

would more eagerly covet. The Whigs may promote Mr Monsell to this office, and even the Conservatives may place in it again Lord Robert Montagu, who has, since his retirement from office, become a Romanist.

Whilst, therefore, there are other important amendments necessary on the details of the Bill in any view of the question, we certainly think that the whole of Scotland should earnestly combine in demanding both security for religious instruction, better provisions in regard to teachers, and that the effective control of our whole education shall continue as heretofore on this side of the Tweed. We have nothing to learn, and little to expect, from England. If we can procure these great amendments on the Bill, other matters may be put right; but if we are unsuccessful in this, the effective power of securing and perpetuating a sound education in Scotland, will have passed entirely out of our hands.

It is a most natural question,—Why has not the Free Church as a body, and in all her congregations, manifested a resolute determination to get those glaring defects in the Bill removed, which she, at the same time, professes clearly to see? Why, on the contrary, do the leading Unionists of all classes urge and press the people to take the Bill even as it is? Simply we fear because this Education question has done more to open the eyes of the country to the utter hollowness of the so-called “articles of agreement,” than all other circumstances put together. Therefore the unsound Unionists are anxious on any terms to get the Education question settled and out of the way. But it is surely sad, nay, utterly deplorable and judgment-like, that the whole future of Scotland should be sacrificed, and her noblest birthright thus sold, by her own unworthy and ungrateful sons, for this odious mess of Union pottage.

“ARE WE TO HAVE NO CONSTITUTION?”

THE extreme seriousness of the conflict going forward in the Free Church of Scotland arises from this, that the question now raised is that of the preservation or destruction of our Constitution.

We brush aside at the outset the assertion (and the question grounded on it), that the Church of Scotland changed her Confession in the middle of the 17th century, and changed her formula in the middle of the 19th century,—and why not do the same again? An utterance like this, in the present discussion, is characterised by such thoughtlessness, if not indeed such moral levity, as to deprive it of all right to serious answer. The Church of Scotland, in adopting the Westminster Confession, declared it to be “in no respect contrary to the doctrine of this Church.” And in amending the formula in 1846, she did so with the avowed purpose, not of changing, but of expressing, re-affirming, and conserving the principles of the Church. And how men can allege a parallel

between that and a proposal to make “allowance” for the principles of another Church, exactly wherein they contradict our own, ought to surpass all powers of honourable imagination. It is not by moral trifling of this description that we are to be turned aside from our argument.

It would be great comfort to us, as men most earnestly desirous to act the part of fair controversialists, if our opponents would either distinctly deny or affirm that they are proposing to alter the Constitution. The painful thing is, that they are virtually *both* affirming *and* denying it. Some of them, as Principal LUMSDEN, for instance, quite clearly admit it. In his speech in the Presbytery of Aberdeen, he justified his vote on the Assembly’s remit by considerations drawn from what would have satisfied the early Christian Church: and that would justify a much greater change in our Constitution than any yet proposed, inasmuch as it would expunge from our Confession its exact expressions of many Christian doctrines, which prior to the rise of the counter heresies and the discipline of sifting discussion, the Church was not in circumstances to formulate, and therefore not in circumstances to require her members formally to accept and defend.*

But while Principal LUMSDEN thus manifestly admits, others,—for instance, and very specially Dr RAINY,—both admit and deny. That the question is really one of changing the Constitution of the Church, in his late speech in the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Dr Rainy clearly admits, by saying:—“It is a question of a somewhat peculiar kind. It is a question with reference to the proper principles on which Church Communion should be regulated.” Again he says:—“The question is, what the terms are, and the principles that should regulate Church communion.” Nor does he gain anything by varying it in the form of the sentence which follows this:—“It must be discussed in the way of deciding what is consistent with our Church principles, regarding the regulation of Church communion.” For in a constituted Church like ours,—in a Church with a definite *constitution*, that is regulated already: and to re-open the question of regulating that, is to re-open the question of the Church’s Constitution. We do not tarry here to comment upon his singular *dictum*, that we are to “regulate our decision by applying (as considerately and calmly as we can) *certain general impressions*.” For, with all reverence we may well say, God help the Church! if that be true. A more extraordinary proposal surely has not been made in the Christian Church since the apostles fell asleep. Our excellent friend should have felt himself, at this point, on the dizzy edge, from which the slightest recollection of what the Church of Christ is, should have warned him back. But if not, little wonder that he added, “We cannot help, *therefore*, differing in the line we take. I think it is impossible that we can help it.” We think so too, if “*general impressions*” are to settle the Constitution. Never was “*therefore*” more conclusively employed in such a case than in Dr RAINY’S inevitable corollary,—“We cannot help, *therefore*, differing in the line we

