
Jonathan Ranken Anderson and the Free Church of Scotland

PART I

ROY MIDDLETON

Introduction

Jonathan Ranken Anderson (1803-59) was a noted preacher in the Free Church of Scotland at the time of the Disruption in 1843. Soon after this event, however, he became highly critical of the Free Church and of his fellow ministers and, in May 1852, he left the Free Church in circumstances which have remained largely shrouded in mystery.¹ In his view, he “separated” from the Free Church because his conscience would no longer allow him to remain in a Church whose courts had declared against the pure gospel of Jesus Christ.² In the view of the Free Church, however, his resignation was the act of a fugitive from discipline who resigned whilst a case against him was before the General Assembly. His devoted followers formed a congregation in Glasgow which continued to read his sermons after his death, and which ultimately became part of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. His writings have been valued and reprinted down to the present day.

The purpose of this paper, and its sequel, is not to give a comprehensive account of Anderson’s life, or to analyse his sermons and theology, but simply to consider the circumstances of his departure and

¹ An exception to this is the article by Ian R. MacDonald, “Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson 1803-1859: Defender of the Faith or Accuser of the Brethren?”, *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland*, October 1988, pp. 215-217. This article is written from a perspective that is highly critical of Anderson.

² See Jonathan Ranken Anderson, *The Free Church of Scotland: Her Character and Proceedings in a Series of Letters* (Glasgow, 1853), p. 2 (cited afterwards as *Letters on the Free Church*).

the critique that he gave of the Free Church of Scotland. The Free Church view of events is taken largely from official records, while for Anderson's view we are heavily dependent on contemporary material written by him and especially on his diary.³ We have sought to deal with this material in an impartial way and let the historical narrative speak for itself.

This present paper is divided into two main sections, the first summarizing Anderson's earlier career in the Church of Scotland and the Free Church, and the second describing the background to his departure from the Free Church. It is hoped that the sequel will cover: (i) the libel against Anderson by the Free Presbytery of Glasgow; (ii) Anderson's setting up of congregations in Glasgow and Aberdeen between the Free Church Assembly in May 1852 and the Free Church Commission in March 1853, when he was declared to be no longer a minister of the Free Church of Scotland; and (iii) Anderson's penetrating critique of the Free Church.

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³ The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Library, in St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, contains the eight-volume *Diary of the Late Reverend Jonathan Ranken Anderson, Minister of the Gospel in Glasgow* (cited as *Anderson's Diary*, with Volume, year, and page number). There is one volume for each year, starting in 1851 and ending in 1858. These leather-bound typescript volumes are evidently edited versions of the original manuscript diaries. The main feature of the editing appears to be the removal of the names of people referred to in the diary and the replacing of them by initials. Whilst the writer is aware of individual volumes of Anderson's typescript diaries in private hands, it is possible that the collection in the Free Presbyterian Library is the only complete original typescript set in existence. The diaries provide a fascinating insight into Anderson's life and times and how he viewed those events in the Free Church of Scotland in which he took a leading part. As we have noticed, the first of the eight-volume set is for the year 1851. However, it gives no indication of being the commencement of a diary. If there were earlier volumes of these diaries they do not now appear to be extant. Most daily entries in the diary are divided into four sections, or occasionally five, each one identified by the following letters as abbreviations: P for personal, F for family, C for congregation, Ch for Church, and occasionally St for State.

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I. JONATHAN RANKEN ANDERSON'S CAREER

Jonathan Ranken Anderson was born at Paisley on 21st October 1803.⁴ Andrew Bonar, in his memoir of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, observes concerning the period in which both Anderson and M'Cheyne were born that it was "evident to us who can look back on the past, the Great Head had a purpose of blessing for the Church of Scotland. Eminent men of God appeared to plead the cause of Christ. The cross was lifted up boldly in the midst of church courts which had long been ashamed of the gospel of Christ. More spirituality and deeper seriousness began a few years onward to prevail among the youth of our divinity halls."⁵ Iain Murray has noted that, "Within a short span of years three events occurred which marked the beginning of this new and better day."⁶ These were (1) the conversion of Thomas Chalmers in 1809; (2) the publication of Thomas M'Crie's biographies of John Knox and Andrew Melville which were instrumental in reviving, throughout Scotland, the memory of the great Reformer and his successor and arousing in many a holy ambition to follow the example of these two spiritual giants; (3) the birth of a succession of infants whose names would be revered all over the land – James Buchanan in 1804, William Cunningham in 1805, Robert Candlish in 1806, James Bannerman in 1807, and James Begg in 1808. Jonathan Ranken Anderson was born at a time in which the Lord was secretly preparing a rich blessing for Scotland.⁷

(a) Paisley

Anderson's father was James Anderson, a Paisley merchant; his mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Fulton. They had a family of ten children of whom Jonathan was the youngest.⁸ Paisley, the town in which Anderson

⁴ Registration of Anderson's birth on www.Scotlandsppeople.gov.uk – accessed on 25th May 2011. The birth was registered at Paisley Abbey in Renfrewshire.

⁵ Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p. 3.

⁶ Iain Murray, "Two leaders of 'The Third Reformation': an introduction to William Cunningham and James Bannerman", *The Banner of Truth*, Issue 17, October 1959, p. 3. This is the first part of material that formed the biographical introductions to the reprints in 1960 of William Cunningham's *Historical Theology* and James Bannerman's *The Church of Christ*.

⁷ As Murray notes, this list could be easily extended: Horatius Bonar was born in 1808, A. Moody Stuart in 1809, Andrew Bonar in 1810, Robert Murray M'Cheyne in 1813, and George Smeaton in 1814.

⁸ The authority for most of the details of Anderson's early life is the short biographical sketch by Neil Cameron; see N. Cameron, *Extracts from Diary of the late Rev Jonathan Ranken*

was brought up, was becoming during his childhood years a centre for radical political opinion. It had also a reputation for its manufacture of thread, and had eclipsed Spitalfields in London for its production of silk gauze, and was, like Glasgow, turning its attention to cotton. With this industrial expansion, the ancient social system was everywhere breaking down, and town and country were alike being transformed; it needed only the French Revolution to evoke a strong popular spirit. The reaction by the different groups in society was quite marked; the gentry and landowners viewed the developments with alarm. At the opposite extreme were the quasi-republicans, fired by the writings of Thomas Paine⁹ and mostly of a more lowly rank, who hailed the breaking down of the old social system with enthusiasm as the dawn of freedom.

William Law Mathieson, contrasting popular opinion with the more moderate views of the English branch of the “Society of the Friends of the People”,¹⁰ notes: “the industrial population which had sprung up in the principal towns – particularly in Dundee, Glasgow and Paisley, had imbibed stronger doctrine from Paine; and associated with the Scottish branch of the Society of the Friends of the People were what amounted to revolutionary clubs.” Paisley radicalism came to a head on 11th September 1819 when a demonstration took place on a moor where workpeople from the surrounding district made their way in procession with music and banners. The theme of discourse was the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester that had occurred just a few weeks earlier on 16th August 1819, when the cavalry charged a crowd of over sixty thousand people who were demanding parliamentary representation. Fifteen people had been killed and over four hundred were injured. One

Anderson, Minister of the Gospel, Glasgow, with Sketch of his Life (Glasgow, undated). A notice in the August 1914 *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 19, pp. 160-162, states that the book had just appeared. It is to be regretted that there is a paucity of detail with respect to Anderson's early life. Cameron had the advantage of speaking directly with one of Anderson's sons, Jonathan (1840-1916), who attended regularly on his ministry at St. Jude's Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Glasgow. It is most probable that Cameron obtained these biographical details directly from this son.

⁹ Particularly Paine's *Rights of Man* that had been published in 1791. The book posited that revolution is permissible when a government does not safeguard its people's natural rights. Based on this theory, Paine defended the French Revolution.

¹⁰ This was an organisation founded by a group of young Whigs in April 1792 with the object of obtaining parliamentary reform. Its Scottish counterpart was formed a few months later. Membership of the Scottish organisation was made up almost entirely of artisans and shopkeepers who desired universal male suffrage. Trees of Liberty were erected in many towns and the common cry was “Liberty and Equality”. See Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (Pimlico, London, 1992), p. 389.

of the radical speakers at Paisley was from Manchester. Trouble broke out in Paisley when the crowd was marching through the market-place and the provost seized one of the banners, the use of which had been prohibited by the sheriff. This led to a riot which continued for several days. The Riot Act was read nightly for about a week and the magistrates had the cavalry and infantry at their disposal.¹¹

(b) Conversion and the call to the ministry

James Anderson died in 1814 when his youngest child was eleven. After Jonathan left school he worked for a period in the Dumbarton Town Clerk's office. It was during his time in Dumbarton that the Holy Spirit convinced him of his ruined state as a sinner before God and gave him a view of the holiness of God that remained with him for the rest of his life. In consequence of the impression on his soul at this time Anderson had an antipathy to shallow views regarding the conviction of sin and of the need for a real work of grace. Neil Cameron says of him, "If his conviction of the holiness of God's wrath was terrible, the sense he had of the sweetness of forgiveness through the blood of Christ caused him all his days to glory in the cross of Christ."¹² The Lord's instrument in Anderson's conversion was a godly Sabbath School teacher called Mr. M'Causlin.¹³ This radical change in Anderson's life took place in 1819 when he was sixteen.

As soon as he was the subject of a saving change he began family worship in his Dumbarton lodgings. When his neighbours heard this they expressed a desire to join with the teenage Anderson in these exercises. At a given sign they came to his room for worship. Cameron observes, "In this way the Lord, whose ways are past finding out, began early to prepare this young man for his future work in the Lord's vineyard".¹⁴ Pitt adds, "We may be sure that it was a most difficult duty

¹¹ W. L. Mathieson, *Church and Reform in Scotland: A History from 1797 to 1843* (Glasgow, 1916), pp. 7, 9, 153.

¹² Cameron, p. iii.

¹³ His full name is not given by Cameron. This omission is repeated in later sketches of Anderson's life by Herbert Baston Pitt of Trowbridge in his introductions to two volumes of Anderson's sermons. See H. B. Pitt (ed.), *Life and Sermons of the late Rev. J. R. Anderson, Minister of the Gospel, Glasgow, 1834-1859* (3 vols., Glasgow and Trowbridge, Vol. 1, 1934, Vols. 2 and 3 undated), Vol. 1, p. 6; Vol. 2, p. 6. (The second volume was reviewed in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* in the issue of December 1937, Vol. 42, p. 355).

¹⁴ Cameron, p. iii.

for a lad of sixteen years to begin worship with his neighbours, but their entreaties overcame all his objections.”¹⁵

It was at this time also that the Lord awakened in his mind an irresistible desire to go forth to preach the gospel. Again Cameron notes, “Like Isaiah of old, when his iniquity was purged, he heard the Lord’s voice saying ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me’ (Isaiah 6:8).”¹⁶ He was concerned that if those around him did not repent and believe the gospel they would be lost forever. Eternity, God – the Judge of all – and heaven and hell were before his eyes night and day. At this point in his biographical sketch Herbert Pitt cites a portion from an address Anderson gave in 1846 on the “Christian Ministry” that focuses on the importance of prayer for a minister: “The worthies of other days were men that had very solemn and abiding impressions of the eternal world, and gave a corresponding prominence to its interests in all their labours and conflicts. But how was this effected? Why, they were much alone. Luther spent daily three hours in prayer; Welsh of Ayr, eight hours; David Brainerd – everyone knows what a wrestler he was; Hogg of Kiltarn, too, was mighty in this work. Rowlands, the famous Welsh preacher, was seldom seen but in his pulpit. There he appeared as a visitor from another sphere, so heavenly his spirit, and burning his eloquence.”¹⁷

(c) Glasgow University and Divinity Hall

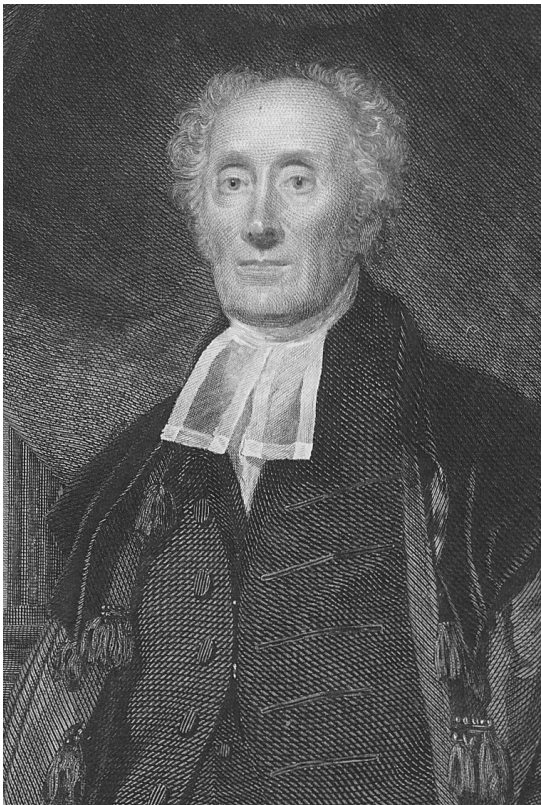
In this frame of mind he began a course of study in order to prepare himself for entering university. It seems as part of his early studies that he acquired an extensive acquaintance with languages, particularly Hebrew and Arabic. In 1823, four years after his conversion, he matriculated at Glasgow University where he studied Metaphysics and Mathematics.¹⁸ He seems to have distinguished himself in all his classes. Scottish universities in the 1820s were very different institutions from what they are today. There were no formal degree courses to follow;

¹⁵ Pitt, Vol. 2, p. 7.

¹⁶ Cameron, pp. iii-iv.

¹⁷ Pitt, Vol. 2., pp. 8-9.

¹⁸ Anderson was a cultured man who would eventually teach Free Church students Hebrew, and was also conversant with Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and several European languages. He solved algebraic problems for relaxation and read the Classics. His theological reading in later life was very wide and extended from the Puritans to modern Reformed theology as well as authors like Dante and Jeremy Taylor.



*Stevenson MacGill, Professor of Divinity,
Glasgow University, from 1814 to 1840.*

students could, however, take a series of courses which might lead to them graduating. Proportionately, however, very few students did formally graduate. Four years appears to have been the normal period in which a student was at university, although this could be greatly extended by periods of employment in order to fund completion of the course of study. Students were required to pay their professors directly in order to attend their classes. In consequence of this provision, it often depended on the financial circumstances of the individual how long his university course lasted. In addition, study breaks were not uncommon, sometimes of many years' duration. Glasgow

University has no record that Anderson graduated.¹⁹ Following his Arts course Anderson entered the University's Divinity Hall.

In September 1814, thirteen years before Anderson began his divinity studies, in the face of considerable opposition, Stevenson MacGill,²⁰ minister of the Tron Parish in Glasgow, was appointed as the Professor of Divinity at Glasgow University. The appointment was secured through the rising influence of the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland led by Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood and Dr. Andrew Thomson. When MacGill became the divinity professor he was

¹⁹ This is based on information supplied to the writer by an Assistant Archivist in the Glasgow University Archive Services on 16th August 2001. Cameron (p. iv) states regarding Anderson that he "took honours in Metaphysics and Mathematics". When the Glasgow Archivist was questioned about the significance of this term "taking honours", he responded by saying, "I have not heard the expression 'took honours' used for classes or a subject in the early 19th century". The Archivist also supplied the year in which Anderson matriculated at the University.

²⁰ Stevenson MacGill (1765-1840) was born in Port Glasgow in 1765. He was the son of Thomas MacGill, a prosperous shipbuilder and Wesleyan Methodist. Licensed in 1790 by the Presbytery of Paisley, he was inducted to the parish of Eastwood in 1791 and translated to the Tron Church six years later.

succeeded at the Tron Church by Thomas Chalmers. MacGill's mother, Francis Welsh, claimed kinship with John Knox's son-in-law, John Welsh.²¹ Stevenson MacGill was the Professor of Divinity who taught a long list of noted evangelical ministers, including Robert Candlish, James Begg, James Buchanan, Alexander Stewart of Cromarty, and Jonathan Ranken Anderson.

In 1825, two years before Anderson entered the Divinity Hall, MacGill's biographer states that above two hundred students were studying divinity at the University of Glasgow. MacGill has described the plan of tuition he adopted in discharging the duties of his Chair at Glasgow University in the following way: "The students of divinity in the universities of Scotland generally attend the theological class four sessions of college. In the University of Glasgow, their number is above two hundred, and the session consists of six months. The present professor of divinity divides his students into two parts, and forms of them a junior and senior class. To each of these he sets apart a separate hour for instruction."²² The junior class consisted of first year students whilst the senior class comprised second, third, and fourth year students.

Apologetics was the main subject dealt with in the junior class. MacGill gave lectures on the evidences of revealed religion, the necessity of revelation, the theistic proofs, the evidences for the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, canonicity, and the nature and proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. In describing the work of the junior class, MacGill observes: "On the various subjects of these lectures, essays are appointed to be written during the session. These essays are given to the professor, who, after a few days returns them to the students. They are then read in the class publicly by the individuals who composed them, and such observations as they severally require are made by the professor. . . . He joins with these exercises frequent examinations on the subjects of the lectures; and sometimes, instead of recapitulating the topics of the preceding lecture, he requires the students to state them. During the last month of the session, every student of this class delivers, also, before his professor and fellow students, a homily from a subject which has been prescribed to him at the beginning of the session."²³

²¹ H. M. B. Reid, *The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow, 1640-1903* (Glasgow, 1923), p. 285.

