

like a snake in the grass. (Hear, and cries of "Order, order.") By that expression, he was sure that the House would give him credit for meaning nothing offensive to his reverend friend. (Hear, hear.) The expression was a hasty one, which he would at once withdraw, and beg pardon for any offence that it might have given. (Applause.) But, with all deference, he did maintain, that whether an overture or a deliverance of the Assembly was a long or a short one, it involved the same, and not a discriminatory amount of responsibility. But as to the merits. At page seven it was stated, "It is in deep humiliation, therefore, but at the same time in holy boldness of faith unfeigned, that this Church would still seek to retain and occupy the position which the foregoing summary of her history assigns her, solemnly owning the weighty obligations devolved upon her in consequence of the attainments and public professions of former days." He could understand, that on the principle that God visited the iniquity of the fathers on the children, the Church might have to suffer, as well as to rejoice, on account of the doings of our Christian forefathers; but he did not think that we were therefore bound to take the obligations to maintain the principles and take the consequences of their conduct on ourselves. And as the obligations in the passage quoted, stood in direct connection with an approbation of the attainments and "public engagements" of former days, he—

Mr CAMPBELL of Monzie.—"Public professions?"

Mr Sheriff MONTEITH.—Public engagements in my copy.

Mr CAMPBELL.—Then you have got the wrong copy. You have not got the amended copy.

Dr CANDLISH (comparing the copies and the original draft.)—The fact is, the error is the printer's; or rather an accident arising from the pressure of business; but the word in the manuscript report is professions, not engagements.

Sheriff MONTEITH.—Well, professions let it be; the objection was equally strong against the one as the other, inasmuch as it might be held, that if the Church approved of the professions of our covenanting forefathers, she could not well withhold her consent to their engagements. (Hear.) But the narrative proceeded to say, that the Church of Scotland "finally resolved and determined, as in the sight, and by the help of God, to prosecute the ends contemplated from the beginning, in all the acts and deeds of her reforming fathers." Now, if there were no other sentiments in these documents than these, it would be sufficient to justify the House in refusing to agree to the motion on the present occasion. Other points there were in the document of subordinate importance. They had been accustomed to consider the Revolution of 1688 as the charter of their rights and liberties—that in which they gloried; and yet in the present document there were expressions in reference to that revolution which would go to inculpate our ancestors for accepting the terms of settlement which it brought about. The document on that head said, "This Church, once more in the good providence of God, was re-established in the land at the era of the glorious and blessed revolution of 1688. It is to be acknowledged, as a cause of humiliation and sorrow, that not only were the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, unprepared for prosecuting the covenanted work of reformation and uniformity of religion; but even as to Scotland itself, this Church and nation, exhausted by long tyranny, and glad to welcome returning freedom, were willing to acquiesce in a settlement of the constitution of the Church, neither reaching to the attainments, nor owning the engagements of that second reformation which had been so signally accomplished, and so graciously blessed by God;" and farther, "this Church, smarting from the fresh wounds of anti-Christian oppression, and thankful for any national recognition of her testimony and truth, was willing, in so far, to let the attainments and engagements of former years fall aside,—as to require, along with the nation and its rulers, in a practical adjustment, which, without express reference to those attainments and engagements, appeared likely to answer sufficiently the ends they had been designed to serve." Now, as a matter of simple fact, no doubt all that was true. But still, he was not prepared to say that they, who for 150 years had lauded the Revolution, should now turn round and say that they had adopted the settlement because they were thankful for any national recognition of her testimony and truth. (Hear.) He admitted that we were bound to follow our ancestors on that account; but he did not think that we were bound to follow our ancestors on that account. There was another passage to which he objected, and if they were to make out their

identity, just as we make out our genealogy, as links in a chain, the link at page six, he feared, would be a weak one. The narrative went on to say, "Nor is it to be overlooked, that while the contentings of this third Reformation period were going forward, not only did they that feared the Lord speak much to one another, but most solemn consultations of the brethren were held at every step, with much earnest prayer, and many affecting pledges of mutual fidelity to one another and to God. A large number, moreover, were moved to follow in a still more formal manner the precedents of former ages, and to enter into a sacred religious engagement for the assurance of one another's heart before the Lord." Now he did not say that those brethren did thus meet from the best of motives; but the question was this,—How comes it to pass that an engagement of a few private individuals, done in a private way, this Assembly should be bound to homologate that engagement as the act of the Church? (Hear.) If the Covenant thus devised were to be considered as one of the links in the chain of this historical deduction, he thought they must not attach importance to it as a component part of their identification with the Church of their fathers. But he would not pursue the subject farther. He would strongly urge that the House, if it entertained the document at all, should send it down to Presbyteries without making it any overture at all, or that it should be laid on the table till next year, recommending it for more mature deliberation at the same time.

