following considerations will show:

(1) The first argument, which is more insinuated than expressed, may be stated as follows: 'It is allowable to use public conveyances on Sabbath in cases which involve the extreme exigencies of necessity and mercy. The urgency of the need of the human soul represents such an exigency, and "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1, v. 21). Therefore it is allowable to use public conveyances on Sabbath for the purpose of going to church.' When thus reduced to plain language, the argument must appear immediately to every unprejudiced mind to be at fault somewhere. If I am asked what is wrong with it, I reply unhesitatingly and emphatically that the premises do not warrant the conclusion. From the standpoint of incorrect reasoning, it is just as warrantable for the Ontario Kirk-session, and not one iota more, to base their conviction on the grounds stated, as it would be for me to argue from premises exactly similar that it is allowable to hire an aeroplane on Sabbath for the purpose of going to pray in a certain place in Lewis where it pleased God to save some. In the one case no less than in the other there is involved the mistake of reasoning from the need of the human soul in general to one particular way in which it pleases God to supply that need, to the utter exclusion and consequent disparagement of other ways. It is right that we should urge liberal views within scriptural and reasonable limits of the importance of the public ordinances of God's worship, but to take up a position, whether in reasoning or otherwise, which in effect, if not in plain outspoken words, represents the public as the only means of salvation, and therefore indispensable to it, and our attendance upon them as an extreme exigency of necessity and mercy, is surely a serious blunder.

"(2) The second argument appears more or less in full philosophical dress as follows: 'We are compelled to recognise further that no exigency can possibly make lawful what is wrong in itself. Thus we agree that the act of using a public conveyance on the Sabbath is not wrong in itself. We have then to find the ground of condemnation elsewhere than in the mere act. We are thus compelled to look for the ground of condemnation in the sphere of motive. But we cannot find any such ground in the motive of the party who uses public conveyances on the

Sabbath for Church-going only.' The inference is not stated. Of course it goes without saying - there is no ground whatsoever for condemning the act of the party who uses public conveyances on Sabbath for purposes of church-going only. One good test of the validity of a process of reasoning is its universality. Valid reasoning holds good in every relevant case. On the other hand, a fallacy which does not so manifestly appear in one certain context, will often stand out in relief, so to speak, in another. In the interests of brevity I will do little more than apply this test of universality here by taking a case somewhat different from that in point but strictly relevant. By this method I hope to show that an argument, such as the above, which makes motive the sole determining principle of morality, in the case of acts even which are not wrong in themselves, is little short of a philosophical monstrosity.

“The act of killing a man, while wrong in some circumstances, is justifiable in others, as, for example, when one commits it of necessity in self-defence. The act of killing a man, therefore, is not wrong in itself. Now suppose for a moment a certain party wants to get to church and is opposed in this by another. And suppose (what is improbable but not altogether impossible) the church-goer resorts to the expedient of killing the man who opposes him, for the sole purpose of getting to church, mark you, unquestionably a good and commendable motive surely. In accordance with the above form of argument we must reason thus in estimating the morality of the churchgoer's act: 'We agree that the act of killing a man is not wrong in itself. We have then to find the ground of condemnation elsewhere than in the mere act. We are thus compelled to look for the ground of condemnation in the sphere of motive. But we cannot find any such ground in the motive of the party who kills a man for the purpose of getting to church only.' We thus arrive at the shocking conclusion that it is perfectly legitimate to kill a man in order to get to church. No one will for a moment believe that the Ontario Kirk-session would accept such a conclusion, or that they would base any other conviction on it than that they were grossly imposed on and misled. Yet it is the perfectly logical outcome of a perfectly reasonable application of the form of argument they here employ to prop themselves up in what amounts to an attitude of defiance. As such it serves to exemplify what extravagance men are ready to lapse into who think they are the people and that wisdom shall die with them.