²² Robert Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. Stevenson MacGill, D.D.* (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 70.

²³ Burns, p. 71.

The three-year senior class was comprised of a series of lectures in Systematic theology. As in the junior class, essays were appointed on topics prescribed by the lecturer and then read by each student to the class. Examinations had also to be sat on the subject of the lectures. Every fortnight in the third year students were required to translate a chapter of the New Testament, state its precise import and explain its peculiar idioms and phrases. Final year students, besides the duties of the class and the delivery of discourses appointed by the Presbytery, were called on by the professor to open the class in public prayer. MacGill finishes his description of the Divinity course as follows: “At the conclusion of each session, subjects for essays to be written during the summer months are prescribed to the students both of the junior and senior classes, and prizes are given according to their merit. Essays also, on any important points in divinity, which students may select for themselves, are encouraged, and if treated with ability, are rewarded. An excellent private library belongs to the divinity students of this college. It is maintained and gradually enlarged, by a small sum paid annually by each student. It is managed by a committee chosen each year by the students themselves, with the approbation of the professor; and is conducted with much prudence and success.”²⁴

James Begg says of MacGill, he was “an able man of much zeal and unction and most earnest for our progress and spiritual improvement”.²⁵ MacGill was also a keen supporter of foreign missions and Church extension. His concerns for his students went far beyond divinity studies and extended to matters of a very practical nature. He gave advice on many subjects, including diet. Begg’s comments on how he interacted with his students’ preaching are most instructive: “Dr. MacGill was an admirable critic of sermons, a very important department of professorial work. He insisted that the whole class be present to hear his criticisms, and it was a most profitable exercise. I have seen him sit to hear four or five sermons in succession without taking a note, and then criticise the whole in detail with the most admirable discrimination and judgment. He was strong for short introductions, clear divisions, precise statements of doctrine, and accurate quotation from Scripture. He had the greatest abhorrence of high-flown language and of some words that the students were fond of using; as for example, Deity, and other words of heathen

²⁴ Burns, p. 74.

²⁵ Thomas Smith, *Memoirs of James Begg, D.D.* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1885), Vol. 1, p. 54. This section of Begg’s life is autobiographical.

origin, which were then currently used by Moderate ministers.”²⁶ Robert Candlish had, however, a point of criticism. After saying that MacGill was the one professor that he respected most and from whom he got the most good, he complains, “Even MacGill mentioned no books to the students and so left them quite at sea in the prosecution of their studies”.²⁷ Neil Cameron observes regarding Anderson’s period at Glasgow University and Divinity Hall, “He took a distinguished place in all his classes there, and finished his course of studies with the reputation of being a young man noted for his piety, ability and learning”.²⁸

(d) Marriage

From the available data it is not clear how long Anderson took to complete his Arts and Divinity courses; it must have been at least eight years and could easily have been longer. If he completed his studies in eight years it would have been 1831 before a congregation of the Church of Scotland could call him to be their minister. It seems probable that this construction of dates is correct, as he married on 7th May 1831 when he was twenty-seven years of age. His bride was Martha Freer of Stourbridge in Worcestershire.

By his marriage Anderson became connected to two of the most prominent Worcestershire families. His wife’s father was William Leacroft Freer (1755-1812), a surgeon who lived in Stourbridge.²⁹ Her father’s three brothers were all surgeons. The elder brother, John, was a surgeon at Birmingham General Hospital and had married the daughter of one of the local landed gentry. A younger brother, George, was also a surgeon at the same hospital and is spoken of as being a “celebrated surgeon and medical writer”.³⁰ The Freer family’s ancestry can be traced as far back as the sixteenth century to Blaby in Leicestershire. In the pedigree of the family there are landowners, Clerks of the Peace for the county, High Sheriffs, and a multiplicity of surgeons and Church of England clergy, including Archdeacons and Deans of cathedrals.

²⁶ Smith, p. 55.

²⁷ William Wilson and Robert Rainy, *Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D.* (Edinburgh, 1880), p. 22.

²⁸ Cameron, p. iv.

²⁹ Cameron, p. x. How a Glasgow divinity student met the daughter of a prominent surgeon in the English Midlands is not known.

³⁰ For the Freer family tree, see W. G. D. Fletcher, *Leicestershire Pedigrees and Royal Descents* (Leicester, 1887), pp. 139-144.

The Rev. Thomas Lane, the Rector of Handsworth, was a cousin of Anderson's wife; his youngest daughter was married to Dr. William MacMichael, who was the Physician to King William IV.³¹

Martha Freer's mother was Anna Maria Hickman (1761-1843). She was the daughter of Edward Hickman, JP (1734-1802), of the Castle, Old Swinford, near Stourbridge, and his wife Anna Maria Greene (1728-1779), who was a direct descendant of the English King, Edward III.³² The Hickmans were a well known family³³ who had lived around Stourbridge from the seventeenth century; many were clothiers, while others were clergymen and Justices of the Peace. Although the link has not been conclusively made, it is thought that Henry Hill Hickman (1800-1830), an early pioneer in the development of anaesthesia, was related to the Hickmans of Old Swinford.³⁴

William Leacroft Freer and Anna Maria Hickman were married in the early 1780s and had sixteen children. Martha Freer was the fifteenth child of the family. Her eldest sister, Anna Maria (named after her mother), was married to the Rev. George Reece, the vicar of Malvern, and her brother George was a Lieutenant in the 38th Grenadiers, serving in the Peninsular War and being wounded at the siege of St. Sebastian. He afterwards went to Cambridge University and was ordained vicar of Yaxley in Huntingdonshire in 1828. He subsequently adopted similar views to Edward Irving.³⁵

³¹ Fletcher, p. 141.

³² Anna Maria Hickman was the sixteenth in descent from Edward III, who was the English monarch between 1327 and 1377. The line of descent is reproduced in Fletcher, p. 142.

³³ See M. V. Herbert, *The Hickmans of Oldswinford* (Research Publishing Co., Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, 1979).

³⁴ R. S. Atkinson, "Henry Hill Hickman revisited", in *The History of Anaesthesia Society Proceedings*, Vol. 19 (Proceedings of the meeting in Plymouth, 28th and 29th June 1996), pp. 22-24. In August 1824 Hickman produced a pamphlet entitled, *A letter on suspended animation, containing experiments showing that it may be safely employed during operations on animals, with a view of ascertaining its probable utility in surgical operations on the human subject, addressed to T A Knight Esq. of Downton Castle, Herefordshire, one of the presidents of the Royal Society*. The *Lancet* responded in 1826 with a scathing letter under the heading "Surgical Humbug", signed by Antiquack. There is an entry on Henry Hill Hickman in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*.

³⁵ Fletcher, p. 143, where he is spoken of as becoming an Irvingite preacher. George Freer's appointment to Yaxley is in the list of "Ecclesiastical Preferments" recorded in *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle from July to December 1828*, Vol. 98, Part 2, p. 461. In 1829 the parish of Yaxley had a population of 1,070 and the patron of the benefice was the Lord Chancellor; see Richard Gilbert (ed.), *The Clerical Guide or Ecclesiastical Directory containing a complete register of the dignities and benefices of the Church of England* (London, 1829).

(e) Call to Kirkfield Chapel-of-Ease

Though it is most probable that Anderson finished his divinity course in 1831 he was not licensed by the Glasgow Presbytery until 4th September 1833 and he did not receive a call until June 1834.³⁶ Why there was this possible two-year gap between his finishing the divinity course and being licensed, and a further year before he received a call to the pastorate, we do not know. It may have been due to the large number of ministerial students that were open to a call. This protracted period in receiving a call could have been the reason why nine Glasgow elders signed a testimonial on the 26th February 1834 expressing their appreciation of his preaching and his personal worth. The testimony reads as follows:

We the undersigned, being Elders of the Established Church in Glasgow, from our intimate acquaintance with, and esteem for, the Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson, Preacher of the gospel, desire to bear the following testimony to his character. We believe him to be a man of God; possessed of the Spirit of Christ, and having it as his supreme desire to glorify his Master, and to do His work in the ministry of the gospel.

We have the most perfect confidence in his integrity and uprightness, in the sincerity of his heart, and the soundness of his religious principles. His conduct has, to our knowledge, been every way consistent with his profession – his conversation being such as becometh a minister of the gospel.

In respect of his ministerial qualifications, it is our firm persuasion, from what we have seen and heard that he has not run unseemly as a minister of heaven. His public discourses clearly indicate the possession of gifts fitted for the work of the ministry, and for edifying the body of Christ. In knowledge, in utterance, in aptness to teach, in faithful application of the truth, whether for the purpose of conviction or comfort, in acquaintance with the mysteries of the kingdom, in the power of bringing forth from the treasures things new and old, to illustrate and enforce every subject, in devoted attachment (we may add in these days of division and hostility to religious establishment) to the principles

³⁶ Hew Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (8 vols., 2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1915-50), Vol. 3, p. 418 (cited afterwards as Hew Scott, *Fasti*).

and standards of the Church of Scotland, Mr. Anderson, we consider, as well qualified to minister the word in season to every man, and to occupy with honour and usefulness a station as one of the watchmen on the wall of our Zion. For these reasons we subscribe our names to this paper, heartily praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth many such labourers into his harvest.”³⁷

In 1834, when these Glasgow elders wrote this testimonial to Anderson, the ecclesiastical struggle had just commenced which would eventually lead to the Disruption of the Church of Scotland. It is significant that the elders speak of Anderson’s devoted attachment in “these days of division and hostility” to the principles of the Church of Scotland – in their view he was an evangelical who held to the establishment principle and was therefore opposed to voluntarism. A few months after this testimonial was written a call came to Anderson to be the minister of Kirkfield Chapel-of-Ease in the Gorbals district of Glasgow. The congregation had been set up in 1813.

One of the first chapels-of-ease to be erected in Glasgow was built in Buchan Street, Gorbals, in 1730. It was eventually disjoined from the Barony of Govan in 1771 and became Gorbals Parish Church. In 1811 a new church was built in Carlton Place and the vacated building in Buchan Street became the subject of a petition from some of the Highland residents in the Gorbals district. Led by James Macfarlane, a shoemaker, they petitioned the Glasgow Presbytery requesting that the Buchan Street building be reopened as a Gaelic Chapel. In support of their petition they asserted that they had been unable to obtain seats in the existing Gaelic Chapels in Glasgow. The Presbytery supported the petition and the General Assembly of 1813 approved a licence for the Kirkfield (Gorbals) Gaelic Chapel, erected for the benefit of the Gaelic-speaking people on the south side of the city. However, the terms in which the licence was drawn up recognised the new congregation simply as a chapel-of-ease, not as a specifically Gaelic Chapel.³⁸

The first minister, and the only Gaelic-speaker to hold the pastorate, was John Mackenzie. He had been ordained to the Gaelic

³⁷ Cameron, pp. iv-v. Cameron states that the original document was in his possession when he wrote his account. Regrettably, he has withheld the names of the nine elders who signed the document.

³⁸ Ian R. MacDonald, *Glasgow’s Gaelic Churches: Highland Religion in an Urban Setting, 1690-1995* (Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 15-18, where the minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery for 5th May 1813 are cited.

Chapel in Aberdeen on 27th November 1793 then translated to Duke Street Gaelic Church in Glasgow five years later in 1798. After just over a decade in Glasgow he returned to his original charge in Aberdeen in 1809. It was from this second pastorate in Aberdeen that he was called to Kirkfield in 1813 and became their minister the following year. Ian MacDonald records that his stipend at Kirkfield was £150 a year and that he preached both in Gaelic and in English.³⁹ In 1823, due to ill health, Mackenzie applied for an assistant and successor. His son Kenneth Mackenzie – a non-Gaelic-speaker – was chosen and was ordained just over a month before his father died on 30th November 1823.⁴⁰ The son remained the minister until 1834 when he accepted a call to the parish of Borrowstounness (Bo'ness) in the Presbytery of Linlithgow where he adhered to the Church of Scotland at the Disruption and remained there until he died in 1867.⁴¹ Kenneth Mackenzie was inducted to Bo'ness on 18th February 1834;⁴² four months later on 26th June 1834 Anderson received a call to the vacant Kirkfield Chapel, signed by seventeen proprietors and managers of the Chapel.⁴³ The document read:

We, the Proprietors and Managers of the Chapel of Ease in Gorbals, considering that there is a vacancy in the office of the ministry in the said chapel . . . and being well informed of the piety, prudence and good qualifications of you, Mr. Jonathan Ranken Anderson, for the ministry. Therefore, we Invite, Call and Intreat you, the said Mr. Jonathan Ranken Anderson, to supply the vacancy in the office of the ministry in this Chapel. Earnestly beseeching you to accept of this, our Call, to come and labour among us in the work of the ministry; promising hereby all subjection in the Lord to your ministry, and all due encouragement from us. In testimony whereof we have subscribed these presents at the said Chapel on the 26th day of June, 1834 years.⁴⁴

³⁹ MacDonald, *Glasgow's Gaelic Churches*, p. 16. For further details on John Mackenzie see Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 421; Vol. 6, p. 6, and Ian R. MacDonald, *Aberdeen and the Highland Church (1785-1900)* (St. Andrews Press, Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 33-34, 37-38, 43-46, 57-58, 76-78, 80-81, 92-93, 110.

⁴⁰ Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 421. For further details of Kenneth Mackenzie, see Ian R. MacDonald, *Aberdeen*, pp. 43, 81.

⁴¹ MacDonald, *Aberdeen*, p. 81.

⁴² Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 1, p. 197; MacDonald, *Glasgow's Gaelic Churches*, pp. 16-17; MacDonald, *Aberdeen*, p. 81.

⁴³ Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 421, states that he was elected by the elders.

⁴⁴ Cameron, pp. v-vi.

After serious and prayerful consideration he accepted the call and preached his first sermon there on 27th July 1834. His text was, “Unto me, who am less than the least of the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8).⁴⁵

The year in which Anderson matriculated at Glasgow University, 1823, was the same year that Thomas Chalmers concluded his historic ministry in the city. This was a momentous period in the history of Glasgow. It was an energetic city: “Its commercial interests extended throughout the world, its manufacturers had established large scale iron foundries and chemical dye works, and they were beginning to harness steam power to revolutionise textile production. Glasgow University, where Adam Smith had once instructed the sons of ‘merchant princes’ in moral philosophy, remained one of the finest in Europe.”⁴⁶

By 1815, cotton was king among the Glasgow manufacturers. The industry had grown from virtually nothing in 1775 to comprising fifty-two separate cotton mills which employed 32,000 people by the time Anderson arrived in Glasgow. The recent growth of the city had been phenomenal – the population had tripled in size between 1780 and 1815.⁴⁷ With each day, more families pressed into Glasgow from the countryside seeking employment. Stewart Brown graphically describes the contrast in social conditions: “Behind the picturesque pillars, turrets, and spires of the main thoroughfares were often tragic scenes of human suffering. Families crowded in damp cellars and derelict tenements. Drainage was insufficient, and water supplies polluted. Garbage and faecal matter rotted in stagnant pools in narrow closes. The air, like the buildings, was darkened with coal soot. Corpses often lay for days in crowded rooms because families lacked the money for burial. In late 1817, an epidemic of typhus began its grim sweep through the Glasgow slums.”⁴⁸ A medical observer noted: “The streets or rather lanes and alleys in which the poor live are filthy beyond measure; excrementitious matter and filth of every description is allowed to lay upon the lanes, or,

⁴⁵ Cameron, p. vi.

⁴⁶ Stewart J. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland* (Oxford, 1982), p. 95.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* In 1755 the population was 31,700; by 1801 it had grown to 83,700, forty years later it had mushroomed to 287,000. See article by John R. Wolffe on “Church Extension” in Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1993), p. 182 (afterwards cited as *DSCHT*).

⁴⁸ Brown, p. 96.

if collected, it remains accumulating for months, until the landlord, whose property it is, is pleased to remove it. The houses are ruinous, ill-constructed, and to an incredible degree destitute of furniture. In many there is not an article of bedding and the body clothes of the inmates are of a most revolting description.”⁴⁹ This was the city in which Anderson was to exercise the greater part of his ministry.

(f) Revival at Kirkfield

It is to be regretted that we know relatively little of Anderson’s ministry at Kirkfield Chapel beyond that the congregation prospered and was favoured with a time of revival in the latter part of 1839 and the beginning of 1840.⁵⁰ These years appear to have been a time of congregational harmony, with Anderson being at one with the main body of evangelicals in the Church of Scotland, quite different from his later career when he became so critical of the ministry in the Scottish Churches. Two years after Anderson was ordained at Kirkfield, another student was ordained to Milton Parish Church in the Cowcaddens district of Glasgow. John Duncan (later Professor Duncan of the New College in Edinburgh) was seven years Anderson’s senior; both men were highly competent in Hebrew and the Oriental languages and had a high regard for the Old School experimental Calvinism of men like John Love, Gavin Parker, and Neil MacBride.⁵¹ They soon became friends and esteemed one another highly in the Lord.⁵²

Anderson’s ministry at Kirkfield coincided almost entirely with the “Ten Years Conflict” that preceded the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843. It was as events were reaching a crisis in the struggle

⁴⁹ R. Cowan, *Vital Statistics of Glasgow*, 1840, p. 5. Cited in S. Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development, 1780-1870* (London, 1960), p. 29.