Dr KERR.—The first line of the overture bears, that "the General Assembly having maturely considered the overtures on the subject of the principles of this Church," &c. Now, not one of these overtures had been read. How then could they say that they had maturely considered them? This testimony went much farther in principle, and pledges the Free Church to principles and views which, to say the least, were new to the Free Church of Scotland. He admitted that there was a danger of our falling into some indifference on the subject of our distinctive principles as a Church, by which we have always been known in the history of this country; and therefore he was ready to agree to any efficient agency by which they might be brought more fully and more frequently before the mind of the people; but the overture introduced heavy and solemn matter, the very intimation of which, a few days ago, by a friend, did startle him, and solemnised his mind very much. They all knew the principles on which they sacrificed all, and were ready to do so again, and lay down their lives, if need be, for the maintenance of these principles; but the principles laid down in the overtures on which this Testimony was based are of a more questionable character than those on which they left the Establishment. The document went on to say, [Here the reverend Doctor read an extract from one of the overtures, requesting the Assembly to consider and devise such measures in accordance with the "Word and Spirit of God," as might place the principles of the Free Church in a clear light to the coming generations in our own land, so that they would see that she had been the chosen of God, as God had chosen Israel.] To the Lord they must look, and the Spirit they may implore, but he did maintain that the language quoted in the overture, viz., the beginning of the lxxviii. Psalm, were spoken in another sense than those in which they were used on the present occasion. The language deserved their most serious and solemn consideration. Having read the psalm, he went on—that was the covenant of the Lord with his people. Now, the argument they had heard that night, rested very much on the principle, or rather the assumption, that as the Covenant was entered into with Isaac and Jacob, so it had been taken up by the Church of Scotland, and was a bond of our union at the present day. But is this principle a sound one? Was there no difference between the circumstances under which the Covenant of the Church of Scotland had been subscribed and solemnised, and those in which the Lord entered into a covenant relation with Judah and Israel? Did not God deal with the people of Israel as he had dealt with no other nation? Had He not chosen Israel, and were they not a separate and distinct people to the present day? God entered into covenant relation with the Jews; but when the gospel was preached to them and refused by them, it was proclaimed to the Gentiles; and under the New Testament dispensation, where was there anything to show that the covenant which God entered into with Israel had been extended to the Gentiles or any other nation on earth? He maintained that they must look in vain for any warrant in Scripture for any national covenant entered into by God and any nation on earth, but the covenant of Abraham as entered into with the Jews. (Hear, and "Oh.") And what was the history of the covenants with which this Testimony

sought to identify the Free Church? Was it not first the covenant of a few Presbyterians of Scotland,—did it not grow large enough to overleap the Tweed and become the Solemn League and Covenant of the Presbyterians of Scotland, England, and Ireland? and was not King Charles the Second at the head of that national covenant? And when that monarch returned from his exile, and was again crowned as king, one of the first acts of this head of the Solemn League and Covenant was to banish from their churches two thousand covenanting Presbyterians of England. (Hear, and applause.) Now, if this testimony were adopted by the Assembly, he must say that he had not only great doubts and difficulties on the subject; but his conviction was,—and he must freely speak it,—that there were statements in the document directly contrary to what he believed to be the great fundamental principles on which the Church of Scotland had been built,—which, were they carried out in the plain, simple, and not in the explained sense in which they had been brought before the House, he could not in his conscience, reading the Word of God as he did, be a member of the Church another day, though it was the Free Church of Scotland. (Great sensation.) He thought, with Sheriff Monteith, they should have prayerful deliberation before deciding on the Testimony, lest they should do that in a day which might not be undone in an age—commit an error that would not be remedied by the penitence of a life. (Hear.) If they agreed to this Testimony, he must say that a more solemn and less deliberate act had never been done by the Church of Scotland, and should not be done now. He would suggest that at least the further consideration of the subject should be delayed. If nations were all Christian, and would realise the divine will,—“Be wise, O ye kings; be instructed, O ye judges of the earth,” a Christian Church might enter into covenant with them; but that time was not come yet. And what had national covenants done for the extinction of heresy? Popery and infidelity, according to the testimony of the Lord, would be destroyed “by the brightness of His coming, and the Word of His power.” “Our weapons are not carnal but spiritual.” Yet what had these Covenanters done? No sooner had they signed the Covenant than they drew the sword, and when they gained the power did they not themselves persecute others as they had been persecuted themselves. He had not looked for Bothwell Bridge, nor surveyed the battlefield of Drumlog, but he looked for the hill of Grdeon down the valley where was fought the battles of the Lord, and where the hailstones of God's wrath had slain more rebellious people than the sword of the Roman in the might of its power.