“(3) The position of the Synod with reference to points raised in connection with their including in their 1928 Statement the words 'allowing for the extreme exigencies of necessity and mercy' is, to my mind, alike clear and consistent, notwithstanding all attempts made to misconstrue and to misrepresent it in the interests of proving the contrary position and of exhibiting the Synod's condemnation as out of its own mouth, so to speak. When it is objected that their allowing the use of public conveyances on Sabbath under any circumstances, implies an admission on their part that the act of using such conveyances on Sabbath is not wrong in itself, and that, therefore, their position is rendered inconsistent, a reply is ready at hand. The Synod have nowhere condemned the mere act of using a public conveyance on Sabbath as such, simply because they were never called upon to deal with such an impalpable abstraction. Their whole position in the matter is set down in these words of their 1928 Statement, in the light of which the entire statement must be read, 'ordinarily (that is, allowing for the extreme exigencies of necessity and mercy) no one can lawfully make use of such services, whether for the purpose of going to church or for any less-worthy purpose'. Plainly, what they condemn is not the act in itself, but the act in relation to circumstances of an ordinary kind which do not constitute an extreme exigency of necessity and mercy. On the other hand they recognised that circumstances of an extraordinary kind may and do emerge, circumstances which give rise to extraordinary cases, and call for extraordinary treatment. Hence, and in order to make themselves perfectly understood, they inserted in their 1928 Statement the words “allowing for the extreme exigencies of necessity and mercy”. In this they are no more chargeable with inconsistency than is the Word of God which condemns the doing of any secular work on the Lord's Day, but allows it in cases of necessity and mercy.

“That attendance at church does not, strictly speaking, come within the category of works of necessity and mercy, the Synod were at some pains to show. Incidentally they represented it rather as a duty, an important duty certainly, but one which we recognise may well give place to the works of necessity and mercy, properly speaking. If we take the view of the Ontario Kirk-session, and regard church-going as a work of necessity and mercy on the ground of the surpassing urgency of the need of the human soul, then we are bound to hold also that, in the proportion of

urgency, no circumstance or consideration in the world is sufficient to justify our staying away from church in one instance. We must leave the ox to perish in the pit, must abandon a dying brother to death, must shut our hearts against all consideration for others, and go to church because 'no exigency can surpass in urgency the need of the human soul', and 'it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe' (I Cor. 1, v. 21). God forbid that the Synod should ever adopt such a view, nor need they fear much hurt at the hands of such as lend themselves to it." "I withhold from entering upon a discussion of the question of Christian liberty, which in the resolution is linked up with the second argument dealt with above, for these two, among other reasons: first and principally, that I still hold the opinion that this question does not properly enter into the subject in hand, and a discussion of it might only serve to confuse issues, and secondly, that such a discussion would swell my letter out of due proportions. The other points raised in the resolution, such of them at least as are worthy of notice, have already been adequately dealt with, as, for example, the Barrier Act question.

"And now, in concluding, permit me to commend you to the grace of God, having special regard to the difficulty of the situation with which you are called upon to deal, and which, in certain respects, is without precedent in the history of our Church. May the great Head furnish you with all resources of wisdom and knowledge, and guide you to a decision which will alike conserve His honour and procure peace and prosperity in His Church."

ONTARIO CONGREGATION'S ACTION TAKES IT OUTWITH CHURCH

The Rev. Neil Cameron then moved a motion which became the unanimous finding of the Synod: "that the Synod order the Clerk to send a copy of the Synod's finding to the Kirk-session of Ontario with the intimation that, if they do not notify the Clerk by the last day of August, 1929, that they have fallen into line with the Synod's decision simpliciter they will not be considered after that a Kirk-session of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland." In the course of his remarks, Mr Cameron pointed out that Mr Matheson was present when the draft minute of the resolution on Sabbath observance was read at the Synod in 1922, and that it was to him a great surprise that he (Mr Matheson) remained quiescent about it at the Synod. The Rev. Ewen Macqueen, in

seconding, said he hoped the Synod would give a clear bill on this occasion, for it was high time it was done. Mr Macintyre, in supporting the motion, pointed out that it was clear that the Session of Ontario, both minister and elders, were prepared to act defiantly. They were setting at defiance the Synod, and it was high time this was put a stop to. One could not understand how anyone with a spark of grace would do anything to oppose the Church's weak efforts in the defence of the Sabbath Day. At next Synod communications were read intimating that the Kirk-session of Ontario before the 30th August, 1929, had re-affirmed their former decision, and the congregation of Ontario indicated they were in sympathy with the attitude taken up by Mr Matheson and his Kirk-session. It was accordingly moved and unanimously agreed to that, "seeing the people who adhered to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Ontario were not included in the Synod's decision concerning the Kirk-session last year, this Synod resolve that the people be given till the 30th August, 1930, to decide for themselves whether they will adhere to this Synod or follow the defiant attitude of the Kirk-session. If the Clerk of Synod will not have received their decision, or that of any number of them, by the above date, all, or any, who adhere to the Kirk-session, will then by their own action cease to be considered adherents in Ontario of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland."