⁵⁰ For some of the sermons preached at that time, see Jonathan Ranken Anderson, *Days in Kirkfield: Being Discourses on a Revival Occasion in Kirkfield Chapel, Gorbals of Glasgow from 24th November 1839 to 5th January 1840* (London, 1872).

⁵¹ Detailed biographical accounts of these outstanding men have not been written but the following works should be consulted: *Memorials of Rev. John Love* (2 vols., Maurice Ogle & Son, Glasgow, 1857-8); *Selected Portions from the Diary and Manuscripts of the Rev. Gavin Parker* (Aberdeen, 1848); on Neil MacBride see J. Kennedy Cameron, *The Church in Arran* (Edinburgh, 1912), pp. 108-112.

⁵² John Duncan, *Rich Gleanings after the Vintage from “Rabbi” Duncan, edited with biographical sketch by James Steven Sinclair* (London, 1925), p. 12. Sinclair was the Free Presbyterian minister in the John Knox Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland on the south bank of the Clyde in Glasgow. This was the remnant of Anderson’s congregation that was received into the Free Presbyterian Church in October 1895. Accordingly, Sinclair had direct contact with some who had been under Anderson’s ministry.



Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843) viewed the Kirkfield revival as part of a larger outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Scotland.

for Christ's kingship over His Church that a series of revivals occurred in many parishes of the Established Church. By 1839 the whole of Scotland was aware of the struggle that was being fought out. Excitement reached white heat when the House of Lords endorsed the decisions of the Scottish courts against the Church, so allowing patrons (usually landowners) to choose a congregation's minister rather than the communicant members. In the same year a movement of the Spirit of God broke out in Kilsyth. It quickly spread to Robert Murray M'Cheyne's church in Dundee where through-

out the autumn multitudes listened to the gospel in an awful and breathless stillness. In 1840 there were revivals in Skye, Tain, Tarbert, Collace, Rosskeen and elsewhere.⁵³ Robert Murray M'Cheyne, in a letter to Horatius Bonar, links the Kirkfield quickening with the other manifestations of revival occurring in Scotland at that time. His words were, "Oh, let us pray that what is past may be but the beginning of days in our thirsty land! Let us stretch out our souls for more. Anderston, Kirkfield and Wellpark⁵⁴ are decidedly quickened from on high. I also visited a school in St. George's parish and preached to many weeping children. In Carmylie, it is said several old people are awakened, and weep bitterly. I have also great hopes for Perth. It is a very dead place; but the people in Mr. Gray's church are stilled waiting for something."⁵⁵

⁵³ For details, see Thomas Brown, *Annals of the Disruption* (Edinburgh, 1893), pp. 7-19; John Gillies, *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival, with a preface and continuation to the present time by Horatius Bonar* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1845 edition, reprinted in 1981), pp. 557-560.

⁵⁴ Anderston was the charge of Alexander Somerville, whilst Wellpark was the charge of James Smith.

⁵⁵ Letter dated 25th December 1839 in Horatius Bonar, *Life of the Rev. John Milne of Perth* (London, 1869), p. 33 (this volume was re-typeset and reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust in 2010).

The revival at Kirkfield was part of a larger work of grace that brought blessing to many parts of Scotland. The Lord poured water upon him that was thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. In the introduction to *Days in Kirkfield* – Anderson’s sermons preached during the revival – the anonymous editor observes: “It is manifest that Anderson’s sermons at this time were composed with a special unction from above, given by the Lord to his faithful servant, for the awakening of poor sinners: and it is on record, and may be in the recollection of many still alive [written in 1872], that under their delivery, there was a copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit: multitudes were pricked to the heart; some were constrained to cry out under soul trouble with audible voice, and good evidences were given, that many were brought under a work of conviction, which issued in their saving conversion to God and His Christ.”⁵⁶ Neil Cameron, speaking of the revival, writes: “This was the day of power of the Lord’s right hand among them. The Lord’s people rejoiced in God their Saviour, and became very lively in all the exercises of religion. Many, who lived carelessly till then, began in real earnest to seek the Lord their God on the way to Zion. The Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved. Many a poor sinner looked back to these days of Divine power with thankfulness to the Lord for the change they had experienced then.”⁵⁷ Iain Murray has noted that, “These were events which neither Moderates nor civil courts could withstand, ‘The God that answereth by fire, let him be God’, said Elijah of old, and God did answer by fire in 1839-1840”.⁵⁸

It is interesting to notice that at the same time the revival was taking place at Kirkfield a similar outpouring of the Spirit was taking place in John Milne’s congregation of St. Leonard’s in Perth. The human instruments, besides Milne, were William Chalmers Burns and Andrew Bonar.⁵⁹ Though in 1839-1840 these men formed part of a single revival movement in the Church of Scotland, in little more than a decade a tremendous change had taken place in Anderson’s thinking. His

⁵⁶ *Days in Kirkfield*, p. vi. Seven of these sermons on Zechariah 12:10 were reprinted as *The Spirit of Grace and of Supplications* (Trowbridge and Glasgow, 1946).

⁵⁷ Cameron, p. vi.

⁵⁸ Iain Murray, “Two leaders of ‘The Third Reformation’, an introduction to William Cunningham and James Bannerman, Part II”, *The Banner of Truth*, Issue 18, November 1959, p. 17.

⁵⁹ Bonar, *John Milne*, pp. 20-28, and Islay Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. William C. Burns* (London, 1870), pp. 139-149.

relationship with John Milne deteriorated to such a degree that he did not regard him as preaching the true gospel.

Following these times of an outpoured Spirit it was thought expedient that a course of lectures be delivered by Church of Scotland ministers on the subject of revivals of religion in 1840. Anderson, who was clearly held in high esteem by the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, was asked, along with thirteen other ministers, to give one of the lectures in the series. The addresses were given in Glasgow and the speakers included men like John Bonar of Larbert, Alexander Moody Stuart, Robert Candlish, Charles J. Brown, William Burns of Kilsyth, Patrick Fairbairn, Alexander Cumming, John G. Lorimer and William Arnot. The topic on which Anderson spoke was “The Work of Christ in connection with the Revival of Religion – His Atonement, Righteousness and Intercession”. The volume of fourteen addresses was first published in 1840 by William Collins and was edited by William Maxwell Hetherington;⁶⁰ it was reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1984.⁶¹ In the publisher’s preface to the 1984 reprint it is stated: “The present publishers are not aware of any other volume which covers the nature and implications of revival as well as they are handled in this reprint. When Moses came down from the mount his face shone. Something of this same light is to be seen in these pages.”⁶²

⁶⁰ W. M. Hetherington (1803-1865) was at the time the Church of Scotland minister of Torphichen in the Presbytery of Linlithgow. It is of interest that Hetherington edited the volume, having been ordained only four years previously. He joined the Free Church in 1843 and became the minister of St. Andrews in 1844. He was translated to St. Paul’s in Edinburgh in 1848 and was appointed in 1857 to the Chair of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the Free Church College in Glasgow. He was a prolific writer and was the first editor of the *Free Church Magazine*.

⁶¹ W. M. Hetherington (ed.), *The Revival of Religion: Addresses by Scottish Evangelical Leaders Delivered in Glasgow in 1840* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1984). Anderson’s substantial address is on pp. 33-70. The biographical notes at the back are less than accurate when they state regarding Anderson: “In 1843 he sided with the Free Church, but he was suspended in 1852 for professing views that, in certain ways, were contrary to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*” (p. 445). This statement is repeated, almost verbatim, from William Ewing (ed.), *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1843-1900* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1914), Vol. 1, p. 84 (cited hereafter as *AFC*). Whatever one’s assessment of Anderson’s subsequent conduct it cannot be said that he held doctrinal views contrary to the *Westminster Confession*. The libel against him, drawn up by the Glasgow Presbytery, makes no reference to his holding such views.

⁶² Hetherington, *The Revival of Religion*, p. vii.

(g) The Ten Years' Conflict

Anderson held firmly to the doctrines and principles of the Scottish Reformed Church. This theological commitment led him to identify himself with the evangelical party during the "Ten Years' Conflict". The evangelicals, led by Thomas Chalmers, were contending for the Church's independence in spiritual matters. They rejected the Erastianism of the Moderate party in allowing civil courts to interfere with the decisions of Church courts. Their major concern was the right of the people to choose their minister and not to have a man imposed upon them by a patron backed by the civil authorities. An important aspect of the Ten Years' Conflict struggle had a direct impact on Anderson. The Kirkfield congregation, as we have noticed, was a chapel-of-ease.

Until May 1834 the convener of the Church Extension committee of the Church of Scotland was Dr. Alexander Brunton, the minister of the Tron Kirk in Edinburgh and Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Edinburgh. Brunton resigned at the General Assembly of 1834 which, from 1830 to 1840, met in the Tron Kirk. The convener's office in Brunton's hands had been purely nominal. However, as Robert Buchanan notes, "Now at length, for the extension of the church, both the time had come and the man".⁶³ The man was Thomas Chalmers and he would fan into flame evangelical zeal for Church extension. Between 1834 and 1841 two hundred and twenty-two new churches were built, funded entirely by voluntary contributions.⁶⁴ Most of these churches had evangelical ministers who shared Chalmers' concern for the unconverted masses among Scotland's growing population. Between 1755 and 1831 the population of Scotland had grown by almost 87 per cent. These new churches were called chapels-of-ease and had been erected in populous districts. The chapels were usually associated with a recognised parish church and the chapel ministers had no seat in Church courts. This was changed in the same year as Chalmers became convener of the Church Extension committee. The Chapel Act of 1834 granted full status to the chapels-of-ease; it gave the chapels full standing *quoad sacra* as the old parishes enjoyed *quoad omnia*.⁶⁵ This meant that these churches could

⁶³ Robert Buchanan, *The Ten Years Conflict: Being the History of the Disruption of the Church of Scotland* (2 vols., Blackie and Son, Glasgow, 1852), Vol. 1, p. 298.

⁶⁴ See John R. Wolfe on "Church Extension" in *DSCHT*, p. 182.

⁶⁵ These Latin terms became familiar terminology in the struggle leading to the Disruption. A *quoad omnia* parish was one recognised by the State both for ecclesiastical and civil purposes, whilst a *quoad sacra* parish was one constituted for ecclesiastical

now have their own Kirk Sessions; territorial parishes were created for them by carving out a district from the *quoad omnia* parish; and their ministers, for the first time, had seats in Church courts. As most of the chapel-of-ease ministers supported Chalmers, the effect of the Act was significantly to increase the strength of the evangelical party in the courts of the Church of Scotland.

The legality of the Act was challenged five years later in the Stewarton Case.⁶⁶ This was one of the celebrated legal cases leading up to the Disruption. Andrew Herron speaks of the case as “the last milestone on the road to the Disruption”.⁶⁷ In 1839 the Old Light Burghers rejoined the Church of Scotland which now had an evangelical majority. One of the Old Light Burgher charges was a new cause established in the town of Stewarton in Ayrshire; its minister was James Cleland.⁶⁸ The Presbytery of Irvine granted Cleland a seat in the Presbytery and resolved to carve out a parish for the new cause and erect it into a *quoad sacra* parish. This was objected to by a number of heritors⁶⁹ led by the patron, William Cuninghame of Lainshaw.⁷⁰ He had separated from the Church of Scotland in 1818, when he was unable to accept the office of an elder because he could not give assent to the teaching of the *Westminster Confession* with respect to the doctrine of Limited Atonement. As a consequence he was then refused admission to the Lord’s Table in the Established Church.⁷¹ Nine years later

purposes only and was without civil responsibilities and jurisdiction. All the chapels-of-ease were *quoad sacra* parishes.

⁶⁶ For details of the case, see J. M. Bell, *Report of the Stewarton Case, William Cuninghame and others . . . against the Presbytery of Irvine* (Edinburgh, 1843); Buchanan, Vol. 2, pp. 403-412; Lord Rodger of Earlsferry, *The Courts, The Church and the Constitution: Aspects of the Disruption of 1843* (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 32-3.

⁶⁷ See article by Andrew Herron on “Stewarton Case” in *DSCHT*, pp. 796-797.

⁶⁸ For a brief history of the congregation, see David Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church* (Edinburgh, 1886), pp. 427-429.

⁶⁹ Heritors were local landowners who at that time had to provide and maintain the parish church, manse, churchyard, and glebe. When church door collections were insufficient for care of the poor they were also responsible for increasing the money available.

⁷⁰ Cuninghame had been educated at Kensington in London and at the University of Utrecht and had been influenced by William Carey while in India with the Bengal Civil Service. In later life, his energies were devoted to writing prophetic and adventist literature. He crossed swords with Edward Irving and was a keen advocate of Jewish Missions. See article by David F. Wright on “William Cuninghame” in *DSCHT*, p. 228; William D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry, 1794-1993* (Glasgow, 1993), pp. 32, 474.

⁷¹ H. Escott, *History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow, 1960), p. 327; James Ross, *A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1900), p. 241.

Cuninghame was the founder and first lay pastor of the Congregational Church in Stewarton.

The objectors opposed the subdivision of the existing parish, doubtless for the reason that it would reduce the income of the existing parish and place a heavier burden on the heritors. They also claimed that new parishes could only be created by the Court of Teinds (in effect the Court of Session) and that Cleland had no right to sit or vote in the Presbytery. The objectors asked the Court of Session to grant interdict to prevent the division of the parish and the minister sitting or voting in Church courts. An interim interdict was granted by Lord Gillies and confirmed by Lord Ivory in June 1840. The Presbytery, on the advice of the Commission of the General Assembly, determined to ignore the interdict. At this stage the objectors complained to the Court of Session claiming a breach of the interdict. The Court determined to reserve consideration of the breach of interdict until the main question had been determined. The entire bench of the Court of Session heard the case and decided in favour of Cuninghame and the heritors by eight votes to five; the judgment was delivered on 20th January 1843.⁷² This meant that the Chapel Act was declared illegal and was a very serious turn of events for the Church of Scotland. It could now be claimed that the decisions of all Church Courts from 1834 onwards, where chapel-of ease ministers had been involved in the decisions, were invalid and that the ministers of the chapels, such as Anderson and Robert Murray M'Cheyne, no longer had the right to sit in Church courts. As Herron observes, "such a decision at such a time made the Disruption (four months later) inevitable".⁷³

(h) The Disruption

In May 1843, along with around four hundred and fifty ministers, Jonathan Ranken Anderson became a minister of the Church of Scotland – Free.⁷⁴ Over a hundred of these men had been ministers in chapels-of-ease. Of the Glasgow Presbytery, of which Anderson had been a member, thirty-one ministers left to join the Free Church and twenty-seven remained in the Church of Scotland. However, of the twenty-seven,

⁷² See Buchanan, Vol. 2, pp. 405-407.

⁷³ Herron, pp. 796-7.

⁷⁴ Anderson did not sign the Protest by the Commissioners to the 1843 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He was not a member of the General Assembly that year. He did, however, sign the Act of Separation and the Deed of Demission. See *AFCS*, Vol. 1, pp. 35-39; Anderson's name is recorded on p. 37, column 2.

just twelve were Moderates, the remaining fifteen were Middle Party men who professed the same principles as those who left to form the Free Church but did not regard it as appropriate to leave the Established Church.⁷⁵ Their leader was Matthew Leishman, the minister of Govan in the Glasgow Presbytery. They were nicknamed the forty thieves, although in fact they numbered forty-five. The Middle Party did not wish to endanger the unity of the Church or its establishment.⁷⁶

Prior to the Disruption, Anderson's congregation erected a new building in the Gorbals area. The need for this may have been a consequence of the revival of 1839-1840. When they moved into the new building the congregation was re-named the "John Knox Congregation". The building was completed in 1842, just prior to the Disruption, and was located at the junction of Surrey Street and Bedford Street. Hence they left Kirkfield Chapel for the new John Knox Church before the climactic events of 1843.⁷⁷ In the course of the construction of the building Anderson anticipated the events of 1843. The feu right, or title, was so framed that the congregation were able retain the property when they joined the Free Church of Scotland. This was one of the few instances in which the Free Church retained an Established Church building.⁷⁸

We noted earlier that Anderson, along with John Duncan, had a high regard for the Old School experimental Calvinism of men like John Love, Gavin Parker, and Neil MacBride. Among other Disruption Free Church ministers who shared Anderson's sympathies was his close friend Peter MacBride of Rothesay (1797-1846) who was a nephew of Neil MacBride. In October 1846, on the Sabbath following Peter MacBride's

⁷⁵ For details see James M'Cosh, *The Wheat and the Chaff Gathered into Bundles; A Statistical Contribution towards the History of the recent Disruption of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Establishment* (Perth, 1843), pp. 6, 51-55. The author of this work was the editor of the *Dundee Warder*, not the Disruption minister of the same name who in 1868 was elected the President of Princeton College in America.