* In this respect it is singular to find Dr LUMSDEN and Mr FERGUS FERGUSON in exact accord. Speaking of the benefit to be derived from “sweeping away” all confessions and “theologies,” Mr F. Ferguson says:—“If we could only have a revolution so complete as to bring us round full circle to the simplicity and spirituality of the apostolic age, it would, I think, be an infinite blessing to the world.” And this, not concerning spiritual life, but expressly concerning “theologies.”

take." And since he says also, "It is a question in the settlement of which there must always come in *considerations of good sense*," we shall keep firm hold of *these* considerations, and leave Dr RAINY's "general impressions" to himself. But only fancy what men call a "great Scriptural duty," placing the responsible ministers of Christ's Church in circumstances in which they "cannot help differing in the line they take"—yea, in which "it is impossible that we can help it"! Is it possible to imagine a more solemn warning against extreme fluency in speaking to a Presbytery?

But the leading point here is, that Dr RAINY, in this speech, acknowledges and advocates an intended change in the Constitution of the Church, under the phraseology of a change, or new "*regulation*, of the Church communion."

In his speech in last Assembly he denied this. He scorned the idea of the Church having any Constitution to break. Presenting the matter in its elements, Mr Moody Stuart had said:—"Dr RAINY maintains that the majority have a right to alter the Confession. *Tres ecclesiam faciunt*; Dr CANDLISH subscribed it, Dr RAINY subscribed it, and I subscribed it. We bound ourselves at once to the Confession and to each other by our signatures. I understood that they could not alter it without me, just as certainly as I could not alter it without them." Now *it was to this* that Dr RAINY answered:—"I have heard them chime in" [for the cheering was loud at the righteousness, the simplicity, the relevancy, the force, and the obvious unanswerableness of this representation]; *it was to this* that Dr Rainy answered:—"I have heard them chime in with the doctrine announced (by Mr Moody Stuart) as a brotherly compact."

Did Dr RAINY not observe the ruling affirmation in Mr Moody Stuart's argument,—this, namely:—"Dr Rainy maintains that the majority have a perfect right to alter the Confession"? Did he observe that it was against that allegation that Mr Moody Stuart had produced what Dr RAINY called the doctrine of a brotherly compact? If he did, why did he not reply, "Mr Moody Stuart has founded his argument on a complete mistake; I do not maintain that the majority have a right to alter the Confession"? And when he did not take that course in reply, what conclusion can be drawn,—but that he *does* maintain this as the right of the majority? And why should he not have plainly said so, instead of substituting in effect something else, by using an invidious word—the word "compact," which the denial of the true principle of Establishment had, in the Cardross case, surrounded with invidiousness? The entire line of Dr RAINY's reply demonstrates that he maintains, and is conscious of maintaining,—and in the service of this Union business, is compelled to maintain,—the right of the majority to alter the Confession. Take the word "compact" as, in no invidious but in a perfectly honourable sense, applicable to what Mr Moody Stuart had said of the mutual obligations of Dr Candlish, Dr Rainy, and himself, in virtue of their joint subscription of the Confession,—(and Dr RAINY's use of the word "compact" at all was most unjustifiable if he did not use it as a brief index or symbol of what he was professing to criticise),—and how does Dr RAINY's next sentence look? "I am here, then, to say that I am in a Church that is founded on no compact. (Cheers.)" We rejoice that we have never got ourselves into possession of "cheers" like these. No cry