In the spring of 1930 Mr Matheson visited Scotland and consulted a S.S.C. in Edinburgh, from whom he obtained advice on two specific points: (a) The question of responsibility under the Sabbath Law as, in distinction from the Synod rule of recent date, we hold parties using public conveyances for church-going on Sabbath innocent of wrongdoing therein, while agreeing with the Synod in condemning the running of such conveyances on Sabbath for other purposes, (b) the question of the constitutional power of the Synod to pass the rule in question as a new term of communion which we deny. On going north Mr Matheson consulted Messrs T.S.H. Burns & Son, Dingwall, and they addressed a letter to the Synod in which they state that Mr Matheson felt hurt that the Synod should have come to the decision it did without giving him an opportunity to be personally heard in the matter. They express the hope that the Synod will accede to the request of Mr Matheson putting before the Synod an answer to the case made against him. They conclude by saying: "While we are personally hopeful that all differences may be adjusted, we have to say quite frankly on behalf of Mr Matheson and his congregation that the foregoing suggestion is made without prejudice to our client's rights and pleas. As Mr Matheson has specially come to Scotland to deal with this matter, it is

essential that it be disposed of without delay, and we shall therefore be obliged by the Church giving it their immediate attention."

When the letter was read at the Synod, strong disapproval was expressed against the course taken by Mr Matheson, and also to the interference with the liberty of the Synod by lawyers in a matter that was of a purely disciplinary nature. The Rev. James Macleod, after some discussion, moved, "that in view of the fact that the Rev. William Matheson has refused to subject himself to the judicatories of the Church, and that he has given his case into the hands of the civil law, this Court take no further steps in the matter." The Rev. E. Macqueen, in seconding the motion, referred to the statement in Messrs Burns' letter as to Mr Matheson's feeling hurt on account of the Synod's action. He appeared, however, to have no word of the hurt which his action had inflicted on the Church. The motion became the unanimous finding of the Synod.

In connection with the Kirk-session and congregation of Ontario the Rev. Neil Cameron, seconded by Rev. D.A. Macfarlane, moved, "that after the 30th August coming, the Clerk be instructed to remove from the records of this Church the Kirk-session of Ontario as the real sequel of the resolution passed by them on the 19th June, 1928, and reaffirmed by them on 29th September, 1929, and all who will adhere to them." This motion also became the unanimous finding of the Synod. In 1931 communications were read from the groups at East Williams and Chesley of the Ontario congregation, intimating that they still adhered to the Free Presbyterian Church. The Synod passed unanimously the following motion: "The Synod would remind the congregation of Ontario that the Synod's motion of 21st May 1930, was to the effect that all or any who would adhere to the Kirk-session of Ontario in their opposition to the Synod's resolution would by their own action cease to be considered members or adherents of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Ontario after 30th August, 1930, and that as the Clerk received no communication until the above dates, all who adhered to the Kirk-session of Ontario ceased by their own attitude to be connected with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland."

CHAPTER 12

Freemason controversy: new missionaries - Another Free Church approach re co-operation or union - The first forty years; growth and losses - The Southern Rhodesian mission - Colonial mission in Canada and U.S.A. - Church's connection with Australia - Work among the Jews.

FREEMASON CONTROVERSY: NEW MISSIONARIES

At the Synod of 1927 the Rev. D.A. Macfarlane asked what was the Church's relation to Freemasonry. A number of the members of Synod expressed themselves, indicating that true Christians should have nothing to do with Freemasonry. The newspapers evidently were at a loss for news material at the time, and throughout the country, and beyond, the Free Presbyterian Church was given a place in the public prints that it never had since it came into existence. Some of the press advocates of Freemasonry were as ignorant of the history of the craft and the implications of its teachings as they were of the Free Presbyterian Church, but that did not keep them from denouncing the Free Presbyterian Church as if the Church was the first to join issues with Freemasonry. In defence of the attitude taken up at the Synod, a series of articles was written on the Religion of Freemasonry by the editor of the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine';³⁸ in which some much needed light was given. At next meeting of Synod (1928) a motion was brought forward to the following effect and unanimously agreed to: "Such as are members of societies requiring secret oaths from their members, such as Freemasons, etc., are debarred from Church privileges in this Church while they remain connected with such societies."