⁷⁶ See James Fleming Leishman, *Matthew Leishman of Govan and the Middle Party of 1843* (Paisley, 1921). An account of the Disruption from the Middle Party perspective is provided by Alexander Turner, *The Scottish Secession of 1843: Being an examination of the principles and the narrative of the contest, which led to that remarkable event* (Edinburgh, 1859).

⁷⁷ Rather surprisingly Neil Cameron states, incorrectly, that in 1843, "He, and his devoted congregation, had to vacate the Kirkfield Chapel. They were not, however, discouraged in the least, but took steps at once to build another place of worship where they and their beloved Pastor could worship God in accordance with His word and their own conscience" (p. vi).

⁷⁸ The congregation possessed the title to the building and so was able to retain it. See MacDonald, *Glasgow's Gaelic Churches*, p. 18; *AFCs*, Vol. 2, p. 94.

death, Anderson preached a striking sermon lasting two and a half hours from the text Matthew 23:38, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate". When Herbert Pitt, the Gospel Standard Strict Baptist, was in the Rothesay churchyard, a friend pointed out to him the tombstone of one converted under Anderson's sermon on that occasion and remarked to Pitt, "There lies one to whom the truth came with power that day, and who continued faithful unto death".⁷⁹

In 1846 the Glasgow Presbytery appointed a committee to prepare a series of subjects for Presbyterian exercises and to name individual members to prepare and deliver exercises on the subjects chosen. Anderson was in sufficiently high standing with his brethren at this time as to be chosen to prepare and read one of the essays. The topic assigned to him was one of great importance: "The dangers incident to the ministerial office; substitution of an official for personal religion; tendency to a perfunctory or formal, in place of a principled and spiritual performance of ministerial work, exclusion or forgetfulness of the higher ends of the ministry through the intrusion of inferior or unworthy motives; self importance, vain glory &c." The essay was read on 2nd December 1846; in its printed version with the title, *A Warning to Ministers*, the essay extends to a tract of fifty-three pages and contains nothing of the highly critical tone that would characterise his later writings on the ministerial office. The dedication at the front of the tract is also highly significant: "To the Reverend Brethren of the Free Presbytery of Glasgow, this essay, written at their request, and read in their presence, is respectfully dedicated by their faithful servant in the truth."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ For brief accounts of the life of Peter MacBride, see Pitt, Vol. 2, pp. 47-48, Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 4, p. 42; *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1877), pp. 159-168. The only published record of his preaching is the *Remains of the Rev. Peter MacBride of the West Free Church, Rothesay* (Glasgow, 1848).

⁸⁰ Jonathan Ranken Anderson, *A Warning to Ministers or the Dangers incident to the Ministerial Office* (Edinburgh, 1851). In the preface Anderson comments, "The title, 'Warning to Ministers', is not used in any offensive sense, still less in a spirit of self-sufficiency and affected superiority to others. The writer feels that no one needs the warning more than himself; and if, as he is persuaded, it is a word in season, he would humbly suggest, that every consideration should be sunk in that of the magnitude of the evils, and the necessity of escaping from them. The warning, however, will be given in vain, unless He, who holds the stars in His right hand, is pleased, by the energy of His Spirit to revive His work in our land, to clothe His ministers with the purity, and strength and zeal, which their office demands" (pp. vi-vii).

(i) Leaving the Free Church

Anderson and Martha Freer had ten children.⁸¹ Two of these died in their youth, one aged ten and the other aged fifteen. Their tenth child, a girl, died at birth, and Anderson's wife died just five days after her daughter, on 27th February 1847 at the age of forty-three.⁸² In a volume published in 1894, entitled *Soul Counsel*, there are two letters written by Anderson which contain an instructive and touching account of the "triumphant death" of his wife.⁸³ In the letter dated 8th March 1847, Anderson writes:

He [speaking of the Lord] has in many ways been very gracious to us, and not least in the solemn scene which closed the earthly life of my beloved wife. She had been in great darkness and trouble the whole of the previous night and the day that followed, up till within an hour of her death. She asked the eighth Psalm to be read, and then exclaimed, "His name is excellent in all the earth". I repeated some Scriptures, and amongst others that in Isaiah, "Fear not for I am with thee," when she said, "That will do; do not leave me any more." She next requested me to sing or repeat the twenty-fourth Psalm. I was too sad to sing, but I began to repeat, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," when she said, "That is not it." I remembered then some delightful views she had

⁸¹ Cameron (p. x) states they had nine children of whom four were dead and five still survive. Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 418, gives details of ten children. Their fourth child, Mary Eccles Anderson, married Donald Stewart of the Glasgow firm Stewart, McKinnon & Company. Their daughter Anna M. Stewart was married to Alexander Stewart D.D., who was until 1905 a Free Presbyterian minister. He then joined the Free Church of Scotland and was the author of a number of publications, including, jointly with J. Kennedy Cameron, *The Free Church of Scotland, 1843-1910: A Vindication* (Edinburgh, 1910). He also edited *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* from 1917 until his death in 1937. See the short memoir of Stewart written by his daughter in Alexander Stewart, *Shoes for the Road* (Pickering & Inglis, London, undated), pp. 9-16. An obituary of Jonathan Ranken Anderson's sixth child, Jonathan Anderson, appeared in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 22 (1917-18), pp. 289-291.

⁸² Cameron (p. xi) has the date as 27th February 1847, while Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 418 has it as 26th February 1847. As she died before the commencement of statutory recording for deaths in 1855, the date cannot be established from that source. There does not appear to be a record in Parish Church registers.

⁸³ *Soul Counsel: Being Letters of the Late Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson* (Glasgow, 1894), pp. 38-39. It appears that the volume was edited by Anderson's sixth child Jonathan. The first letter is dated 14th February 1847, a fortnight before his wife's death, and the second, 8th March 1847, a little over a week after her death. Excerpts from the two letters are cited in an appendix in Cameron, pp. xii-xiii. Herbert Pitt reprints Cameron's appendix in Pitt, Vol. 1, pp. 19-21; Vol. 2, pp. 27-28.

had on the latter verses, and therefore said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in," when she said, "That is it!" When I finished she said, with great emphasis, "Now I know He gives great deliverance." I went on repeating passages with a heart bursting with grief, and my hand resting on the pulse that told me of the rapid ebb of her precious life. She said in a little after, "He is here: He is come to take me to Himself: I stand ready to receive Him." We felt deeply solemnized: it was evident her thoughts were away from us, for she took no notice of my sobbing. I went on with my passages of the Word, though little able for the task, and again she said, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." In a few minutes the darkness of death seemed to come over her eyes, and she called for more light, but though it was brought she took no notice of it; and at nine o'clock the last long inspiration was drawn and all was still and motionless. Oh, who can tell the anguish of that hour, and yet I could not but say, "It is well." I retired, feeling that God had put great honour on this family, in allowing us to be witnesses of such a scene.⁸⁴

Fifteen months later, on 16th May 1848, Anderson re-married, this time to Ann Alisa Alison, the daughter of James Alison, a corn merchant in Leith. Nevertheless, the death of his first wife, Martha Freer, seems to have marked a turning point in his career. It was around this time, just four years after the Disruption that he became very disillusioned with the Free Church and began to raise a forceful witness against what he considered to be the corruption in that Church. Being in the south, he was in a position to see what he considered alarming trends developing in the Glasgow/Edinburgh belt. Highland ministers, due to the distance and the difficulty of travel, could not so easily discern what had become clear to him. Regrettably, as this paper will seek to show, instead of raising cases in the Church courts against the men whose conduct or doctrinal orthodoxy he regarded as deficient, Anderson issued warnings against them publicly, often from the pulpit. Even more serious were instances when he objected to something he had observed in private and, instead of first speaking to the person confidentially, he exposed the matter from the pulpit or spoke about it to other people.

⁸⁴ *Soul Counsel*, pp. 38-39.

In May 1852 Anderson resigned from the Free Church ministry and eventually formed an independent congregation in the Gorbals area of Glasgow called the “John Knox’s Kirk of Scotland Tabernacle”. He died just seven years later on 10th January 1859.⁸⁵ Whilst Principal John MacLeod speaks of him as becoming in his latter years “unwisely censorious” he adds that he was “one of the great preachers of the Disruption generation”.⁸⁶ Anderson’s printed sermons have been blessed to very many, particularly his *John Knox Tracts*⁸⁷ and the sermons preached at the time of the 1839-1840 revival at Kirkfield. Following his death the congregation continued to meet for thirty-six years, largely reading Anderson’s sermons in public worship,⁸⁸ until

⁸⁵ Neil Cameron, followed by Herbert Pitt, states that Anderson was aged fifty-six when he died. This is incorrect and flows from both of them being unaware of the date on which he was born in 1803. As his date of birth was 21st October, his age when he died was fifty-five; Cameron, p. vii; Pitt, Vol. 1, p. 18; Vol. 2, p. 26.

⁸⁶ John Macleod, “An Argyllshire Worthy: Archibald Crawford, 1815-1903”, in G. N. M. Collins, *John Macleod D.D.* (Edinburgh, 1951), p. 275. One of Anderson’s congregation who emigrated to Canada has given a description of his preaching: “I thank and praise the Lord that I sat under that ministry. I think I can see Mr. Anderson now with his face aglow, his hands upstretched, just filled with adoration for the great ‘I Am’ and the great salvation. Many who would estimate the worth of such a ministry (on the earth) would have to see him, and hear his voice, and feel the power that filled the house, the bowed heads, the silent tears, man in the dust and God on the throne.” See Jonathan Ranken Anderson, *Sermons for the Times* (Dumbarton, undated), p. 5 (reviewed in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 64, September 1959, pp. 156-157).

⁸⁷ These were sermons of Anderson’s printed, at first, in the form of an eight-page tract. The first tract was published in January 1851 with the title “The Well of Living Water”. The sermon is from John 4:14, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up into everlasting life”. The tract itself is undated. The date can, however, be ascertained from Anderson’s typescript diary; see *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 6. These tracts had a significant circulation. The writer has had access to a volume in which are bound together a number of Anderson writings that were published during his lifetime. The volume includes the first fifteen *John Knox Tracts*. At the top of the first page of Tract No. 5 are the words “Fourth Thousand”, presumably indicating that it was the fourth run of a thousand that had been printed. Many of the tracts were reprinted and there were at least sixty-seven of them in total. Anderson viewed the way that these tracts were received as a test to the generation in which he lived. He writes: “The thought struck me that the ‘Tracts’ might be another test of this generation, whether they would receive plain solid truth or prefer the foam of men’s imagination. I was afraid the latter might be the case, and to leave men guiltless. I thought it might be well to send No. 1 to all the ministers in the Free Church. I wrote to friends in the North and South, proposing that they should take charge of Synods for this purpose, and hope the plan will be executed.” See *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 26. J. K. Popham, reviewing a book of Anderson’s sermons, says, “We must confess that Mr. Anderson’s *John Knox Tracts* please us most, of his writings. They are short and for the most part simple and clear,” *Gospel Standard*, Vol. 93 (1927), p. 339.

⁸⁸ The Free Presbyterian Library in Glasgow contains forty-seven volumes of Anderson’s sermons that were taken down by hearers and carefully transcribed into books. The

1895 when they were received as a congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. James S. Sinclair, the first editor of the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, became their minister in 1896. Following Sinclair's death in 1921 the John Knox congregation united with the St. Jude's Free Presbyterian congregation in Glasgow under the ministry of Neil Cameron.

II. THE BACKGROUND TO WHY ANDERSON LEFT THE FREE CHURCH

There were four strands to the history behind Anderson's departure from the Free Church. They were:

- (i) His criticism of the preaching and practice of John Milne, the Free Church minister of Perth;
- (ii) His censuring of two Free Church ministers in a sermon preached in the Hope Street Gaelic Church;
- (iii) His reflections against the character of ten of his own elders;
- (iv) His producing a pamphlet critical of the Glasgow Presbytery whilst his own conduct was being reviewed by that Presbytery.

A common theme running through all four strands is that Anderson disparaged and criticised both his brethren in the ministry and his elders, without raising cases against them in Church courts.

(a) John Milne's sermons at John Knox's

As we have noticed, shortly after the death of his first wife in 1847, it appears that Anderson slipped into the habit, whilst he was preaching, of criticising the ministry in general, and the Free Church ministry in particular.⁸⁹ This practice led to a flashpoint in September 1850. Anderson had agreed to preach in Aberdeen and on his way he stayed at the house of John Milne, the minister of St. Leonard's Free Church in Perth. Milne was a close friend of Andrew and Horatius Bonar⁹⁰ and

index to each volume usually details both the date that Anderson preached the sermon and the date(s) that they were read to the congregation after his death.

⁸⁹ *The Case of the Rev. Jonathan R. Anderson of Glasgow before the Church Courts, with authentic documents, illustrative and explanatory* (Glasgow, 1852), p. 5 (cited afterwards as the *Case of J. R. Anderson*).

⁹⁰ Horatius Bonar was the author of Milne's biography, *Life of the Rev. John Milne of Perth*, from which we have already quoted. Milne was born in Peterhead in 1807. He studied at



*John Milne, Free Church Minister of
St. Leonard's, Perth.*

William Chalmers Burns, and earlier of Robert Murray M'Cheyne. Milne's theological stance was similar to that of the Bonars. In contrast to the emphasis of the Bonar-M'Cheyne circle, Anderson's theological position was representative of the doctrinal-experimental branch of Scottish Calvinism that found expression in men like John Love and Gavin Parker.

Before going to Perth, Anderson had written to Milne informing him of his intention to go to Aberdeen, adding that he was "fagged and wished a little repose".⁹¹ He asked him to preach at John Knox's on Sabbath 29th September 1850 whilst he would

preach for Milne at the weekday prayer meeting and take his place whilst he was in Glasgow. Anderson intended to be away for two Sabbaths and had arranged for John M'Kechnie,⁹² a Free Church Gospel preacher to supply on the following Sabbath after Milne. Almost two years later, when the Glasgow Presbytery was prosecuting a libel against Anderson,

Marischal College, Aberdeen. After receiving licence he held the evening lectureship at Gilcomston Church, Aberdeen. He was ordained at St. Leonard's, Perth, in 1839. He became a Free Church minister at the Disruption. He was translated to be the minister of the European congregation in Calcutta in 1853, but returned to his old Perth congregation in 1858. Milne died in 1868. See also *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 270.

⁹¹ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 56.

⁹² The Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery of the Free Church describe M'Kechnie as a "Preacher of the Gospel in connection with the Free Church, now or lately residing in Glasgow". It does not appear that M'Kechnie was ever ordained in the Free Church. See *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland, 5th April 1848-29th April 1856*, NRS, CH3/146/35, Meeting of 6th October 1850, p. 322. These minutes are located at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow and are cited afterwards as *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*. M'Kechnie's name is not included in *AFCS*, Vol. 1. He gave evidence to the Glasgow Presbytery of the Free Church when it was dealing with the libel against Anderson. In his diary for 17th January 1852, just a few months before he left the Free Church, Anderson hints at M'Kechnie's becoming a missionary in his congregation; see *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 17.

M'Kechnie reported the details of a conversation he had had with Anderson before he invited Milne to preach to the John Knox's congregation. If the report of this conversation is accurate, it throws considerable light on Anderson's thinking when he made the invitation to Milne to supply in his place. M'Kechnie stated that he had told Anderson that the preaching of Mr. Macrae of Greenock⁹³ would be more acceptable to the congregation than that of John Milne. M'Kechnie was then questioned by the Presbytery on how Anderson had responded to this suggestion. M'Kechnie answered by saying he could not remember Anderson's reply; however, he had a clear recollection that he appeared distinctly unfavourable to the ministry of John Milne. Following this conversation with Anderson, M'Kechnie had informed one of the John Knox's elders (George Cowan) of what had been said and Cowan was able to recall what M'Kechnie had told him regarding Anderson's response to the suggestion of inviting John Macrae in preference to Milne. Anderson was opposed to inviting Macrae due to the fact that Greenock was very near to Anderson's church. He was fearful that some in his congregation would be so impressed with Macrae's preaching that they would leave John Knox's and be drawn away to Greenock. However, by inviting Milne there was little danger of that taking place.⁹⁴

Whilst in his manse at Perth, Anderson conversed with Milne on a range of topics. Milne received Anderson with brotherly affection and could not recall any difference between them.⁹⁵ It was very different with Anderson; he made notes of what Milne had said and was dissatisfied with what he saw in the Perth manse, and with the way Milne had conducted family worship.⁹⁶ In accordance with their prior agreement to

⁹³ This is a reference to John Macrae (1794-1876) or "Big Macrae" as he was known by his appreciative hearers. He was ordained in 1833 and had been minister in the Church of Scotland at Ness and Knockbain (translated in 1839). The minister and congregation left to form the Knockbain, Munloch, Free Church at the Disruption. Macrae was translated to the Greenock Gaelic charge in 1849, to Lochs (Lewis) in 1857, and to Carloway in 1864. He resigned from the ministry in 1871. For biographical details, see *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*, pp. 115-126; Nicol Nicolson, *The Reverend John Macrae: Knockbain, Greenock, Lewis* (Inverness, 1924); G. N. M. Collins, *Big Macrae* (Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1976).