of "send back the money" could in such a case be too strong in our view: we could not more earnestly desire to restore an overplus of payment received in a money transaction. What *could* Dr RAINY mean? Could he mean that what Mr Moody Stuart described—our mutual signature, namely, of the Confession and our reciprocal obligation thereby—is a thing that does not exist in this Church? Could he mean that, although that transaction does of course take place, yet it is not meant to hold? Could he mean that the two can cut out the third; that every two can cut out the third; that, always, again, if there are more than two remaining, this can go on till *only* two remain? And this in the service of Union! Indefinite disintegration an argument for Union! What *could* he mean? And then, "If I am not in Christ's Catholic Church, I go out of it at once. (Loud cheers.) It is a question of our freedom." All this in reply to an argument against a claim on the behalf of a majority to alter the Confession! Dr RAINY's reasonings have come very generally to be called *sophistical*. Will any man in Scotland dare to deny that the sophistry in this instance is as flimsy as it is obvious? Or will any man affirm that there can be any hope of the slightest worthy result issuing from discussions in which such desperate fetches of sophistry are loudly applauded in a packed assemblage such as gathers in the galleries of the Free Church General Assembly? And this was reserved for the peroration of the speech, and the final clinching of the argument for sending down the remit to Presbyteries: "The whole question now raised is whether this Church is free—(applause)—to consider, as a Church, on its responsibility, such questions as these? (Great cheering.) They deny it. They tell us it is *ultra vires* of the Assembly—to do what? What do you ask the Presbyteries to do? To say whether it is lawful to unite with a certain Church on the Standards as accepted by this Church." Is that worthy of being called even *sophistry*? Union on the Standards *as accepted by THIS Church!*" Are intelligent human beings to be told that we object to that? that we call *THAT ultra vires* of the Assembly? Were there none on the right hand of the Moderator ashamed to hear *that* substituted for the real proposal of "Union on the Standards *as accepted by THE SEVERAL Churches?*" But there it stands, on the Blue Book, page 228, that we have declared it to be *ultra vires* of the Assembly to remit to Presbyteries the consideration of Union with a certain Church on the Standards *as accepted by THIS Church!* What is this, but even-handed perversion of everything, dealt out all round, to friends and foes alike, to our contention and his own too? And for the gallery there is left to cheer, nothing but the grammatical accuracy, the perfect fluency, and the ring, or rhythm, or music of the sentences, aside from all consideration of their meaning? *And they did it.*—We greatly regret having been detained so long in criticising what we boldly defy any man to make head or tail of.

Taking up substantially Mr Moody Stuart's view of the matter: I am ordained into this Church, resigning, we shall say, all other life-prospects which I might be warranted to cherish, and devoting to her service all my energies and interests, embarking on her prospects also all the temporal interests of my family. I am thus ordained in terms of an ordination-vow. This vow is not an instrument special in my case, or peculiar to me. It is the vow taken also by all my brothers, who in this Church are exactly my peers. It has been already taken by all the brothers who, in this transaction of exacting and accepting my vow, represent to me, and

act the part towards me of, the Church. Not to mention that they are thus bound by the self-same vow already,—taking into account merely that they exact, and I render this vow in my ordination, is it conceivable that, speaking of this one ordination merely, I alone become bound by it? Is this merely a *pact* on my side, without being a *compact* between me and the Church? The idea of the word being a mean and dishonourable word in its own nature, or in this connection, is simply ridiculous. Dr CUNNINGHAM uses the word “compact,” to designate the Eternal Covenant of Grace. Do I, then, come under obligation to the Church, without the Church coming under obligation to me? Who would make an assertion so outrageous? The idea of a vow between creatures of God, binding only one party in the transaction, is a sheer paralogism. This vow entails very weighty obligation on my side; and on the side of the Church the weight of obligation is as great. The obligation is manifestly reciprocal. That inheres in the idea of it. Laying out of view the contingency of my convictions as to the subject-matter of my vow coming to be changed, and my leaving the Church accordingly, I am bound by it, aye, and until the Church shall release me. Is it conceivable that all this time the Church should have been silently reserving a right to release herself, what time she may be able to outvote me? Is it possible that, on what are actually called “general impressions” and considerations of “good sense,” it is proposed to regulate anew our Church communion, and I am to be—by a dispensing power, we presume—set free from my ordination-vow, and the Church from her reciprocal, and another is to be substituted in its stead? Has a majority power to do this? Yes, if I have power to change my vow, and still continue in the Church. And, Yes, if the Church was not bound to me by prescribing and accepting my vow. But the Church *did* bind herself to me on and by accepting my vow. She bound herself to me to the effect that, while faithful to her terms of my admission, I should enjoy all privileges depending on my admission, and without which it would have been suicidal in me to resign all other life-prospects to enter on her service. For, service rendered, and rendered for life, with absolutely nothing to count upon—(we do not speak of temporal support merely)—is an anomaly of folly or slavery—we hardly know which, probably both,—at all events seldom manifested where “considerations of good sense” have any place. Most assuredly the Church is bound to give me all the usual facilities for the rendering of that service which I have taken myself bound to render. She is bound to watch over my comfort while I am faithful. “See that he be with you *without fear*, for he worketh the work of the Lord.” That is a divine injunction lying upon her, and as binding as that by which she is under obligation to sustain me in things temporal. She is no more entitled, for instance, to worry me, or stand by and see me worried, in her service, than she is entitled to see me starved in her service. “Worry” is not,—and he that hath an ear let him hear,—worry is not a divine ordinance: it is not an ecclesiastical institution: it is not a human function; it is a function of beasts: “Let dogs delight, &c.” We have heard a venerable and powerful man of God say, concerning this Union *worry*, “I think it will kill me.” Let the Church take care! There has been more than enough already brought upon her skirts of what she will not soon wash out. Assembly 1867 broke men’s hearts, and caused such tears of anguish as the Disruption never caused. And when fluent gentlemen stand up and