At this meeting of Synod two important steps were taken by the Church in connection with its Foreign Mission activities, The Rev. Donald Urquhart was appointed to Palestine as a missionary to the Jews, and Dr R. Macdonald who had finished his medical course and taken classes in London in Tropical Medicine, was appointed to be licensed after undergoing an examination in theology. These appointments involved considerable additional expenditure on the Foreign Mission Fund, but the people responded nobly to the new calls made. Mr Urquhart was ordained in Glasgow on the 25th July, 1928, and Dr Macdonald on 14th August of the same year. Mr Urquhart accompanied by Mr Angus Fraser, elder, set sail for Alexandria en route for Palestine on the 4th

³⁸ Volume XXXII, pp. 129, 178, 217, 253.

August, and reached his destination safely. Dr Macdonald sailed for Capetown on the 28th September.

ANOTHER FREE CHURCH APPROACH RE CO-OPERATION OR UNION

When the Synod met in 1931, a communication was read from the Free Church General Assembly, intimating that a Committee had been appointed to confer with the Reformed Presbyterian, Original Secession, and Free Presbyterian Churches, with a view to cooperation or incorporating union. In connection with this communication the following motion, which was unanimously adopted, was moved by the Rev. Neil Macintyre: "The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland respectfully acknowledge receipt of communication from the Free Church Assembly, 1930, intimating that a Committee had been appointed to confer with the Reformed Presbyterian, Original Secession, and Free Presbyterian Churches, with a view to co-operation or incorporating Union. The Synod would remind the Free Church Committee that in May, 1918, they submitted a Statement of some Differences, in which it was plainly pointed out that until these differences were removed by the Free Church Assembly, it would be futile to appoint a Committee to confer with the Free Church Committee. The Synod would seriously point out that inasmuch as the Free Church took no steps to have these differences removed, the Synod cannot consider a proposal for union or co-operation while these remain unremoved. And further since the above Statement of Differences was submitted, grave and serious reflections have been cast on the genuineness of certain passages of Scripture by some of the Free Church Professors, which reflections were silently passed over by her, and other unscriptural and carnal practices indulged in which place new obstacles in the way of co-operation and union."

The Free Church Union Committee replied to the Synod in a "Plain Statement in answer to the Free Presbyterian Synod", and at the 1932 Synod the following motion was brought forward and unanimously carried: "The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland respectfully acknowledge receipt of the Reply of the Union Committee of the Free Church of Scotland dated 17th September, 1931, to the Synod's finding of May, 1931, anent union or co-operation with the Free Church. In doing so the Synod would point out that whereas the finding in question clearly stated that there could be no union or co-operation between the two Churches until the differences set forth in the Synod's 'Statement of Differences' adopted at its meeting in May, 1917, and

forwarded to the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland were removed, there is nothing in the Union Committee's Reply to indicate that this has been done or even contemplated.

“As to the claim put forward by the Committee that they 'without evasion or compromise dealt with the facts of the differences in a statement which was unanimously adopted by the November Commission of Assembly in 1917', which statement the Union Committee were at pains to publish in their Church Record, the Synod would remind the Free Church Union Committee that they had already in 1918 communicated to the Free Church their estimate of that statement as being composed of 'evasive statements and suggestions of compromise and that no useful purpose could be served by continuing the correspondence'. To the above finding this meeting of the Synod still strictly adheres, and in view of the unsatisfactory nature of the Union Committee's Reply, and taking all relative circumstances into consideration, find that it is useless to continue the correspondence and resolve that it now take end.”

THE FIRST FORTY YEARS; GROWTH AND LOSSES

The Synod of 1933 is of special interest in view of the fact that it registers the 40th year of the Free Presbyterian Church's existence. The concluding part of this History may now be appropriately taken up with a brief summary of certain matters that are of some interest. As already noted, the Free Presbyterian Church had only two ministers to begin with - Revs. D. Macfarlane and D. Macdonald. At the present time it has 18 ministers, with three ordained foreign missionaries, and two probationers. There are six vacant charges. In addition there are congregations in Winnipeg and Vancouver, while deputies visit Detroit (U.S.A.), Toronto, Calgary, Saskatoon, etc. Australia has been twice visited by deputies from the home Church - the Rev. Duncan Mackenzie in 1914 and Rev. R. Mackenzie in 1929. The Church teaches her own students in divinity. The first tutors were Rev. John R. Mackay (now Professor Mackay, D.D., of the Free Church College), and Rev. John Macleod, M.A. (now Principal Macleod, D.D., of the Free Church College), both appointed by the Synod, 6th July, 1897. Mr Macleod resigned in 1898; but he undertook tutorial work for session 190, 4-5. On his resignation Rev. D. Beaton, probationer, was appointed tutor, 5th July, 1898, and still holds the appointment. In 1918 the Rev. J.R. Mackay resigned his tutorship on joining the Free Church, and from 1918 to 1932 the work was carried on single-handed by Mr Beaton. In the latter year the Synod appointed Rev. D.A. Macfarlane, M.A., as joint-tutor. To