⁹⁴ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 64.

⁹⁵ See the deposition of Milne when the libel against Anderson was being considered before the Glasgow Free Church Presbytery, *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 56.

⁹⁶ See the deposition of John Cuthbertson, one of the ten demitting Knox elders, when the libel against Anderson was being considered, *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 57.

exchange pulpits for the coming Sabbath, Milne travelled to Glasgow on the Saturday and preached twice on the Sabbath. His text in the morning was, Hosea 14:5, “I will be as the dew unto Israel”, and in the evening Jeremiah 31:3, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love”. The general impression of the majority of the congregation seems to have been very favourable. Many said, “They had not experienced such a blessed day in Knox’s church for a long time. Others, however, took an opposite view; amongst these were two of Anderson’s twelve elders.”⁹⁷

When Anderson returned, it became apparent that he was highly displeased with those who approved of Milne’s ministry at John Knox’s. His hearers inferred from his subsequent public comments on Milne’s preaching that he believed that Milne preached “another gospel”.⁹⁸ In addition, Anderson spoke to his elders in private relating to them his conversations with Milne and what he had seen in the Perth manse.⁹⁹ He argued further, that Milne “could not preach spiritually sound sermons; and that the appearance he made on that day in Knox’s Church must have been the effect of his intercourse with him while they were together for two or three days in Perth”.¹⁰⁰

(b) Anderson’s Hope Street sermon

On 6th October 1850, just days after Anderson’s return from Aberdeen, the Glasgow Presbytery appointed him to preach in the Hope Street Gaelic congregation on 17th November 1850.¹⁰¹ It is not clear why he was appointed to preach at Hope Street as the congregation was not

⁹⁷ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 5.

⁹⁸ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 5. Rabbi Duncan’s assessment of Milne’s preaching in a conversation to Horatius Bonar was as follows: “Dr. John Duncan, mentioned to me that he had heard Mr. Milne, many years ago, in Mr. Moody Stuart’s and that he did not altogether assent to some of his opening statements, thinking them not quite theologically correct.” “But,” says he, “I heard the whole sermon to the end, and soon I felt that I was listening to a man that loved Christ better than I did myself”; see Bonar, *John Milne*, p. 19.

⁹⁹ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 56. One of Anderson’s elders stated that the tendency of Anderson’s notes in his journal was to represent Mr. Milne as a carnal man. “By carnal man, he understood that Mr. Milne was destitute of grace.”

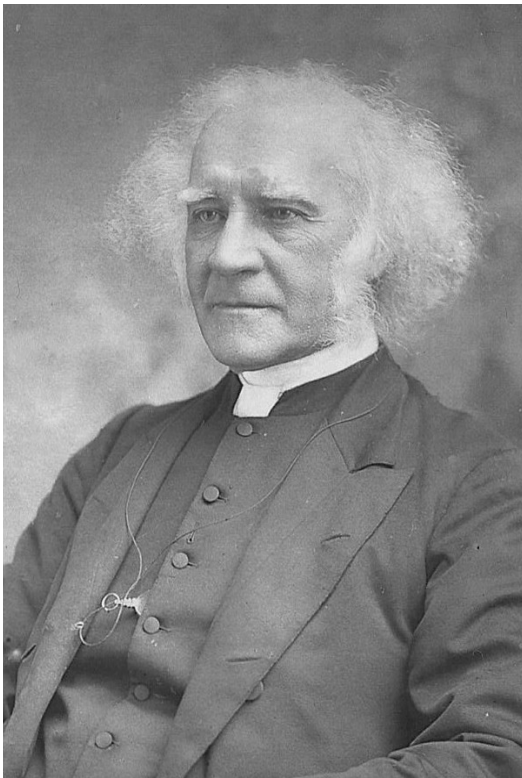
¹⁰⁰ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, p. 203. The Hope Street Free Gaelic Church moved into a former Congregational church building in the late 1880s. The congregation retained this building in 1900 but it was destroyed by fire in 1957. After a period of moving from building to building they acquired the St. Vincent Street former United Presbyterian building in 1971. For the history of the Hope Street Free Gaelic congregation, see MacDonald, *Glasgow’s Gaelic Churches*, pp. 18-22, 34-39, 68-69.

vacant; a young probationer, Robert M'Gillivray, having been inducted as the minister in 1848. Prior to his induction at Hope Street, the congregation had dwindled to a mere handful and it appears that the task of rebuilding it proved too much for the young man and his health broke down. In 1852 he was advised not to preach during the winter but to pass the time in Bute.¹⁰² The most likely reason, then, for Anderson's being appointed to preach at Hope Street was the illness of the minister. Still highly dissatisfied with John Milne's preaching, Anderson took as his text at Hope Street, Isaiah 27:11, "When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour".¹⁰³ The sermon had two main divisions, the first being a description of those referred to in the text – "a people of no understanding" – and the second being the judgment pronounced upon them. The first head proved to be the main source of offence as Anderson detailed those who, at the present time in his view, were without understanding. Amongst those in authority that were without understanding were both Houses of Parliament, Magistrates and Town Councils, the Press, and schools and schoolmasters. He then lists the Churches that were without understanding. The list is comprehensive: to Romanism and the Church of England he adds the English Dissenters, the Scottish Establishment – which he refuses to call a Church – the

¹⁰² NRS, CH16/3/3/1, *Minutes of Hope Street Free Gaelic Church Deacons' Court*, 12th March 1849, p. 16; cited in MacDonald, *Glasgow's Gaelic Churches*, p. 36.

¹⁰³ Neil Cameron, in his extracts from Anderson's diary, has a footnote against the entry for 9th January 1851 stating that Anderson's text in Hope Street was 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 and that this sermon "kindled a wide controversy and resulted in Mr. Anderson's leaving the Free Church". See Cameron, p. 1. This footnote is inaccurate on two counts. First, as detailed above, Anderson's text at Hope Street on 17th November 1850 was Isaiah 27:11 and it was this sermon that led to his effectively being rebuked by the Glasgow Presbytery when it approved the report of its Committee of Privy Censure. Cameron confuses the November 1850 sermon with another Hope Street sermon preached a year later on 23rd November 1851 when his text was 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness". This second sermon was soon published as a booklet, *A Testimony for the Truth* (Edinburgh, 2nd edn., 1852). The second inaccuracy is the statement that the Hope Street sermon (either of 1850 or 1851) led to Anderson's leaving the Free Church. As this paper seeks to show, there were far more significant events that led to this than the Hope Street sermons. The sermons do, however, form part of the overall milieu that contributed to his departure from the Free Church. These inaccuracies are repeated by Pitt, Vol. 1, pp. 11-12; Vol. 2, p. 14. Ian MacDonald, presumably following Cameron, cites the incorrect text of scripture, "Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson", p. 216.



Alexander Somerville (left) and William Arnot (right), the two ministers in the Glasgow Presbytery that Anderson admitted he had criticised in his November 1850 Hope Street sermon.

United Presbyterians, the Reformed Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, and the Free Church. With respect to the latter, he rejoices that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* has not yet been tampered with, but then goes on to state, “There is but one testimony from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West that her congregations are dead and her ministers are like them too”.¹⁰⁴

He also used the sermon to deliver a salvo against two ministers in the Glasgow Presbytery whose preaching he considered to be as unsatisfactory as that of John Milne. The two ministers he aimed at by allusion, though not by name, were Alexander Somerville and William Arnot.¹⁰⁵ Somerville was the minister of the Anderston congregation in Glasgow, a friend of Milne’s, and another member of the Bonar-

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix I to this paper for notes of this sermon.

¹⁰⁵ Although the Presbytery minutes conceal the identity of Somerville and Arnot, Robert Candlish makes clear who Anderson had in view in a speech before the 1852 General Assembly; see *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland held at Edinburgh, May 1852* (Edinburgh, 1852), p. 272 (cited afterwards as *PGAFCS* with year). This speech is given below in Appendix II.

M'Cheyne circle.¹⁰⁶ William Arnot was the minister of St. Peter's, Glasgow, and in 1863 succeeded Robert Rainy as minister of the Free High Church in Edinburgh.¹⁰⁷ Anderson specifically criticised preaching which was considered to be a "fine oration", or could be classified as "descriptive preaching". In addition to the criticisms of Somerville and Arnot, he delivered a series of sweeping censures against large groups of ministers.¹⁰⁸

As a consequence of the sermon, a Presbytery "Committee of Privy Censure" was appointed to confer with Anderson and a meeting was arranged for 10th December 1850. Dr. John Smyth, the minister of St. George's, Glasgow, was appointed as the convener. The report of the committee indicates that Anderson was asked by committee members if he had a manuscript copy of his sermon, to which he replied that he did not, as the sermon had not been written out. The committee then proceeded to read from a manuscript purporting to be a "Sketch and Excerpts" from the sermon taken down by a hearer in the Hope Street Church.¹⁰⁹ Before doing this, they pointed out that these notes were being read only as a means of explaining the rumours that were circulating regarding the character of Anderson's sermon. After he had heard the excerpts, Anderson made it quite plain that some of the expressions imputed to him he had never used at all and others, though used by him, were accompanied by explanations that qualified their meaning and modified their character. However, there were other observations imputed to him that he was unsure whether he had used

¹⁰⁶ For biographical details of Alexander Neil Somerville (1813-1889), see G. Smith, *A Modern Apostle: Alexander N. Somerville* (London, 1891); Memoir by his son W. F. Somerville in A. N. Somerville, *Precious Seed Sown in Many Lands* (London, 1890), pp. ix-xlvii; *DSCHT*, p. 787; entry in *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁷ For biographical details of William Arnot (1808-1875), see A. Fleming (his daughter) (ed.), *Autobiography of the Rev. William Arnot and Memoir* (London, 1877); *DSCHT*, p. 32; entry in *ODNB*; C. G. M'Crie, *Sketches and Studies contributed to the British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (Ayr, 1885), pp. 136-149.

¹⁰⁸ *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 272; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁹ The sermon has never previously been published. The writer recently obtained several handwritten volumes of Anderson's sermons and lectures similar to those referred to in footnote 88. In one of the volumes are notes of this sermon. At the conclusion of the sermon there is the following handwritten comment: "The following copy of Notes of sermon preached at Hope Street Free Church by the Revd. J. R. Anderson of Knox Free Church made use of by the Glasgow Presbytery against Mr. Anderson when attempt was made by that Court to criminate him for preaching it. The Notes were disclaimed by Mr. Anderson as unsound." See Appendix I.

them or not; and “if he had used them he regretted having done so, and desired to withdraw them”.¹¹⁰

The Committee of Privy Censure inquired whether Anderson, in his discourse, had criticised the style of preaching of several brethren in the Presbytery, characterising some of their sermons as “fine orations” and others as merely “descriptive preaching”. At first Anderson responded by saying that it was of pulpit ministrations generally that he was speaking and with regard to the “fine oration” he did not refer to any specific minister in the Free Church. However, when he was pressed, it became clear that in some of his criticisms he did have two ministers in the Glasgow Presbytery in view. He then confessed that it was wrong for him to have spoken as he did and that he was wrong to have listened to reports made to him. He then confessed that he had aggravated the wrong in bringing before a public audience what should have been a matter of private conversation with Somerville and Arnot. At this point he withdrew whatever was offensive in the observations he had made.

The report of the committee made the following devastating observations on Anderson’s sermon: “As regards the general strain of indiscriminate censure and condemnation which seems to have pervaded the discourse, the committee are unanimously of opinion that the language employed was such as it was highly improper to use anywhere and most especially in the pulpit. Nor can they feel themselves at liberty to withhold expression of their strong and decided conviction that such a style of preaching, in which unqualified and sweeping censures are pronounced on public bodies and large classes of men, is unwarrantable and injurious and ought not to be repeated.” The committee concluded its report by expressing the hope that the conference, by God’s grace, would lead Mr. Anderson to greater caution in order that a recurrence would not take place, that the “ministry be not blamed”.¹¹¹

The Committee of Privy Censure gave in its report at a meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery on 8th January 1851.¹¹² After the report had been given in, Anderson responded in a two-hour speech vigorously defending his sermon. In response to this, Robert Buchanan said he had

¹¹⁰ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 60.

¹¹¹ The Report is not included in the Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery but was kept *in retentis* by the Clerk. The Press, however, obtained a copy and it was printed in the *Scottish Guardian*. The committee’s report is given in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 60-62, their observations on Anderson’s indiscriminate censures being on p. 61.

¹¹² *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 60, incorrectly dates this report as being given in on 8th January 1852.

never been more surprised by anything than by the contrast between the tone and spirit of Mr. Anderson in the conference and his appearance now before the Presbytery.¹¹³ In the Presbytery he was defending himself, contrary to his profession of repentance he had made to the Committee of Privy Censure. Buchanan enlarged on this in a speech in the Glasgow Presbytery on 10th May 1852, when he observed that on the night the committee's report was considered by the Presbytery it was expected that Anderson would acquiesce in the committee's findings. However, "to the astonishment of the committee . . . instead of acquiescing in the report he got up and read a statement in the course of which he repeated the offensive attacks which to the committee he had confessed to be wrong. Furthermore, he proceeded to read what he called a sketch of the sermon complained of – a sketch which astonished everybody, by the fact of its containing nothing in it whatever regarding the matter with which he was charged."¹¹⁴

Clearly, Anderson's position had hardened between his appearance before the Committee of Privy Censure and the meeting of Presbytery on 8th January 1851, as his diary indicates:

2nd January 1851 "I have been led to admire His ways in the affair of the Presbytery. It seems to be becoming apparent they have fallen into a capital blunder, but I pray the Lord will over-rule for His own glory and the advancement of His cause. Oh, what need have I to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves! And to beware of men that are as subtle as serpents, and cruel as ravens."¹¹⁵

3rd January 1851 "Resumed my Plea before the Presbytery, which is swelling in my hand;" and then he adds, "Mr. C. kindly brought Notes of the sermon last year in Hope Street."¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *PGAFCs*, 1852, p. 272.

¹¹⁴ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 39. The handwritten volume of sermons in the writer's possession, besides containing the notes of the Hope Street sermon of 17th November 1850 used by the Presbytery, also contains a copy of the sermon notes that Anderson read to the Presbytery. As we observe shortly, the latter set of notes was probably produced by one of Anderson's elders who was present at Hope Street. We have reproduced the former set of notes in Appendix I, not because we consider them more accurate – Anderson clearly thought them faulty – but because they were initially used by the Presbytery. The latter set of notes is considerably longer. For comparison, we give in Appendix I both versions of the critical passage where Anderson was, as he admitted, reflecting on the preaching of Somerville and Arnot.

¹¹⁵ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 3.

8th January 1851 [Before going to the Presbytery] “Was led somehow to finish the pleadings in my ‘Vindication’ to the Presbytery.”¹¹⁷

The matter ended in the Glasgow Presbytery by Anderson accepting the report of the committee. In order to prevent the incident being reported widely in the newspapers, the meetings of the Presbytery were held largely in private when the issue was discussed.¹¹⁸ Buchanan’s assertion that Anderson was acting in a duplicitous way by saying one thing to the Committee of Privy Censure and another to the Presbytery could be correct. Another more likely interpretation, as we have noted, is that after his appearance before the committee he changed his mind on some of the issues. Anderson’s diary in the days leading up to the Presbytery certainly gives no indication of the contrition referred to in the report of the Committee of Privy Censure.

The diary entry reflecting on the Presbytery meeting of 8th January 1851 is as follows:

I was kept perfectly composed, though having only blind men to deal with, I could make nothing of them. The truth of God is nothing accounted of in what is called a Court of His house. . . . The Report of the Committee was read, and then I read my Statement of two hours length. The ferment which it caused was very great, and sundry speeches were made, but from first to last I did not hear pure language except from Mr. C.¹¹⁹ I saw I could

¹¹⁷ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 8.

¹¹⁸ The Presbytery minutes of 8th January 1851 are very brief. See *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 216-218. The minute relating to Anderson reads as follows: “Dr. Lorimer moved that the Report be approved, which then being seconded by Dr. Roxburgh was unanimously agreed to: and this Report containing Mr. Anderson’s acknowledgement of wrong done to certain of his brethren in the language he employed in the pulpit in the sermon referred to, and his expressions of regret for the same is ordered to be kept *in retentis*.”

¹¹⁹ We cannot identify “Mr. C.”, mentioned in the diary for 3rd and 8th of January, with certainty. The man in question gave Anderson notes of the 1850 Hope Street sermon and was a member of Presbytery. It could be Peter Currie, the minister of the Stockwell Church. He was an Old Light Burgher who had joined the Church of Scotland in 1839 and then came out with the Free Church in 1843. However, the most likely identification is Anderson’s own Presbytery elder – George Cowan. If this is correct, then in January 1851 Cowan was prepared to assist Anderson and is spoken of by him as the only one in the Presbytery with “pure language”. In little over a month, Cowan would become, in Anderson’s view, his bitterest opponent.

make nothing of it, and withdrew my statement, and so the matter dropped. I hope I get good from the affair.¹²⁰

In his diary in the days following the Presbytery, Anderson is still reflecting on what had taken place.