say, “I am glad of it, notwithstanding the elements of pain and of distress which are unquestionably mingled with the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed,” what if that “pain and distress” are, on considerations of so-called “good sense and general impressions,” inflicted in violation of obligations towards her faithful sons, assumed in the solemnities of prayer to God, when, with prayer and laying on of hands, she accepted service which she is thus ungratefully requiting? A majority may prove treacherous to a vow, just as an individual may; nor is it in the power of the multiplication table to settle a question of morals.

Our ordination-vow, taking us bound to our Confession, settles that we have a Constitution, clearly enough defines it, renders us amenable to it, and pledges the Church, reciprocally, as amenable to it also. Deny this, and never dream of scorning Chartism. The wildest Chartist asks a Charter. No revolution even was ever proposed on the footing of having no Constitution at all. There can be no government, civil or ecclesiastical, magistral or ministerial, human or divine, on such an understanding as this; which is in fact the canonising of the absence of all understanding. When Almighty God governs responsible beings, purely and absolutely Sovereign though He be, He never claims to govern in this fashion. He gives His government, and His creatures under it, a Constitution. He gives them His Moral Law: He says, “I will govern you under that instrument and charter; and in no respect and in nothing will I govern you aside from it.” And when we have broken His law, and rendered the Constitution useless, except for our everlasting ruin, He hath in His pure sovereignty renewed it, and given us His Covenant of Grace with the broken law, re-honoured and magnified, enshrined in it: and again, the Constitution is everything, even as it is definite, and intelligible, and permanent; and to have faith in it, and appeal to it, has been made of God our first and highest duty; and still He will never rule us aside from it, or beyond its declarations, provisions, and requirements. In His infinite condescension and faithfulness, God hath bound Himself to be amenable to this Constitution of His government over men in Christ Jesus His Son. And His work herein, most honourable and pure, has for ever stamped the brand of shame and condemnation on all principles of absolutism in human government,—and, by terrible immediacy of application, specially on all absolutism or want of Constitution in the Church. No doubt, it may be deplored that there should be different branches of the Church, with different Constitutions, preventing perfect visible oneness and total incorporation. That may be with propriety deplored in so far. Also it may be deplored more than there is need for, and on grounds that do not justify the grief. But in any case that consideration cannot be allowed to enter here and bar this argument. I was not ordained a minister of Christ’s Catholic Church only, but of the Free Church of Scotland in particular, which had her own separate distinctive Constitution when she asked and received my service and my vow. And when now I demand the reciprocal from her, of what my vow bound me to render, I ask my countrymen what they think of the peculiar treatment I receive, when I am substantially told that there was “no compact” at all, and that if I am not satisfied that I am in Christ’s Catholic Church, I may go out of it at once! I think they will say, I am treated at least in astounding moral levity, if not in moral injustice. Nor shall the loud word “majority” be allowed to be rung out to weaken this deliver-

ance. Majority! and minority! Oh, yes. We have all been in a minority. I was in a *minority of one*, when I was ordained. And I trusted to the Church's faith. For I gave my vow to an overwhelming majority, and the majority vowed to me.