begin with the tutors gave their services gratis to the Church. In 1911 a sum of £10 as an honorarium was granted to them by the Synod. At present the grant is £30, with £5 for the purchase of books required for their work as tutors.

During the forty years under review the ranks of the ministry were depleted by death and removals of ministers to other Churches. The removal of the Rev. D. Macdonald was the first breach in the ministerial ranks; he died in 1901. His fellow-labourer, the Rev. D. Macfarlane, lived to a patriarchal age and died in 1926. The other ministers removed by death were Revs. John Robertson (1914), Walter Scott (1916), James S. Sinclair (1921), John B. Radasi (1924), Donald Graham (1927), Duncan Mackenzie (1930), Neil Cameron (1932), and John Maclachlan (1933). Another who should be mentioned is the Rev. D. Bannerman, probationer, who died in 1919. Among promising students who were studying for the Church may be mentioned, with the year of their death, the following: John Hamilton, Oban (1897); Donald Mackay, Strathy Point (1900); Kenneth Mackenzie, Gairloch (1899); John Mackenzie, North Tolsta (1918); Murdo Macfarlane (1918). The last two lost their lives through the War as has already been noted. They were a choice company, and the recording of their names brings back pleasant memories of lives, short though they were, made beautiful by grace. Another student, Mr William Mackay, Balintore, Ross-shire, who had taken his divinity course at the Assembly's College, Belfast, had to give up his work through ill-health and has passed to his everlasting reward.

The Church lost a considerable number of ministers and students who joined other Churches. Among these may be mentioned Rev. Allan Mackenzie and Rev. Roderick Mackenzie, who joined the Established Church in 1900, and the following ministers who joined the Free Church: Revs. John Macleod (now Principal Macleod) in 1905; George Mackay, Alexander Stewart (now Dr Stewart), Dugald S. Cameron in 1906, John R. Mackay (now Professor Mackay, D.D.), Alexander Macrae, Andrew Sutherland, and Norman Matheson in 1918. Among the students who joined the Free Church were the following: John Sinclair, Roderick MacCowan, Peter M. Chisholm, and John A. Mackay. Mr Kenneth Ross, Gairloch, joined the Established Church when Mr Allan Mackenzie left in 1900. Mr Thomas Cameron, another student, ceased connection with the Church and went to New Zealand.

THE SOUTHERN RHODESIAN MISSION

A brief summary of the Church's missionary efforts in South Africa may now be given. As already stated, the Rev. John B. Radasi set out from Scotland to

Southern Rhodesia in 1904. He went first to Bulawayo, which lies some distance north of Kuruman, famous in missionary annals as Robert Moffat's station. There were difficulties in the way of starting a mission, but these were at length overcome. Through the good offices of Chief Ngege, a five years' lease of land of ten acres thirty-eight miles from Bulawayo at a pound a year was secured at a place called Ingwenya. The place is on a plateau as high as Ben Nevis, and enjoys a very healthy climate. The people in the vicinity of the mission consisted of three races - Mashonas, Fingo- Zulus and Matabele-Zulus; the last spoke no English. These peoples practised polygamy, and they were under the spell of their dreaded witch-doctors. Their beer-drinking festivals were a menace to morality - men, women and children joining in them. Lying, stealing and killing were not considered reprehensible, unless it was done against their own family or tribe. It was into this spiritual wilderness with its rank growth of nameless sins and flaunting superstition, that the divine message of the gospel was carried by Mr Radasi.

The Church provided money for building a place of worship, a schoolhouse, a house for the missionary, and huts for school boarders. Later on a small hospital and dispensary were provided. As time went on, the mission extended to other stations, necessitating the building of churches and schools. Mr Radasi also was provided with a Cape-cart, which, though it belonged to the order of another age, was very useful to him in going from place to place. The motor car has now to a great extent supplanted the old order of transport, and the Church at home readily responded to an appeal for money to purchase a car for the use of the mission.