9th January 1851 “I still revert to the Hope Street Sermon and to the sad carnality of the judges. But there is another judge, and a higher tribunal: oh, for mercy to stand there under the covert of the blood of Christ renewed and sanctified by His Spirit to the praise of His grace.”¹²¹

10th January 1851 “The Committee’s Report appeared in the *Guardian*: but what, after all the noise, what have they found? Next to nothing: and my liberty remains unimpaired. Nay, people are expressing their gratitude at the good they are getting by the rebukes tendered to their ministers, and yet I am reviled and hunted down. Let me in patience possess my soul and look for the day of reckoning!”¹²²

12th January 1851 [The first Sabbath after the Presbytery] “The Lecture at first exceedingly solemn – the congregation still as stone, sending to the pulpit a chilling awe. My subject, Matthew 21:12-22. Led naturally to what I had witnessed in the Presbytery.”¹²³

Not only does the diary not contain any note of contrition on Anderson’s part, it gives further evidence of his antipathy to the views of William Arnot. He begins on 4th January 1851 to write a review of a publication by Arnot entitled *Streams in the Desert*. Two days later he records, “I wrote a little of my review of *Streams in the Desert* and discovered more and more of its silliness and worthlessness. How blinded men must be to endure such trash for a moment, under the name of religious instruction.” He then adds four days later, “I wrote a little of the critique on *Streams in the Desert* by Arnot, and was perfectly

¹²⁰ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 8-9.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 10.

¹²² *ibid.*, p. 11.

¹²³ *ibid.*, pp. 12-13. Matthew 21:12-22 are the accounts of the Lord Jesus Christ cleansing the temple and of the barren fig tree.

sick by the senseless trash which it contains. Oh, what would I do were there not one whose eyes are a flame of fire, and those eyes upon the truth.”¹²⁴

Anderson was not satisfied with merely reviewing Arnot’s publication; he then wrote to James Gibson, the Clerk of the Glasgow Presbytery, seeking an interview in order to voice to him his estimate of Arnot’s publication. When they met, Gibson gave it as his view that Arnot’s material was “very bad”, then added, “but the unity of the brotherhood must not be disturbed”. In consequence of this Gibson shrank from bringing it before the Presbytery. He further observed to Anderson that, “Truth is fallen in the streets and I fear there is none to lift her”.¹²⁵ Learning temporarily from his previous mistake of not first dealing with an offending brother privately, Anderson went to see Arnot to point out the blunders in *Streams in the Desert*. The diary records the outcome of the visit, “I found the proverb true, ‘He that reproveth a fool, getteth to himself a blot’. . . . I never in my life came into contact with such a lump of blindness and pride and hypocrisy. He affected to pity me, and said he would try and cast me on the Lord! Oh, my soul, come not thou into their assemblies.”¹²⁶

Following the Presbytery meeting that had dealt with his Hope Street sermon, Anderson was critically examining more of the books written by men in the Bonar-M’Cheyne circle. His assessment is trenchant; he writes in his diary, “I went over to town and looked into *The Mount of Olives* and *The Morning of Joy* and was disgusted with the senseless flowery trash that is there served up as religious instruction. The men can scarcely be called novel writers, and yet all wonder after the beast.”¹²⁷ The author of the first of these books was James Hamilton¹²⁸ while the second work was Horatius Bonar’s sequel to his *The Night of Weeping*.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 6, 10.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 15. See also *The Alarm! A magazine for the times*, April 1855, p. 151 (cited afterwards as *Alarm*). Two and a half years after he left the Free Church, Anderson began a monthly magazine called *The Alarm!*, which was printed in Glasgow and ran for eighteen months. The first issue is dated January 1855 and the final issue June 1856, with the pagination running continuously.

¹²⁶ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 16-17.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 40.

¹²⁸ James Hamilton (1814-1867) graduated from Glasgow University in 1835. His first appointment in December 1838 was as an assistant to Robert Candlish at St. George’s Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. After less than a year, in which a close lifelong friendship with Candlish was formed, he became an assistant and successor to James

(c) Anderson's controversy with his elders over their support of John Milne

No sooner had the Presbytery sought to limit the damage of the Hope Street sermon than Anderson's views of John Milne were confirmed by a detailed report of a sermon by him in the *Glasgow Examiner* of 1st February 1851.¹²⁹ In a review of the newspaper report, four years later, Anderson classified the sermon as "undisguised Morisonianism".¹³⁰ In his attempt to change the opinion of the majority of his Session regarding John Milne's preaching, Anderson completely failed. Hence, on 9th February 1851, he preached a sermon on Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out". During the sermon he denounced certain individuals in the congregation and laid at the door of those who are regarded as the people of God:

- (a) The sin of want of discrimination between the truth and the opposite error.
- (b) The sin of rashly giving forth their judgment in favour of error against the truth.

Wilson, the minister of Abernyte in the Presbytery of Dundee, where he was very near to Robert M'Cheyne at St. Peter's, Dundee. In January 1841 he was ordained the minister of Roxburgh Place Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. After a very short pastorate of little over six months he was inducted to the National Scottish Church, Regent Square, in London, where he remained for the rest of his life. The Regent Square Church had been built in 1827 for Edward Irving. Hamilton was a prolific author; many of his writings were reprinted in a collected edition of his works which ran to six volumes, published between 1869 and 1873. In addition, he edited the *Presbyterian Messenger* (the organ of the Presbyterian Church in England) and *Evangelical Christendom* (the organ of the Evangelical Alliance). Under Hamilton's ministry in 1843, Regent Square Church severed its connection with the Church of Scotland and joined the Free Church of Scotland and became associated with the Presbyterian Church in England. Hamilton's biography was written by William Arnot, *Life of James Hamilton* (London, 1870). See also Kenneth M. Black, *The Scots Churches in England* (Edinburgh, 1906), pp. 112-152; R. Buick Knox, "The Relationship between English and Scottish Presbyterianism 1836-1876", in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 21:1 (1981), pp. 43-66.

¹²⁹ *Glasgow Examiner*, 1st February 1851, p. 1, columns 1-2. This was in a long-running series of articles on "Our Scottish Clergy" that gave a summary of the preacher's career and an outline of a sermon. The article was entitled, "No. CCVIII, Rev. John Milne, Free St. Leonard's, Perth". Jonathan Ranken Anderson had himself appeared in the series three years earlier in January 1848. The sketch of Anderson was reprinted in John Smith, *Our Scottish Clergy: Fifty-six sketches, biographical, theological and critical, including clergymen of all denominations* (Edinburgh, Second series, 1849), pp. 27-35.

¹³⁰ *Alarm*, p. 63. The term "Morisonianism" is a reference to James Morison (1816-1863) who, during his period of study, was John Brown of Edinburgh's favourite student. Brown was one of the theological professors in the United Secession Church. On the day of his licensing, Brown spoke of Morison as "the hope of the Church"; see Fergus Ferguson, *A History of the Evangelical Union* (Glasgow, 1876), p. 5. Morison became engrossed with the

- (c) The sin of resisting earnest exhortation, addressed to them, to show them the evil of the course they had taken.
- (d) The sin of untender and cruel treatment of the maintainers of truth and showing favour to the opposers of it.

He concluded by saying, “The Lord will not return unto this congregation until the Achan be removed from it”.¹³¹ The allusions in the sermon were generally understood to refer to the majority of the Knox elders who still stood by their appreciation of John Milne. Anderson’s reference in the sermon to those who said “the Lord is present” and “I was refreshed” made this certain to the minds of the elders. These were the precise words of one of the elders in a conversation he had with Anderson.¹³² He may well have been encouraged to deliver this salvo by receiving, in the week prior to delivering this sermon, visits to his house by three members of his congregation who told him they agreed with him with regard to his assessment of John Milne.¹³³ Anderson’s own view of the sermon could hardly have been more different from that of many of his hearers; he writes: “I was helped in a way I have not been for some Sabbaths. The congregation was very attentive, and many weeping under the truth. I hear that some were so overpowered by the offers of Christ, they thought the whole congregation would have been melted.”¹³⁴

(i) The Jezebel proposal

The next day a majority of the elders signed a letter respectfully requesting Anderson to call a meeting of the Session in order to come to

labours of Charles Grandison Finney and began to question the doctrine of a definite atonement. If his mind had been turned in this direction by John Brown, it was Finney who gave coherence and definition to his thinking. By 1839 he was reading Finney’s *Lectures on Revivals* and writing to his father, “get Finney’s *Lectures on Revivals* and preach like him; I have reaped more benefit from the book than from all other human compositions put together”, Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism* (Westport, Connecticut, 1878), p. 98. Soon Morison was putting Finney’s techniques into practice by holding nightly meetings in his father’s Secession congregation, with “anxious meetings” to follow. His Gospel appeals were based on his belief that Christ had died for everyone. In Morison, the Double Reference Theory of the Secession Church had become Amyraldianism and would soon degenerate into Arminianism.

¹³¹ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 280-281, Meeting of 11th February 1852. See also *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 6, 11.

¹³² *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 6.

¹³³ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 36, 39-40.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

a right understanding of the persons he was referring to in the sermon. On the following evening, Tuesday, the monthly congregational prayer meeting was held when Anderson energetically warned the people against the sin of daring to meddle with faithful ministers, quoting the words, “touch not mine anointed” and added that in his opinion the best thing the Session could do would be to appoint a congregational fast, for humiliation on account of sin.¹³⁵ Writing in his diary after the prayer meeting Anderson is still reflecting on the Sabbath sermon, “To me, it was a very precious day, but it seems to have been felt other by some of my poor flock”.¹³⁶ That night the beadle verbally warned the members of the Session to attend a meeting two days later, on the Thursday evening, when Anderson told them they had sinned in sending in a request for a meeting. He was convinced that the whole issue was a device of Satan.¹³⁷ At the meeting Anderson announced he wanted to appoint a congregational fast on account of the present troubles.

Ten of the elders insisted that before appointing a fast it was needful to search out the sin and John Taylor, one of the elders, moved, “That the Moderator be requested to give the names of the persons alluded to in the sermon of Sabbath afternoon, as chargeable with great sin and as having resisted the earnest exhortations when spoken to, in order that they might be dealt with by the Kirk Session for their good”.¹³⁸ Rather provocatively, one of the elders called the proposal to hold a congregational fast a “Jezebel proposal”. In 1 Kings 21:9-12 Jezebel told the elders to proclaim a fast and at the same time set Naboth on high in order to murder him. The elder, George Cowan, later admitted that he had sinned in making the comment. In a conference held after the Session the elders pressed Anderson as to the evil of introducing personalities and weekday gossip into his sermons.¹³⁹ In

¹³⁵ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 6.

¹³⁶ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 45.

¹³⁷ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 6-7.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹³⁹ One of the statements of the elders when Anderson's case was before the Presbytery reflects on his introducing matters discussed in the Session into his sermons. The elder stated: “It may be of use here to state, as proof that Mr. Anderson was in the habit confessedly of alluding in the pulpit to the disagreeable position of affairs in the Kirk Session, that on a recent occasion, when he was visiting in the family of one of the members of the congregation (a duty rather rarely attended to by him), in course of conversation, Mr. A. said – ‘You may perhaps, not be aware that there are disputes between me and my Session?’ The member said, ‘I understand so’. Mr. Anderson, evidently surprised, said, ‘Indeed! Who told you?’ ‘You yourself told me,’ was the reply.

response, Anderson made the rather telling admission that “he heard many different things throughout the week, which he just put all into the cauldron, so that it was not wonderful that some of them should come out in the Sabbath services”.¹⁴⁰ After the Session had been meeting for some considerable time Anderson adjourned the conference for eight days stating that he would then reply to what had been said.¹⁴¹

Following the Session meeting Anderson could not sleep; his mind was running over what had taken place with the elders. He determined that Cowan, the chief offender, should be dealt with privately, for “the sin of foul and manifold calumnies”. He then wrote a note to him requesting him to call on him at noon on the Friday. With respect to this meeting, Anderson observed, “He was very simple and cordial, and I went from point to point till I drove him from all his refuge of lies, and he seemed to have nothing to stand upon in his charges”.¹⁴² The following Sabbath (16th February 1851), on his own admission, Anderson delivered a lecture that was “suitable to the temper of the elders”; he adds that “in the course of the lecture, and very unconsciously, their spirit and behaviour were severely reproved, but whether the rebuke will be taken or not, I cannot tell.”¹⁴³

The minister now regarded the majority of his elders as rebellious brethren.¹⁴⁴ When the Session re-convened on the following Thursday, 20th February 1851, Anderson made a long speech, in which he pointedly asserted that he had no one in view in the sermon on the afternoon of 9th February. It was in vain that the elders reminded him that he had used expressions that were the exact words of one of the

‘I told you!’ exclaimed Mr. A., still more surprised; ‘when did I tell you that?’ ‘You have told me frequently from the pulpit,’ was the answer; ‘often have I been under that belief, in hearing your frequent references to such things, which have pained me exceedingly, and rendered the preaching unprofitable’. ‘Well,’ replied Mr. A., ‘one cannot always control his feelings, even in the pulpit’.” *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 6-7 footnote.

¹⁴⁰ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴¹ Several months later Anderson commented in a sermon with regard to this meeting: “I listened for nearly two hours to all that some brethren, who thought they were greatly aggrieved, had to say; I solicited them to exercise the utmost freedom and candour; and, at the end, I said to them, that it was my persuasion from the first, that it was a device of Satan, and that all that I had heard confirmed me in this persuasion. I said, ‘I see distinctly the mark which his devices usually bear – he is a liar and a murderer’. There is not a particle of truth in all that you have said; it is just mere imagination.” *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 7.

¹⁴² *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 47-48.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 53.

elders. Anderson responded by calling upon the elders to believe on his bare word, that he did not intend to allude to any person, in the same way as the Presbytery had taken his word in the Hope Street Case. His main object seems to have been to bring a further accusation against George Cowan for his use of the term a “Jezebel proposal”. As we have noted, Cowan had already apologized for this; now for a second time Cowan acknowledged that he had sinned in the matter and for a second time Anderson expressed himself satisfied. He then abruptly said, “Let us pray”, and closed the meeting.¹⁴⁵ Clearly Anderson was not satisfied; he writes in his diary, “The truce is not very solid. We appear to agree, but in reality there is a serious difference. He (Cowan) broadly denied having used words of which I have the most distinct recollection.”¹⁴⁶

Less than a week later he is again writing, “I had some fearful views of the iniquity committed by the rebellious elders of our congregation, but hope I may be able to be firm in my position, faithful yet tender in my exhortation and rebukes. . . . One of the elders ran out, and I do not wonder at it, for their position is truly awful.”¹⁴⁷ The prayer meeting on 11th March witnessed yet another outburst by Anderson; his veiled comments on the evening were as follows: “I was afraid of the prayer meeting in the evening, but got through with much solemnity. I am led much into public affairs. I would rather keep to the exercises of the soul, but what can I do!”¹⁴⁸ What actually took place was this statement in his sermon aimed at the ten elders: “It is a foul calumny, a lie forged in the anvil of hell that he who is over you in the Lord, has ever attempted to subject you to any other authority than that of the Word of God.”¹⁴⁹ The following day there was a meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery. Anderson’s assessment of the gathering reveals all too clearly how he viewed that Church court: “I went to the Presbytery early. A poor place – the dead are there. The speeches are often very childish – the squabbles paltry and the schemes for Sustentation and Spiritual Distribution just like Towers of Babel. The ministers are little removed from machine makers!”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁶ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 55.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁹ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 77.

As the month of March elapsed it was clear that Anderson's relationship with ten of his elders was reaching breaking point. On 17th March, as the communion season was approaching, the ten elders, anxious to come to some better understanding with their minister, sent a deputation to Anderson requesting a conference with him. He refused to meet them and viewed the request as coming from the "rebellious elders". The diary entry for the day details the grounds for refusing the request: "If I had injured anyone, let him come to me first, but if anything wrong in the ministry, let me be brought before my Presbytery. Mr. L (Joseph Leitch – one of the ten elders) said I had assailed someone's preaching. I asked him to say what it was that I had assailed, and what was the nature of the assault. But he said he could do neither – then I said, you ought to hold your tongue, and never speak of such a thing."¹⁵¹ A congregational meeting took place the following day which further revealed the distance between Anderson and the majority of his Session. He writes regarding the meeting: "I was short, but solemn and sweeping in the remarks made. The rebels looked very black, some of them as fierce as bulls of Bashan, and after a meeting of session, C (George Cowan) walked up the street to see if he could wile me to a conference, as he had already learned I had refused. I am glad I refused, for such a tissue of childish discontent and wretched fretting as I got from him, I seldom have heard."¹⁵²

(ii) John Knox's Communion – April 1851

At the end of March 1851 the Session met to purge the roll prior to the communion. The first name on the roll was George Cowan. Anderson announced to the Session that unless he would sign a written confession, which he had prepared,¹⁵³ Cowan would not be allowed to cross the threshold of John Knox's church at the communion season. After much unpleasant discussion, the meeting closed with the elder apologising for

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁵³ The ten elders regarded the confession drawn up by Anderson to be of a most degrading character. *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 7. It contained seven clauses, each of which began with the words, "I did wrong". The third clause reads, "I did wrong – in drawing up a paper and signing it and getting others to sign it, requesting the Moderator to call a meeting of Session to consider this matter. For hereby I called on the Session to usurp the place, and exercise the functions of the Presbytery, to whom alone it rightfully pertains to judge of a Minister's preaching." The entire confession, which Cowan refused to sign, is printed in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 53-54.

the third time. Cowan and Anderson then shook hands.¹⁵⁴ His diary contains a long description of the incident but, rather tellingly, makes no mention whatever of the written confession that Anderson had asked Cowan to sign with the threat he would not be allowed to cross the threshold of the church door unless he put his name to it. The diary account, which is so different from that of the elders, is as follows:

Tuesday 25th March 1851 My mind was led out with an activity which I could not restrain, upon the duty of putting George Cowan and his confederates in the session under discipline. For how can the Lord's Supper be observed, in the temper they manifest, and with the sin they have done, not repented of. I prayed again and again about it but felt perplexed and sad. But I thought the Lord had more interest by far in the congregation than I have, and so let my eyes be to Him, till He bring me out of the net.