What's the meaning of the word "incorporation?" And what is an "incorporated Union?" And by what means, and with what effect, is an incorporation, or incorporated Union, accomplished? Will anybody answer these questions on the understanding that there is "no compact" and no Constitution? Human language becomes useless, when all words and ideas are put into such a state of flux and evaporation as this. The tails of comets are understood to be composed of matter so highly attenuated, that up or down through their substance, the lightest feathers would gravitate towards each other with a violence fatal to the permanence of their form,—just like the different parts of Dr RAINY'S speeches about "compact."

Our doctrine that a majority has no right to alter the Confession or Constitution of the Church has been called "slavish doctrine." No man, surely, can understand what we say, and bring this charge against it. And yet what we do say is said in plain enough language,—too plain, in fact, to permit us to doubt that the simplicity and intelligibility of it is what gives offence. We challenge them to establish their right to change the Constitution of the Church without our consent; and they answer, if Dr RAINY speaks for them, that "the worst thing that could happen this Church would be if she flinched from giving forth her mind on such challenge as we have now received." Therefore they quite understand the challenge, and they meet it by an appeal to liberty. It is "slavish doctrine," says Dr BUCHANAN. Says Dr RAINY, "It raises the whole question of our liberties." And he calls it a "blunder" and "worse than a blunder." But our Protest that it is *ultra vires* of the General Assembly to do anything to upset the Constitution of the Church, or that Confession on condition of fidelity to which every member sits in the Assembly, by a commission, namely, requiring him to "deliberate, vote, and determine, according to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the other standards of the Church;"—our Protest, we say, that it is *ultra vires* of the Assembly to violate the commission, in virtue of which they convene and act as an Assembly, has proved, and will continue to prove, the salvation of the Free Church of Scotland.

Why have our friends never dared to say, your Protest is founded on a false assumption? Why have they never thus met it in the teeth? Why have they never complained that we are stamping the brand of *ultra vires* on a mere fanciful contingency of our own conjuring up? Why have they never said that were they doing what we suppose, that *would* be *ultra vires*? When we use that phrase, in what respect do they mean to say that we speak injuriously? Will they tell us plainly whether they condemn our use of it, because they are *not* doing that same *ultra vires* thing which we condemn, or because, though they are doing the thing which we condemn, they believe it to be not *ultra vires*? Not one of them has explicated that. They seem to reserve two strings to their bow. But there is a simile drawn from two stools, as well as two strings: and they should take care. We say they are altering the Confession and the Constitution without our consent: and we add,

most fearlessly, that this is *ultra vires*. Will they say that this is what they are doing, and that it is not *ultra vires*? Or will they say this is *not* what they are doing; and that, therefore, we need not consider the *ultra vires* element at all? If they say this is *not* what they are doing, why do they not grapple with us there, and prove what they say? For, if this is *not* what they are doing, neither they nor we need waste time and temper on an abstract question of the limits of the *vires* of the General Assembly. Their logic on this point is a muddle. And it behoves to be a muddle, to conceal or mystify the fact that they cannot answer our Protest. They can only rail at it.

And to think of railing at it as "slavish!" In order that there may be liberty, must there be no Constitution? Must there be nothing that the General Assembly is not "free" to tamper with and change? Are there to be no limits to the powers of the Assembly,—or even of Presbyteries, which have higher powers than the Assembly, as they have been too long in vindicating. So long have they been in vindicating their power and independence, that rather than thwart Assembly potentates, they will send up hypothetical answers to remits—answers upon "assumptions," which the very idea of the word implies that they know are not verified. But speaking even of the Church—to let alone Assembly and Presbyteries,—is she not free, except on the understanding that she has no special law of her being, as specially the Free Church of Scotland? Is she not free, except on the footing that no human being can point to anything *permanent* in her structure, organism, identity—in one word, the word that will not consent to be evaded or evited—her Constitution? Is it true that this Church has no *norm*, so that in the nature of things it is simply impossible and inconceivable that she should do anything *abnormal*? Is she simply a generalised ecclesiastical phenomenon, which by her own sweet will may take shape at any time with all the apparent lawlessness of the Aurora Borealis? Is that our far-famed Free Church of Scotland? And is she not "free," except for that? And even in that, must the Assembly be not her *minister*, but *lord*? We know, at least, of one minister of this Church who would have sisted procedure on his ordination-day, had such doctrine been promulgated amidst the ordination services.