In connection with the Mission's activities a very interesting feature was the desire to have the Psalms translated into Kafir metre. The Church at home entered with keenness into the matter, and though it took considerable time to have the task accomplished, yet the Church had the satisfaction of knowing that through her efforts the Psalms were translated in Xosa metre. When the work was undertaken, there were but portions of nine psalms in Kafir printed in the Wesleyan hymn book, while portions of thirty-three psalms were found in the Presbyterian hymn book. Mr Radasi approached Dr Stewart of Lovedale on the matter of having the whole psalms translated into Kafir metre, but Dr Stewart dying, the matter was set aside for a time. When the Rev. John R. Mackay visited the mission in 1909, he became interested in the matter and wrote to Principal James Henderson of Lovedale. The first twenty-four

psalms³⁹, as stated in the preceding pages, were first issued, and in 1922 a thousand copies of the whole collection were issued from the Lovedale press, the copyright being secured by the Free Presbyterian Church. The translators were Revs. John Knox Bokwe, of the United Free Church, and William Kobe Ntisikana, of the Free Church. These were under the superintendence of Principal Henderson; Rev. John Lennox, M.A.; Inspector Maclaren, M.A., a Hebrew scholar; and the Rev. Brownlee Ross, M.A., a Kafir scholar.

In 1909, as already stated, the Mission was visited by the Rev. John R. Mackay, and in 1921 he was followed by the Rev. Neil Cameron who was accompanied by Mr Angus Fraser; and in 1929 the Rev. R. Mackenzie on his way home from Australia paid the Mission a visit. These visits were cheering to our missionaries and people in the foreign field, and had the additional advantage of giving the visitors a clearer idea of the nature and difficulties of the work than they otherwise could have.

The work done in the schools has greatly extended since its early beginning. In 1910 the school population was 70, and the latest returns show a roll of 533 in ten schools. These schools are under Government inspection and receive Government grants. Two of the schools have for a few years been paid the grant usually given to Central or Higher Grade Schools, though really not such. In order that the grant may be continued, a white teacher qualified to give instruction in such subjects as woodwork and agriculture is required. The Foreign Mission Committee in 1933 have appointed Miss Jean Nicolson, M.A., as the first teacher to the post of Domestic Science. The Church's first native missionary was the Rev. John B. Radasi, who had been trained in theology in the Free Presbyterian Church. From 1904 he carried on the work with the help of his elders. In 1924 he was cheered and gladdened by the news that the Rev. John Tallach was setting sail for the mission field to labour with him in preaching the gospel. Mr Radasi by this time was much weakened by diabetes, but after treatment in Johannesburg, news reached this country that he was much improved. He purposed meeting Mr Tallach and having gone to Bembesi Station on his way to Bulawayo, was killed by a passing train. When Mr Tallach reached the mission, it was in mourning. A stranger in a strange land, with no knowledge of the language or customs of the people, he felt himself bereft of one to whom he was looking for guidance and counsel until he became familiar

³⁹ Specimens of the translation of the first two psalms are given in the 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', xvii, 101, 102.

with his future sphere of work. It is not easy to realise what must have been Mr Tallach's feelings as he had a renewed view of the power of death to shatter cherished expectations. Alone he had to take up the task, and instead of an earthly counsellor he had to rely on the One who alone could help him in such a situation, and judging from the progress of the Mission since 1924, that One has not failed him. The Free Presbyterian Church was signally favoured in her first missionary in Southern Rhodesia. God owned his labours, and there are many who went from the Free Presbyterian Mission to Heaven who will bless God forever that He sent the messengers who proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen; who were turned by God from their heathen superstitions and wickedness to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in righteousness and holiness.

Mr Tallach began his work in 1924, and year by year the reports he has sent home indicate how the work has been progressing. Before beginning his missionary work, Mr Tallach took classes in medicine, which he found very useful to him in Rhodesia. In 1932 he came home on furlough and delivered addresses to the various congregations of the Church, which from their interesting and instructive nature awakened a new interest in the Church's Mission in Southern Rhodesia.