Dr HENDERSON said, that he felt strongly that the overture was one which the Assembly was not at present prepared to receive. He thought, with all deference, that the way which had been taken of introducing the subject, was hardly in direct accomplishment of the object which was contemplated by the Presbytery with which he was connected, or, he believed, with that of the other Presbyteries who had sent up overtures on the subject. He did not think that they contemplated the issuing of a testimony, but rather the devising measures by the Assembly, by means of which the distinctive principles of the Church would be held forth to the country and to Christendom, and especially by which the minds of their own people would be indoctrinated in the great principles for which they contended. He would desire that something like a motion should be prepared with the means to be taken by ministers for the first part of the overture, connected with the measures which the Assembly should devise, by instructing the members, and especially the young of their congregations, in the principles of the Free Church, and the measures which the Assembly should devise, by which this great object might be brought more fully before the view of the Church, and that her testimony might thus be established and extended in the land. He thought that they should confine themselves to this at present, and leave the other matters referred to by Dr Candlish to be thought over by the brethren for another year.

Dr MACFARLAN of Renfrew wished that Dr Candlish, and his friend who had seconded his motion, would say whether they were willing to recommit the overture, either in whole or in part, so as to prevent the discussion going any further. If the discussion was to go on, he would beg to intimate his general acquiescence with the sentiments expressed by Mr Monteith and Dr Keith; and would state the reasons which led him to do so.

Mr TWEEDIE begged to express his concurrence in what was said by Dr Macfarlan. Dr CANDLISH said, that he felt that the Assembly were not in a position to dispose of the overture now. He thought that it might be of importance that they should

remember that the overture was laid upon their table, not by one or two individuals, but by a large Committee of the House. It was quite true that circumstances, which they could not foresee or prevent, had hindered them from setting apart so much of the time of the Assembly as they would have wished for the consideration of this important subject. He felt that it would be in the last degree disastrous if they, as an Assembly, should adopt any step in this matter which any considerable number of the brethren should consider as premature and in haste. He fully believed that, if time had been allowed to them for mutual explanation and for further conference, many misapprehensions might have been removed from the minds of those who had spoken. He might have been tempted to prolong this conversation a little, by adverting to some of the remarks which fell from preceding speakers; but he would not trespass upon their time. He did not wish to prolong this discussion, if it were the general mind of the House, as he confessed it was his own, that it should not be continued. He deeply regretted,—he looked upon it as a misfortune and as loss, but it was inevitable now,—that in consequence of the pressure of business, and the want of time, they would not at present give further consideration to the subject. Had they been going on with the discussion, he would have been most anxious, not in the spirit of mere controversy, but from a regard to the vast importance of the subject, to remove some of the misapprehensions which it seemed to him that his excellent friend Mr Monteith had taken up, both of the document itself and of his (Dr Candlish's) remarks; but he must just content himself with saying, that he altogether demurred to the accuracy of very many of Mr Monteith's representations, both of his (Dr Candlish's) views, and of what the document contained. He confessed that he would have liked, if possible, that they had had more time to go into the questions which had been raised by their venerable father, Dr Keith. He felt well assured, that if any of them in that House who might approve generally of the principles of that document, had the same impressions which their father Dr Keith, had,—if they believed that, when rightly understood, even by him, it would lead to such consequences as he announced, there was not a man in this House who would take the responsibility of pressing it a step farther; but he most thoroughly believed that all the objections which had been stated by Dr Keith were capable of being removed by the further consideration of the whole matter. However, for the reasons he (Dr Candlish) had stated, and under the deep conviction that they were not in circumstances to prosecute this matter, and farther lamenting that, in the providence of God, their time had been cut so short for the consideration of the subject, and assured that it only needed longer time, so far at least as he could judge, and full deliberation to bring them to see eye to eye, and to see that if any difference existed among them, it was nothing at all like the vital difference which Dr Keith seemed to imagine, and that there was no cause for that alarm which Dr Keith seemed to think,—believing this, he had no idea that it was their duty to press the matter now. Let it be remembered, however, that the subject was one which was not to be regarded as a novelty in the Church of Scotland. Let it be remembered also, that the subject was one which they could scarcely avoid, if they were really in good faith to maintain their testimony in the land. That, at least, was his solemn impression; but on that very account he acquiesced all the more readily in the postponement of the matter; and was perfectly willing that the document should be recommitted to the Committee of Assembly, that they might deliberate, and report to a future Assembly.

The overture was then recommitted, with instructions to the Committee to give full consideration to the whole subject, and to bring up a Report to next General Assembly.

The case of the election of an elder in Rothessay was then taken up. Papers having been read, and parties heard, the Assembly dismissed the appeal, and remitted it to the session, enjoining them that, in proceeding with this matter, they should have a careful regard to the harmony of the congregation and the general interests of religion.

#### FORT-AUGUSTUS CASE.

The Report of the Committee on this case was given in by Dr Candlish, the Convener, and read.

After hearing Mr McBean on the subject, the General Assembly “approve of the Report, and of the exertions of the Committee in the discharge of the duties en-