And what—it has been asked—what is "leadership" without a Constitution? For some time it has been bad enough *with* that. We have had a leader in the East, and a leader in the West, and a leader in North, so far; and the affairs of the Free Church have sometimes been conducted on telegraphic wires along the sides of the plain rectilinear triangle E.C.D.* And we have got colleagues and successors in the leadership. And the Union Committee has become glaringly a committee of leadership; and even inside of it they have *their* leaders, as that poor man was content to own—(mercifully they didn't give his name, only "a member")—who asked if anything had been done about the proposed new formula, and was contented to receive for answer, in a deliberative body of which he is himself "a member,"—"Ah! yes, yes, yes; some of us have thought of a proposal about that, and it has been well received!" But if such is leadership *with* a Constitution, what would it be *without* one? Is there not some-

* Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee.

thing in the Bible about the relative circumferences of somebody's little finger and of his father's loins? Ah, brethren! take care of "slavish doctrine," by all means. Nothing could be more proper. Only make yourselves sure as to where it lies. And see that you solve a problem, in which we fear you will get little help from Euclid:—*To destroy the plain rectilineal triangle, BGD.* Then go on with the similar and smaller triangle, *RAW*; remembering that similar triangles are to one another in the duplicate ratio of their homologous sides!

But to return. What could leadership be without a Constitution, but despotism double distilled? Just fancy hundreds of thousands of pious people turned over night into Unitarians by a vote of the General Assembly! But this is absurd, is it? Why? On the doctrine against which we contend, why is this absurd? If one chapter of the Confession can be confiscated to the United Presbyterians, why not another to the Unitarians? What difference in principle is there between expunging the 2nd Chapter of the Confession, and expunging the 23rd? Why not a new formula to operate on the one chapter as well as on the other? Let it read thus, in its reference to the chapter on *God and the Holy Trinity*:—"And in signing this portion of the Confession, you are not understood to approve of anything in it that teaches, or may be supposed to teach, *irrational* principles." Is not that a concession to Unitarianism, which says that the doctrine of Three Persons in one Godhead is irrational? Does not that *qualify out* the doctrine of the Trinity? Is it "slavish doctrine" to say that it is *ultra vires* of the General Assembly to send down the proposal of such a new formula as that, or to negotiate with a Unitarian Church (so-called), and send down a proposal to accept the second chapter of the Confession, in that case, *as accepted by the several Churches*? Is that "slavish doctrine?" Mr Moody Stuart's doctrine is, that you are not entitled, "to change the Confession without our consent, any more than we without your consent." Will you assail it here on a plea of freedom? Must you be free to cut out the Confession of the doctrine of the Trinity from the Church's Constitution? Is it not enough if you be "free" to become Unitarians individually, if you think you see reason, and then leave this Church? But must you claim a right to stay in, and seek her conversion to Unitarianism?

What logic would there be in replying, that you could not claim to deal so with the second chapter of the Confession, but that you do claim to deal so with the twenty-third? Is not one chapter of the Confession as good as another on which to test a principle that refers to an asserted right to alter the Confession? And if it would be *ultra vires* in the one case, why is it not *ultra vires* in the other? You will hardly reply that the truth concerned in the one case is more solemn and important than in the other. That is alien from the question. For the question is, since *tres ecclesiam faciunt*, can two change the one Confession against the third?