The medical side of the Mission must be referred to also. In 1928 Dr R. Macdonald, M.B., Ch.B., indicated his willingness to go out as a medical missionary. The Church gladly accepted the offer, and Dr Macdonald proceeded to London to take classes in tropical medicine to equip him for the work in his new sphere. The Church rose to the occasion, and though the financial burdens were increasing, the people responded to the new calls. Dr Macdonald is an ordained missionary, and is in a position to assist Mr Tallach in the spiritual side of the missionary work. The hospital and dispensary are especially useful to him. In one year in one of his reports he says that no less than 2000 patients consulted him.

COLONIAL MISSION IN CANADA AND U.S.A.

Reference has been made in the preceding pages to the beginning of the Colonial Mission in Canada, but the main events of the Church's history crushed out quite a number of interesting details connected with this mission which will be of interest as throwing light on the Church's work in this field. Mr Forrest, as has been seen, interested in what was going on in Scotland, got into touch with the Free Presbyterian Church in 1896. This was the beginning of a

fellowship that lasted for many a long year, and brought many of the Lord's people in Ontario and Scotland together in the closest bonds of the gospel. The appeal for a deputy was readily responded to, and from 1902, when the Rev. Neil Cameron went out as the first deputy, the Church sent out ministers for many years. The people composing the various groups were dissentients of the Canadian Presbyterian unions of 1861 and 1875.⁴⁰ The Rev. Lachlan Macpherson, East Williams, stood out against the 1861 union and the Rev. John Ross, Brucefield, against the 1875 union. The death of Mr Macpherson in 1886 was followed next year by that of Mr Ross, but the pastor-less groups kept meetings conducted by their elders.

The stations visited by the first deputies were Brucefield, Newton, East Williams, Lochalsh, North Line of Kincardine, Edmondville.

Later on services were held in Ontario at Toronto, Kincardine, and Wardsville. In course of time Detroit was visited, and services were held there and in New York by deputies, though there were no regular meetings in these places. In 1909 the Rev. D. Beaton as the Church's deputy visited Winnipeg, and a meeting was subsequently begun which is still in existence notwithstanding all the difficulties which beset the congregation; to some of which reference has been made in the preceding pages. The Associate Presbyterian Church congregation in Chesley petitioned to be received as a congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church in 1912,⁴¹ and the Synod granted their request. The first minister settled as pastor over the groups in Ontario was the Rev. Walter Scott. Mr Scott did not see many years as he died in 1916, four years after he had been settled as minister in Ontario. In 1918 the Rev. William Matheson took his place. While the Rev. D. Beaton was at Winnipeg in 1916, he received a request from a few sympathisers in Vancouver to visit the Pacific Coast and conduct services there. In answer to this request Vancouver was visited, and the following year a petition was sent to the Synod requesting that the Church at home would take oversight of the spiritual needs of those who sympathised with the Church's witness for truth. The congregation was visited by the Rev. James Macleod in 1919 and ministered to by him as a deputy. Mr Macleod had to face unexpected difficulties by the visit of the Free Church deputy, the Rev. George Mackay, the first Free Church deputy for a considerable number of

⁴⁰ The Union of 1861 was between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians; the Union of 1875 was between the Canadian Presbyterian Church and the Church of Scotland congregations in Canada.

⁴¹ See 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', xvii, 131, 132

years, but Mr Macleod stood his ground firmly⁴². Mr Donald Matheson, lay missionary, looked after the congregation for a number of years (1920-1928). Deputies visit the congregations regularly and the stated services at other times are conducted by Mr Hugh Mackay, elder. A church was built in 1922.

The deputies to Canada and the United States, with the years of their visit, were: Rev. Neil Cameron, 1902; Rev. J.R. Mackay, 1903; Rev. Alexander Macrae, 1904; Rev. John Macleod, 1905; Rev. Ewen Macqueen, 1906; Rev. D. Beaton, 1907; Rev. D.N. Macleod, 1909, 1910; Rev. Neil Macintyre, 1911; Rev. J.R. Mackay, 1913; Rev. D.M. Macdonald, 1915; Rev. D. Beaton, 1916; Rev. James. Macleod, 1918; Rev M. Gillies, 1920; Rev. D. Beaton, 1922; Rev. M. Morrison, 1924; Rev. James Tallach, 1926; Rev. James Macleod, 1928; Revs. Ewen Macqueen and Finlay Macleod, 1929; Rev. William Grant, 1930; Revs. Ewen Macqueen and D.J. Matheson, 1931; Rev. D. Urquhart, 1932; Rev. Finlay Macleod, 1933. The names of the Conveners of the Canadian Mission Committee since its inception are: Revs. J.R. Mackay, N. Macintyre, E. Macqueen, J.R. Mackay, N. Macintyre, D. Beaton, N. Macintyre, and E. Macqueen.