I was occupied with this matter more or less all day, and in the evening the session met. I took up the communion roll, and the first name was George Cowan. I endeavoured, with all calmness and tenderness, to state how, as I supposed, matters stood, and proposed to the session two questions: first, whether they thought we were in a condition to eat the Lord's Supper, and secondly, whether they were satisfied with Mr. Cowan's repentance of the outrage he had committed. I know the enemy would rage. And so he was like a wild bull galled, yet held by a chain. But at last, a torrent of insolence and defiance was poured out by the culprit, and we had nothing for it but to name a committee to deal with him. I began firmly, yet solemnly, to dictate to the clerk the Minute, when I felt a solemn stillness came upon the meeting, and I felt it was a terrible thing, the discipline of the church. The effect was striking. He tamed down, and at last a reconciliation took place, and the matter dropped.

Wednesday 26th March 1851 I did not get home till twelve o'clock last night. I was wonderfully tranquil. But when I reviewed the affair of the usurping elders, I again wondered at the blindness and presumption of which they have been guilty. I wonder why men should be so anxious to get me to confess a fault – which they,

¹⁵⁴ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 7.

when put to it, could not define, and even when they did their uttermost, it was this, “you acted improperly in meddling with Mr. Milne’s ministry” – a charge too ludicrous to be looked at by any reasonable being. I have firmly resisted this sessional aggression, and hope I may get good from the annoyance it has given me.

But the evil lies far deeper than this, and it has come out in various quarters there is deep and bitter dissatisfaction with my ministry. And this is cloaked under professed zeal for the glory of God, and the purity and efficiency of my ministry. I think the surest way to promote these objects is to submit with all readiness of mind to the truth of God: to apply it faithfully each man to his own soul: and to endeavour to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.”¹⁵⁵

In the event the communion season appears to have been a time of great blessing. The assisting minister was Archibald Cook of Daviot. He arrived on Wednesday 2nd April 1851 and stayed with Anderson until the following Thursday (10th April). Anderson preached the action sermon and Cook told him afterwards, “He did not expect to hear in Scotland such faithfulness as he had heard that day, and blessed God he had been here”. Cook served the second table and Anderson said of Cook’s table address, “I never heard an address equal to Mr. Cook’s; it was short, pithy and rich. The view I got of the Sacrament was wonderful. I thought in receiving Christ therein set forth, I received the fulness of the Godhead, for it dwelleth in Him.” The last two sentences in Anderson’s diary for the communion Sabbath read, “The elders came round me at the close and shook hands cordially, and some with tears standing in their eyes. The enemy has thrust sore at us that we might fall, but the Lord helped us.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 88-90.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 102-103. Anderson’s full account of the communion is given in the diary, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 97-106. After the warmth of this communion in April 1851; a subsequent visit to Stratherrick in August 1851 where he and Archibald and Finlay Cook were the assisting ministers at Alexander Cook’s communion (Alexander was Finlay’s son); and a further visit to the John Knox Church by Archibald Cook for the April 1852 communion, Anderson’s relationship with the Cook brothers deteriorated. It is my intention to deal with some of this in a subsequent article. In addition, see Norman Campbell, *One of Heaven’s Jewels: Rev. Archibald Cook of Daviot and the (Free) North Church, Inverness* (Stornoway, 2009), especially chapter 9, “The lost friendship with Rev. J. R. Anderson”, pp. 191-198.

(iii) Criticism of Free Church ministers

During the summer of 1851, criticism of Free Church ministers was a constant refrain in Anderson's diary. An illustration of these criticisms can be seen in his observations on the Free Church General Assembly being held in Edinburgh. Alexander Duff, the missionary, was the Moderator of the General Assembly that year. Commenting on a newspaper account of the opening address, Anderson writes, "I glanced at Dr. Duff's opening address as Moderator of the General Assembly, I am glad I was not there. I cannot stand such inflated fulsome style of speaking on sacred things. Oh, where is the truth, where is the reason, where is the sense?"¹⁵⁷ With regard to the Assembly's day set apart for humiliation he notes, "I thought of this day as set apart for humiliation, and wished to enter into the appointment, though I judged it wise to keep away from what I am sure would be a painful exhibition of carnal conceit and hypocrisy: Samuel Miller of Glasgow conducting the services."¹⁵⁸ Anderson did, however, go to Edinburgh for the penultimate day of the Assembly; these are his comments on Alexander Duff's prayer: "The Moderator's prayer, a fine speech but certainly no prayer, and all the more dangerous that mention was made prominently of conversion, but what in the mouth of such men does conversion mean?"¹⁵⁹ He stayed in Edinburgh overnight in a house with two more ministers and was asked in the morning to conduct family worship; he refused and persuaded one of the other ministers to take the worship. These were his comments: "But such worship! The monstrous lies that the man uttered, with vain glory, flattery, bombast and folly;



Alexander Duff, Moderator of the 1851 Free Church General Assembly.

¹⁵⁷ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 143.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 147. Samuel Miller was the minister of St. Matthew's, Glasgow.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 149.

I, however kept quiet, and at breakfast the conversation offered me opportunities of quietly hitting the miserable thing which is pawned upon men as religion in these days.” His concluding assessment of the Assembly once he had got back to Glasgow was in these terms: “My soul begins to breathe a little, for truly I have been in little else than death since I went to Edinburgh.”¹⁶⁰

However, on some occasions Anderson’s criticisms were fair and accurate. He had a number of friends and supporters in the Free Church Congregation in Huntly, near Aberdeen. A new young minister had recently been set over them. After receiving a letter from one of his friends, several weeks after the General Assembly, he makes an interesting and quite appropriate observation in his diary: “A precious letter from Huntly, my predictions concerning the talented young minister are coming true already. He goes from house to house, and in the very first urged people to go to the Lord’s Table that are unfit for it. But whether fit or not, the practice is disgraceful, and proves the lad knows nothing of spiritual matters. To such God saith, ‘what hast thou to do to take up my statutes unto thy lips’.”¹⁶¹ The “lad” in question was the then twenty-five-year-old Robert Rainy who would eventually become the leader in the Free Church General Assembly and the Principal of New College, Edinburgh.

(iv) Congregational catechists

After the respite of the communion, Anderson’s relationship with the majority of the Session deteriorated further during the summer of 1851. This manifested itself in September 1851 when a new source of conflict arose between them concerning the congregational catechists. Connected to the congregation, and under the superintendence of the Kirk Session, were two catechists or local missionaries. Both were elders; one was Luke Henderson and the other George Cowan. Henderson and another elder, Joseph Anderson, were the two members of the Session who agreed with their minister in their estimate of John Milne’s ministry at John Knox’s in September 1850. Henderson had been appointed as a catechist towards the end of 1848 on a salary of £52 a year that was provided by church door collections and individual subscriptions. Cowan had been appointed a year later and his salary of £52 was paid

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 161.

directly through Anderson from an individual donor belonging to the congregation. Anderson, however, had never revealed the name of the donor to the Session. In addition to Cowan's salary, £8 was paid to him in order to purchase books. At the time of his appointing, the Session had had reason to regard the proposed arrangement as permanent and, knowing his suitability for the task, they had appointed Cowan as the second catechist. In turn, Cowan had given up his highly skilled manual employment as a machine maker.¹⁶²

At the monthly meeting of the Session, which met at the end of September 1851, Anderson informed the elders that the fund out of which Henderson received his salary was in debt to the treasurer by £22. This was due to two main causes; firstly, the last church door collection, which should have produced £20-£30, had dropped to £7, and secondly, some of the subscribers had ceased to pay their subscription. Several of the elders gave in reasons for not continuing their subscription that appear to have been unrelated to the difference between Anderson and the majority of the Session.¹⁶³ It seems likely, however, that Henderson's support for Anderson was the reason for the falling away of subscriptions. The Session meeting at which this took place was probably on the evening of Thursday 25th September. The typed diary for that day has been edited, with ellipses in several places, and accordingly the narrative gives no indication of what must have been a rather difficult meeting of the Session. The only exception is the last comment in the diary for that day, which reads, "Oh that I could learn to be silent: to avenge not myself; but rather to give place unto wrath".¹⁶⁴

The month of October 1851 was a watershed both for Anderson and the majority of the elders at John Knox's. For him the month began with a meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery which he describes in the following terms: "I was in the Presbytery all the day, and my soul utterly barren. The wrangling that goes on there proves that men have no spirituality and what would a poor creature gain by associating with such men? I was refreshed with G's (James Gibson) manly exposure of the liberalism of the day, and yet he only skimmed the surface. How difficult it is to be faithful in these times."¹⁶⁵ Less than a week later he records

¹⁶² *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 8, 63-64.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁴ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 249.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 253.

that not one of the elders was at the prayer meeting. His explanation, which seems unlikely to be correct was, “I suppose they are tired of such meetings, or do not find them to their taste”. That this was a trial to Anderson is plain; he notes, “The ministry is becoming more and more difficult – it seems a path beset with enemies and full of thorns”.¹⁶⁶

(v) A day in John Knox’s

On the following Sabbath, as seems clear from his diary, he was outspoken about what was taking place in the congregation. He writes: “The Lecture took a course very different from what I expected. A number of severe and pointed things came out, but I was almost perfectly clear from personal allusions in my own mind.”¹⁶⁷ This may have been so in Anderson’s mind but it was hardly how the elders viewed the matter. The lecture and sermon delivered by Anderson on that Sabbath were published very shortly afterwards in a little booklet entitled *A Day in Knox’s Free Church, Glasgow*. If the lecture and sermon are read without any appreciation of their historical setting, no fault would be found with them. However, reading them in the context of a controversy with a majority of his elders that had been in progress for over a year, they must be viewed in a somewhat different light.

The lecture was an exposition of Matthew 26:1-5, which contains the words, “Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified”. Anderson viewed the actions of the ten elders as an act of betrayal and treachery. Following his exposition of the Son of Man being betrayed he makes this application: “In this He is the pattern to His poor people, and affords solace to them under some of the sharpest trials to which they are subjected. They, too, frequently are betrayed. They confide in those who prove themselves unworthy of their confidence, and show kindness to those who seem to take no notice of such kindness, but altogether forget it, and imagine that they are laid in no obligations by it. . . . They, too, are the objects of treachery; they receive the opposite to that to which they are entitled. For their love, they get hatred; for their kindness they get barbarous cruelty. What is it that will sustain the people of God in such circumstances, under such trials? It is the thought that the Son of Man was betrayed. He was tempted, that He might learn experimentally to succour them that

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 256.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 259.

are tempted. If any of you are the objects of treachery, you will find your need of the tender sympathy of Him who was betrayed.”¹⁶⁸ Then when Anderson came to verses 3 and 4, which read, “Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him”, he comments regarding the elders of the people: “Ought they not to have been the friends of the best friend the people ever had? No: they must serve their own turn, gratify their own lusts, and get their little petty objects achieved, come of the people what may.”¹⁶⁹ The lecture concludes with three points of application, the opening sentences of the last of these reads: “See what Christ and His people receive at the hands of men – ecclesiastics, men in high places in the church – powerful men, affecting a marvellous zeal for true religion. Yet, with all their privileges, and pretensions, and qualifications, look at the spirit by which they are actuated. They have had successors in generations past, and they have them in the days in which we live.”¹⁷⁰

The sermon later in the day was from 2 Corinthians 2:15, “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish”. It dealt with the Christian ministry and contained the following statement: “Faithful ministers come into contact with corrupt men, with proud men, with men whose depravity has grown up into peculiar activity and strength, and whose deceitfulness works in a way we cannot comprehend. By this means, that which is unto God a sweet savour of Christ is converted into rank poison.”¹⁷¹ Setting aside the wisdom of speaking about the virtues of the Christian ministry when Anderson was in controversy with his elders, at the heart of which – in their view – was his behaviour as a minister, it is quite feasible that in his own mind he had no intention of making any personal allusions. It is, however, equally reasonable for the elders to have thought that these comments, in both the lecture and the sermon, were aimed directly at them and that Anderson was guilty of doing again what they thought he had done on previous occasions, of using the pulpit to criticise them.

¹⁶⁸ J. R. Anderson, *A Day in Knox's Free Church, Glasgow, being Notes of Lecture and Sermon delivered 12th October 1851* (Glasgow, 1851), p. 9. This pamphlet is as the title indicates – notes of the Lecture and Sermon. It has clearly been edited by Anderson and may not fully reflect what was actually spoken.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 27.

The following Sabbath was the one before the communion and somewhat to Anderson's surprise a number of the elders were absent from the morning services. His diary record is as follows: "A number of the rebellious elders were absent, perhaps hearing Dr. D.,¹⁷² but this never happened before on a Preparation Sabbath. I do not wonder, however, that the poor men skulk away from the truth. The word is against them, and it is natural they should be against it. I thought we were none the better of their return in the afternoon."¹⁷³ On the following Wednesday, the day before the Fast Day, the tensions and animosity in John Knox's becomes all too evident when Anderson records that he met one of his elders who spoke of "bringing me down".¹⁷⁴ Adding to the difficulties was a letter which arrived after the communion season had commenced, informing Anderson that the minister invited to assist could not come. He, therefore, concluded he would have to take all the services himself, but observed, "a dark cloud again hung over the congregation, and I felt convinced that power is withheld. An Achan is in the camp, and until it is purged, He will not be with us anymore."¹⁷⁵

(vi) Ten elders resign

The subject of the local missionaries in the congregation that first came up at the meeting of the Session on Thursday 25th September 1851 was taken up again just three days after the communion had finished at the meeting of the Session on Thursday 30th October 1851. Anderson told the Session he had called them together "to decide whether it was expedient that Mr. Luke Henderson should be continued as a local missionary in connection with the congregation".¹⁷⁶ Nine members of the Session supported a motion that it was not expedient to continue to support Henderson and that he should be given three months' notice of the termination of his position. Only two voted against – the Moderator and Joseph Anderson. After the vote had been taken, Anderson announced, "then I have to intimate, that the provision hitherto made for the support of Mr. Cowan, as a local missionary is now withdrawn

¹⁷² It is unclear to whom "Dr. D." refers. No minister in the Glasgow Presbytery in 1851 fits the abbreviation Dr. D. The most likely identification is John (Rabbi) Duncan.

¹⁷³ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 265-266.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 267.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 269.

¹⁷⁶ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 8.

and consequently that mission falls to the ground”.¹⁷⁷ This announcement, which was totally unexpected, was received by the Session with some surprise. After it was minuted, it was moved and seconded that “Mr. Cowan be still continued as a local missionary in connection with the congregation”. In opposition to this Anderson tabled a counter-motion – according to a report by the majority of the session “with a bitter emphasis” – that “Mr. Cowan be *dismissed* from that office”.¹⁷⁸ The motion to support Cowan’s continuation in office was supported by nine. Anderson’s motion received three votes, Luke Henderson, Joseph Anderson and himself. The Moderator then entered his protest against the vote and the meeting broke up. Again, the typed diary is edited and contains no details of what had taken place at this crucial meeting of the Session, beyond a statement by Anderson that though all men were against him he was in the right: “My session against me, my Presbytery against me, the Church against me. But I may say, there be more that be with us than with them, with them is the arm of flesh, but oh to be able to say, ‘With us is the Lord our God’. ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed.’”¹⁷⁹

The following day, Friday 31st October, Cowan sent in his resignation to Anderson. He felt that he could no longer act under a minister who was so much opposed to him. This put Cowan in a somewhat difficult position, as he had given up his occupation to become a catechist on the encouragement of Anderson, believing the support for him to be permanent. At his time of life he could not easily resume his former occupation. Within a matter of days he found himself without any means of gaining a livelihood for himself and those dependent on him.¹⁸⁰ This episode made very clear the lines of division in the Session and to the majority it appeared that Anderson’s response was rather vindictive.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 8, 63-64.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁹ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 273.

¹⁸⁰ Due to the sympathy and support of a number of private friends, Cowan was able to continue as a missionary in a destitute locality in Glasgow on the south side of the Clyde. *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 9 footnote.