It is utterly impossible to blink the obvious fact, that the present proposal is to abandon the Constitution of the Free Church, in just her distinctive characteristic as a distinct branch of Christ's Church in Scotland, and substitute the Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in its stead. And this is to eliminate from our Constitution and Confession as a Church, the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Nations. It is utterly useless to reclaim against this representation. "You are not entitled," said Dr CANDLISH, "to parade me throughout the whole country, and

stigmatise me as an apostate, representing me as abandoning the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Nations, unless you demonstrate by the laws of logic that the mere leaving the question of Civil Establishments open necessarily involves that." Here it will be observed that "parading him throughout the whole country as an apostate," is Dr CANDLISH's own translation of our avowment that he is proposing to alter the Constitution of the Free Church. He calls, moreover, for the services of the "laws of logic," to prove that he is doing that, and that he is doing that in the particular way of "merely leaving the question of Civil Establishments of religion open." But with all deference, the laws of logic are not at present required to prove that; because "merely leaving the question of Establishment open" is not all that Dr CANDLISH is doing. He is doing that in a very special way by which he does a great deal more than that. He is "expunging" that portion of the Confession which affirms the Civil Magistrate's, that is, the Nation's duty to the truth and Church of God. He is expunging, or proposing to this Church to expunge and make ALLOWANCE for expunging, the only confession which the Westminster Confession makes of the Nation's subjection to Christ, or Christ's supremacy over the Nation. It is trifling with a great question to say in bar of this, that the ordinances there spoken of are called not the ordinances of Christ but of God, and that civil magistracy is called an ordinance of God. It had not in any earlier chapter been said that Civil Magistracy is a natural,—not a supernatural, ecclesiastical, or mediatorial ordinance. As against Erastianism, it behoved that that be said now and here, when this topic of the magistrate's power is first particularized. But in the eighth Chapter *all* power had been declared to be *subjected to Christ*: and as *all* power includes the Civil Magistrate's power, the complete doctrine—at once Anti-Erastian and Anti-Voluntary—is obtained by combining the Confession's deliverances in these two chapters severally. This combination, therefore, is the avowal by the Westminster Symbol of the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Nation. And Dr Candlish is proposing to the Church—say he what he may—to abandon the doctrine of Christ's Headship over Nations, by proposing a formula which qualifies out that portion of the twenty-third Chapter which affirms the positive duty of the Civil Magistrate. Thereafter the Church would be in worse circumstances than if that twenty-third Chapter had never been there to be expunged. For the doctrine in that case might have been found by inference,—or, as Dr Candlish will allow of no inferences from the Confession, it might have been found, as the part is found in the whole,—in the eighth Chapter, which subordinates and subjects all power to the Mediator. But it could not be found there now, *after* that particular part of the whole had been expressly eliminated and expunged. We do not choose to use Dr Candlish's free translation about "parading him," &c., but we repeat, that he *is*, as a public ecclesiastic, by the policy which he presently supports, abandoning the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Nations. The proof, we take leave to say, is complete and unanswerable.

Now, such tampering with the Constitution of this Church there has never been since the effort of the Stewarts to force Episcopacy upon us. Since that time it is utterly unprecedented. The Moderates were unfaithful to the Constitution, in the way of not acting up to it. They did not conform their policy to it; but they *never* dared to conform *it* to their policy. There it stood: on it the faithful party leaned: their faithful-

ness was just their conformity to the Constitution: the Constitution protected them: they protected the Constitution: and when they at last triumphed, their triumph was the triumph of the Constitution. But we are to be treated by our brethren now, as the Moderates never dared to treat *them*. The policy of the Moderates was inconsistent with the sole supremacy of Christ over the Church: but they never proposed to expunge that doctrine from the Confession. Our friends *are* proposing to expunge the correlative doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Nations, and we tell them their attempt is *ultra vires*. We tell them, in other words, that their success would be merely their Secession from the Free Church; and that we are numerous enough to make that obvious when it comes—as we pray it may never come. Our contention with them is, that they ought not to secede from this Church: for assuredly they will not carry the Church with them.—Is that not a clear enough stating of the lists in this conflict? Will they meet our *case*, as we have now put it? This, we say, *is* our case in this conflict: and they are bound to meet us on the issue as we have put it, or to show that we have put it wrongly.

They are proposing a *Revolution*. That is only another word for “altering the Constitution.” And if they do not wish to crash the crisis on to the catastrophe, they have got abundantly sufficient warning and reason to proceed no further. Revolution, whether in Church or State, is eminently serious, and by no means to be transacted in terms of clap-trap denials of “compact,” and clap-trap appeals to freedom.