CHURCH'S CONNECTION WITH AUSTRALIA

The history of the connection of the Free Presbyterian Church with Australia came about through the influence of the Rev. Walter Scott. Mr Scott had gone to Australia for health reasons in 1889, and after being received by the Free Presbyterian Church there as a student in 1891, was ultimately ordained and inducted as a missionary to the Back Country Mission. In 1895 he received a call to the Grafton-Brushgrove Presbyterian congregation which he accepted. The story of the formation of this congregation may be briefly told, as it throws light on the ecclesiastical position of those who cast in their lot with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In New South Wales the Presbyterian Church was connected with the Established Church of Scotland. In 1846 certain ministers and elders separated from this body and formed the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. In 1864 a union took place of the four bodies of Presbyterians, including the main body of the above Church. The new denomination was known as the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. Four ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia refused to enter the Union. In 1884 their numbers had increased to eleven, but small as they were as a denomination, personal disputes caused disunity and friction. In this

⁴² See 'Free Presbyterian Magazine', xxv, 72

year three of the ministers had their names removed from the roll. These set up a reconstituted Synod of Eastern Australia. Brushgrove at one time was connected with Grafton congregation but the Synod formed it into a separate charge. The Rev. William Grant became pastor in 1880, but resigned in 1884, ostensibly on account of the congregation favouring the expelled ministers. The Rev. John Finlayson (a native of Skye), who had been Free Church minister at Coigach before going to Australia, ministered in the Brushgrove congregation for three years. On 27th October, 1891, a resolution was passed that the Grafton and Brushgrove congregation should unite with the reconstituted Synod. In this way the majority of the joint congregation joined the Synod of Eastern Australia.

Later the Expulsion Act of 1884 was deleted without any acknowledgment being made of its character, or any expression of regret for the wrong that had been done. This act paved the way for the union of the Synod of Eastern Australia with the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and the Free Presbyterian Church of Southern Australia, forming the Free Presbyterian Church of Australia.⁴³ Mr Scott consistently refused to acknowledge the Expulsion Party. In 1909 Mr Scott resigned his charge, and after the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland issued its "Declaration anent Reformation Attainments" in 1910, Mr Scott applied for admission to the Free Presbyterian Church and was duly received. The remnant of Brushgrove-Grafton congregation sent a petition to the Synod to be received. The request was granted, and in 1914 the first deputy, Rev. Duncan Mackenzie, was sent out, and preached at the following places: Brushgrove, Grafton, Lower Southgate, King's Creek, Glen Lewin, Woodford Leigh, Woodford Dale, Iona, Lawrence, Ellerslie and Chetworth. Nine years later the sympathisers in Baltma, on the Richmond River, New South Wales, applied to the Synod and were received. Mr Alexander Kidd, one of their elders, being appointed a lay missionary.

The next deputy to visit Australia was the Rev. R. Mackenzie who set sail in 1929. The people connected with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland have stood nobly to their principles through many discouragements, and

⁴³ This Church is connected with the Free Church of Scotland and is to be distinguished from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

though efforts have been made by the Church at home to answer the cry from a distant land, it has not been so successful as it could wish.

WORK AMONG THE JEWS

The Church's efforts to spread the gospel is seen also in its work among the Jews. The Synod in 1925 received Mr Isidore Reuter to work among the Jews in Glasgow until failing health made him give up his duties. Mr Donald Urquhart offered himself in 1922 as a student with the view of devoting his life to work among the Jews. On 25th July, 1928, as already stated, he was ordained as a missionary to the Jews and set sail for Palestine on 4th August of the same year.

Mr Urquhart set in real earnest to acquire colloquial Hebrew, and was soon so proficient in it that he could speak to the Jews in their own tongue. He then proceeded to Tel-Aviv, a colony of about 40,000 Jews, and began his work among them. Mr Urquhart had to return to Scotland on sick leave in 1931, and at the request of the Canadian Mission Committee, with permission of the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee, he went to Winnipeg as deputy in 1932 where he laboured until August, 1933. He set sail for Jerusalem in October, 1933, to resume his beloved work among the Jews in Palestine.