It is plain, in the first place, to simple and unsophisticated reason, that Revolution, to justify itself, must appeal to *necessity*. You must plead necessity, if you are to justify this change. You have tried that. You have tried to plead, and play upon, conscience,—the “consciences of a great number of dear friends on the right.” But this is very dangerous; for the consciences of these dear friends can get no relief by a “declaration” of a General Assembly. The *Church* ordained them, not the Assembly. And until you drive your “declaration” through the Barrier Act, your dear friends’ consciences will be exactly where they were. Meantime,—we are sorry to be driven to say it,—if it is with them a case of conscience, the door of the United Presbyterian Church is open for them to enter individually. They will hardly plead that conscience forbids them to accept the immediate relief for conscience which lies ready to their hand. They will hardly say that their ecclesiastical conscience requires them to violate their personal conscience, and to stay in the Church and educate other people’s consciences when their own are in bondage. This would be too like Mr TOM CRINGLE, who had a big conscience and a little one, and who has put on record some interesting “minutes” of their “negotiations” with each other. Their formulas differed precisely in respect of LATITUDES and ALLOWANCES.

A case of necessity arising from conscience will brook no delay; and it was a very dangerous move in the game when the attempt was made to place it on this footing. Moreover, it is perfectly ridiculous to affirm the existence of a large number of dear friends with consciences in this condition. Is there one single minister in this Church who will stand forth and say, that his conscience is in such a state that, if Union on the footing presently proposed is not accomplished, he must of necessity join the United Presbyterian Church? What an awful aspect that man’s conduct assumes if *he* consents to reserve a question of expedi-

ency, when on that of principle his conscience is in this condition. MENNON CHENE, BERTIN, and BROWN DOUGLAS may twitter such stuff about their consciences, knowing neither what they say nor whereof they affirm; and two or three more, as thoughtless, may join them in their noise. But in a Constitution, venerable through centuries, to be tampered with for *them*; or are we to be frightened by their escapades? It was very excusable, in a handful of Waldensians to dance out and in behind trees, extend their plaids, appear and re-appear on this side and that side of rocks, to delude their bloodthirsty enemies into the conviction that they were an immense host, and quite able to hold their own. And it must have been as amusing as it was mercifully providential, that the DUKE OF SAVOY fled in terror before what in reality was less than a fiftieth part of the force he had brought to storm the strongholds of the Vaudois. But anybody who ever saw Mr NIXON, not to speak of *hearing* him, will trust it to him alone to give a good account of the gentlemen with consciences. He will hardly take the role of the Duke of Savoy!—Do what we will, this subject *will* insist every now and then on becoming ridiculous. No man can read it correctly without feeling that.

But besides the plea of *necessity*, all our reliable jurists have agreed that Revolution requires to be justified by *success*. To involve a community in internecine war, with the miseries of war as the only result, all the highest authorities on the political and ethical aspects of the doctrine of Revolution, have agreed is very deeply criminal. *And we will not allow you to succeed*. You cannot but see that we have that in our power. The question of *success* is in our hands, not in yours. You have compelled us to say so. We have no desire whatever to provoke you; and we are not become your enemies by telling you the truth. But think ye of that as you may,—the truth we tell you, and in plain duty must tell you. You *cannot* revolutionise the Free Church of Scotland. You may rend yourselves away from her, and as a Secession join yourselves to the Sister Church. But, even in that, it will task all your ingenuity to lay on our table a protest justifying your Secession, and proving that we had compelled you to secede. Be that as it may, this is the utmost you can achieve. If you do achieve this, we shall deplore it for manifold reasons, public, private, and personal alike. But we obtest to you *that you can achieve no more*. We shall not go with you; and behind you, you shall leave the Free Church of Scotland, as plainly and easily to be identified as she has been since 1843 and before that. Possibly, you may take with you all of this world that we possess. Be it so: what worse could we be than in 1843? But you shall leave behind you the principles and the identity of the Church. The principles have been the fountain of the property, and they will be that again. But whether that shall be or no, *they* in this matter are our “ewe lamb”; and being spiritual and not external, you cannot take that “ewe lamb” from us. So that you need dread no visit from NATHAN. But the LORD shall visit in His time; and we pray that you may be able to commend yourselves to His gracious pity, where we cannot think you will commend yourselves to His approval.

COMMUNISM.

“WHAT is a Communist? One who has yearnings
For equal division of unequal earnings;
Idler or bungler, he is quite willing
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling.”

—BENEZEER ELLIOTT.