¹⁸¹ Joseph Anderson, a John Knox’s elder, has recorded how he saw the division as it unfolded between his minister and the majority of his colleagues on the Session: “I frequently saw hasty tempers breaking out from them, while he seemed comparatively mild. I thought they could not be led by the Spirit, or they would have bridled their tongues, especially when he *seemed* [emphasis his] so gentle, and was apparently bringing forth fruit. I believed that he was right, and I therefore followed him: and they took their

The majority of the elders were of the opinion that Anderson was making individuals, over whom he had power in pecuniary matters, to suffer for their firm adherence to the favourable opinion they had formed of John Milne's preaching in September 1850. In this category of dependence on Anderson for financial matters, there was another person besides George Cowan. This was a deserving Highland student, whose support and education were provided for by funds entrusted to Anderson by a number of friends for distribution to the student as required. Because the student remained firm in his appreciation of Milne, Anderson deprived him of support at a moment's notice. This action left him in arrears for board and lodging. Anderson's response, when challenged about his attitude to both Cowan and the Highland student, was that they should "go away, and reconsider their opinion, as money was far too valuable to be thrown away on anything else than the pure truth".¹⁸²

Following the meeting of the session on 30th October the majority concluded that a breach with their minister was inevitable. They waited three further Sabbaths, and then on 17th November 1851 ten of the twelve John Knox elders sent in a letter of resignation to Anderson. They seemed to have been finally pushed to this decision by a lecture on one of the intervening Sabbaths on Matthew 26:6-13. In this lecture Anderson uttered from the pulpit the following fearful denunciation, which was plainly understood by many of the hearers to be directed against the ten elders who had considered it inexpedient that Luke Henderson should be continued in the office of local missionary: "There has been tremendous iniquity perpetrated within these walls. We believe that there are men in this congregation who have well nigh come to the verge of committing that sin for which we are forbidden to pray. There has been honour put upon a member of Christ's body here, and rather than acknowledge that honour, and give glory to Christ's name, they have had recourse to expedients which I dare not name, and if men

course," Joseph Anderson and William Anderson, *Reasons for leaving the ministry of the Rev. Jon. R. Anderson, Knox's Tabernacle, Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1857), pp. 5-6. The two elders who supported Anderson in his controversy with the majority of the Session were later to leave his ministry. Luke Henderson stayed with the Free Church when Anderson left in May 1852. Joseph Anderson left the Free Church and became an elder in the congregation that was formed by Anderson and his supporters after he left the Free Church. However, in 1856 he separated from him and was the joint author of the booklet, referenced above, which explains his reasons for doing so.

¹⁸² *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 5.

repent not, it shall be known to all in this congregation, what secret damning work has been going on.”¹⁸³

On which of the three Sabbaths between the 30th October and 17th November 1851 this outburst was made cannot be determined from extant documentation. However, Anderson’s diary during this period indicates what was uppermost in his mind.

Sabbath 2nd November 1851 I was sorely tossed in the morning – the most sweeping and condemnatory views of my poor elders came before me, and I said it is impossible for me to say these things. I cried that they may be taken away, and so I got relief and went to church quite composed. . . . The Lecture opened to me amazingly, and I had plenty of strength – only rather vehement. The afternoon, if possible, more wonderful still – two elders off, and I have since understood a third said, “this is my last, I can stand it no longer”. The wonder is the men have stood it so long.

Sabbath 9th November 1851 A precious day! The Lecture full, tender and winning, yet some terrible things against transgressors.

Monday 10th November 1851 A very blessed day – full of inward peace and joy. I feel we are already in the midst of persecution, and the most intense hatred is now being let loose upon those who stand by the pure truth, and refuse to bow the knee to the image of Baal, so popular in this evangelical age.

Wednesday 12th November 1851 In my walk got some striking views of His ways with us as a congregation. We are, so to speak, sick, and must cast off the Achans. . . . I also heard that people are very busy labouring to detach the congregation from me, but the Lord will fight for me, And I shall hold my peace.¹⁸⁴

The elders’ resignation letter, dated 17th November 1852, reads as follows:

To the Moderator and Remanent Members of the Kirk-Session
of Knox’s Free Church, Glasgow

We, the undersigned, after careful and anxious consideration of the painful state of matters which has existed for some time past, in

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁸⁴ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, pp. 274-275, 278, 279, 281.

Knox's Free kirk-session, have come to the conclusion that it is our duty, and that we shall best consult the peace of the congregation, and our own well-being, by resigning. We therefore do resign our office as members of Knox's Free kirk-session, and subscribe this letter of resignation in the order of our appointment to said office.

John Taylor, <i>Elder.</i>	David Dunlop, <i>Elder.</i>
George Cowan, <i>Elder.</i>	Donald Elder, <i>Elder.</i>
Joseph Leitch, <i>Elder.</i>	William Ross, <i>Elder.</i>
William Fraser, <i>Elder.</i>	John Cuthbertson, <i>Elder.</i>
John Hendry, <i>Elder.</i>	Archibald M'Kirby, <i>Elder.</i> ¹⁸⁵

On the day Anderson received the letter, the edited entry in his diary reads, "A most insulting and scurrilous letter from (names edited out) – a perfect paragon of fashionable professors of the first class. I answered it by simply writing on a sheet of paper, Isaiah 36:21.¹⁸⁶ I hope to get good from it. But truly "the floods lift up their voice, and make a mighty noise. The Lord on High is more and mightier than the noise of many waters."¹⁸⁷ The demitting elders immediately made the fact of their resignation known to some of the ministers in the Glasgow Presbytery. The following day Anderson received a letter from one of the senior members in the Glasgow Presbytery, James Henderson, the minister of St. Enoch's in Glasgow, regarding the "rupture in the Knox's session"; to which, Anderson says, he replied "in a kindly spirit and hope it may serve our cause".¹⁸⁸ The elders' resignation seems quickly to have resulted in criticism of Anderson, for he complains in his diary, "I know not why I should be hooted down on all sides, and most bitterly by those that make the loftiest pretensions to spiritual religion. I never, to my knowledge, did the people any harm, and if His truth touches them, it is with Him and not with me they should quarrel."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ The text of the letter is cited in full in the *Reference from the Free Presbytery of Glasgow in the Case of the Rev. Jonathan R. Anderson* (General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1852), pp. 2-3. It is also printed in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ Isaiah 36:21 reads, "But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not".

¹⁸⁷ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 284. We cannot be certain that this is a reference to the elders' resignation letter and may refer to another piece of correspondence received on the same day. It is difficult to see how Anderson could regard the resignation letter as insulting and scurrilous. See also *ibid.*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 296.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

(vii) A second Hope Street sermon

The next matter to which Anderson had to give his attention was the sermon he was to deliver on Sabbath evening in Hope Street Gaelic Free Church on 23rd November 1851. This was the Sabbath directly following the elders' resignation the previous Monday, and almost exactly a year from his sermon in the same building on Isaiah 27:11 that had led to his rebuke by the Glasgow Presbytery. His sermon on this occasion was based on 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Anderson went to the Hope Street Church early and found the building packed to overflowing. There were many reasons why a sermon by Anderson would draw together a large congregation. It was well known that he was an able preacher whose regular congregation exceeded five hundred and that he could, on occasions, be outspoken. The sermon of the previous year in the Hope Street Church would still be in people's memories; and in addition, there was the news that most of his elders had left him just days before. These were all reasons for a large congregation to gather, curious to hear what he would say. Interestingly, amongst the large congregation were several of the resigning elders, doubtless wondering if they would be referred to in the sermon.¹⁹⁰ He says himself that he preached for two hours and forty minutes, "and yet the multitude seemed, upon the whole, attentive and serious, though even more hard than ever".¹⁹¹ The sermon was later published and was very well constructed and both pointed and appropriate in its application. It was similar in many ways to the one of the previous year, when the stress was on "a people of no understanding"; a year later the emphasis was on those who had been sent "strong delusion" that they should believe a lie. Yet unlike the sermon of 1850 there was no direct naming of organisations that he considered to be deluded. There were, however, veiled references to the Evangelical Alliance and to the kind of preaching he associated with John Milne and Horatius Bonar.¹⁹² On the Tuesday following he writes

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 288.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 288.

¹⁹² Jonathan R. Anderson, *A Testimony for Truth: Being a sermon preached in Hope Street Gaelic Church, Glasgow on Sabbath evening, November 23rd, 1851* (2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1852). The veiled references to the Evangelical Alliance are on pp. 23-24 and to the type of preaching he associated with Milne and Bonar on pp. 26-27. He completed the text of the sermon

in his diary: “I learn the people are delighted with the sermon in Hope Street, but poor, blinded creatures, they do not see it is worse than its predecessor, only it did not so nearly touch their idols.”¹⁹³

(viii) The elders appeal to the Presbytery

It is clear from references in his diary in early December 1851 that members of the Glasgow Presbytery urged Anderson to meet the ten elders, along with others, in a conference, with a view to resolving the conflict so that the elders would withdraw their resignations. Anderson refused to take part in such a conference, saying, “the only effect might be to lose time and temper, and drive parties to a still greater distance from each other”. James Henderson of St. Enoch’s then wrote him on 6th December begging him to review his decision not to confer with the elders. To this Anderson replied by saying he looked upon the elders as having grievously sinned and he “could not in good conscience meet them in conference. If the Presbytery hoped to bring them to repentance, they might try.”¹⁹⁴ Anderson viewed the conduct of the Presbytery in urging a conference as meddling and as that of inquisitors attempting to pry into other people’s affairs.¹⁹⁵

Following the resignation of the ten elders, the Session now comprised Anderson and the two elders who agreed with him in his assessment of John Milne’s ministry. They met on 23rd December 1851 and accepted the resignations. The diary record indicates Anderson’s satisfaction at what had taken place:

The meeting of the session in the evening was very precious. We took up the resignation of the ten, and after mature deliberation agreed to accept it, and ordered their names to be withdrawn from the roll. In the concluding prayer, I felt great solemnity and sweetness. I came home very happy.¹⁹⁶

for the publisher on 25th December 1851 and notes in his diary, “I finished the manuscript of Hope Street sermon, and got woven into it the substance of the testimony which the enemy last year suppressed”. *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 306. This indicates that the published version may be slightly different from what was delivered. The sermon is reprinted in Jonathan R. Anderson, *Lectures and Sermons* (Glasgow, 1861), Vol. 1, pp. 379-419 (we do not know of any further volumes in this series), and in a slightly abridged form in Jonathan Ranken Anderson, *Sermons for the Times*, pp. 9-35.

¹⁹³ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 288.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 295.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 295-296.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 305.

Anderson himself wrote the minute of the meeting. It was this minute that began a chain of events that led to Anderson's departure from the Free Church. The words that caused the offence were:

The session . . . agreed that they should accept the said resignations and at the same time record their deep regret that these brethren should have adopted, for a period of fourteen months [i.e. since the time of Milne's sermons], a line of policy which, as it seems, they themselves judged to be such as to break the peace of the congregation and at length to lay them under the alleged necessity of demitting their office, for the sake of healing the breach which they themselves had made.¹⁹⁷

As soon as the resigning elders received the minutes they drew up a Memorial to the Glasgow Presbytery craving their protection "against the groundless stigma cast upon our character in the Records of Knox's Free Kirk-Session".¹⁹⁸ By New Year's Day 1852, Anderson had become aware of the possibility of the elders taking their case to the Glasgow Presbytery. He writes: "A report is current that the elders mean to apply to the Presbytery because of the stain cast on their character by the Minute of Session sent to them. We shall see what they are to make of it. Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?"¹⁹⁹ In his diary four days later he records an incident involving adherents of the John Knox's congregation as they went to church and George Cowan, the elder that he regarded as leading the opposition to him. "Poor George Cowan seems deeply sunk in devilishness. He sneers at them as he sees them passing along to the church, and that so evidently as to give them no small pain. The Lord will plead the cause of the oppressed. 'The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor.' But here is patience. The character of these men will yet be seen in its true colours."²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ An extract minute is cited in full in the *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 4. The original minute book is in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, reference CH3/1299/2, *Gorbals John Knox Session Records*.

¹⁹⁸ The Memorial is quite brief. It attaches a copy of their resignation letter and a copy of the Knox's Session minute of 23rd December 1851 and concludes, "These documents we deem it our duty to lay before your reverent court craving your protection against the groundless stigma cast on our character in the Records of Knox's Free Kirk-Session", *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 4, where the Memorial, dated "Glasgow 27th December 1851" is cited in full.

¹⁹⁹ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, pp. 1-2.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.



Robert Buchanan, minister of the Tron Free Church (left), and James Gibson, minister of the Kingston Free Church and Clerk of the Glasgow Presbytery. These two ministers took a leading part in dealing with Anderson's case before the Glasgow Presbytery.

At its next meeting, on 7th January 1852, the Presbytery received the Memorial and appointed a committee of nine ministers and five elders to confer both with the demitting elders and the remainder of the Knox Session, to investigate the circumstances, and report to the next meeting. The committee included the Clerk of Presbytery, James Gibson,²⁰¹ and

²⁰¹ James Gibson (1799-1871) was ordained in 1839, the first minister of the Kingston Church extension (*quoad sacra*) charge in Glasgow. At the Disruption, the congregation joined the Free Church. During Anderson's difficulties with the Glasgow Presbytery, Gibson was the Clerk of that court. After Anderson left the Free Church, Gibson was appointed as the Interim Moderator of the John Knox's congregation and played a major role in the Presbytery's prosecution of its case against Anderson. In 1856 he was elected Professor of Systematic Theology and Church History in the Free Church College in Glasgow. James Gibson was one of the main spokesmen for the conservative wing in the Free Church, leading the opposition against the Evangelical Alliance and in the Australian Union Case. An early opponent of union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, Gibson was the author of a number of significant publications, including *The Inability of Man* (Glasgow, 1846); *The Marriage Affinity Question* (Glasgow, 1854); *Present Truths in Theology* (Glasgow, 1863); *The Public Worship of God* (Glasgow, 1869); and *The Church in Relation to the State* (Edinburgh, 1872).

Robert Buchanan,²⁰² the author of the *Ten Years Conflict*. The Convener was James Henderson, the minister of St. Enoch's, Glasgow.²⁰³ Anderson did not attend the meeting of Presbytery. His reasoning was, "I thought I was better to keep out of the way, lest I should be tempted to speak unadvisedly, I want to know what shape our affair is to take before I appear in self-defence".²⁰⁴

On Thursday 8th January 1852, Anderson received a letter from the Convener of the committee, citing him to appear before them on Monday 12th January 1852 at 7.30 in the evening. On the day appointed for them to meet the committee, Anderson's two remaining elders on the Knox's Session met at his house for a short time of prayer and then went to the Presbytery House where they received a kindly welcome. After a short delay the meeting began at 8.00 p.m. and went on into the early hours of Tuesday morning. Anderson did not leave the Presbytery House until 3.00 in the morning. The only record of what occurred at the meeting is the account in Anderson's diary which, due to his involvement, can hardly be regarded as entirely objective:

The ten elders had written statements, and were conceited enough to desire that all should be read. The committee heard three of the ten, which occupied us till after 12 o'clock. What a mass of presumption and folly and wickedness! The most bare-faced lies were coolly asserted as verities. Truly the wicked know no shame. I made a short speech, keeping to the subject of their Memorial,

²⁰² Robert Buchanan (1802-1875) was ordained at Gargunnock in 1827. He was translated to Salton in Haddingtonshire in 1830 and to the Tron Parish in Glasgow in 1833. The congregation joined the Free Church at the Disruption and for a year had to worship in the City Hall until a new church was built in 1844. In 1857 Buchanan, along with a number of office-bearers and members of the Tron Church, formed a new congregation linked to the Free Church College in Glasgow. For twenty-eight years he was the convener of the Sustentation Fund Committee. Robert Buchanan was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1860 and two years later was appointed convener of the Free Church Committee to negotiate union with the United Presbyterian Church. He later took an active part in the development of the National Schools system. After the Disruption he was requested to write an account of the events and the result was *The Ten Years Conflict* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1849). Buchanan was also the author of the commentary, *The Book of Ecclesiastes: Its Meaning and Lessons* (London, 1859). There is a comprehensive biography of Buchanan by Norman L. Walker, *Robert Buchanan D.D.: An Ecclesiastical Biography* (London, 1877).

²⁰³ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 268-269, Meeting of 7th January 1852.

²⁰⁴ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 8. The *Scottish Guardian* newspaper gave a detailed report of the elders' memorial and reproduced verbatim the minute of the John Knox Congregation Kirk Session. Anderson noted in his diary, "I cannot get over the infatuation of the men, in compelling us to bring out their delinquencies. But it is of a piece with the whole business. He reigns over all," *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 10.

and said that, if any new case could be extracted from the farrago laid before them, I would be ready to meet it. My two elders followed, and did nobly, though when any allusion was made to the state of matters in our congregation as evincing the prevalence of the word of God, the ten sneered! Mr. Henderson towards the close of his speech brought a tremendous charge against George Cowan, which was noted by the clerk to be made the ground of discipline against this fearfully wicked man. In connection with this, the glory of divine justice began to break in upon my soul: not, however, until I left the place, for it seems a desolation. Flee out of her my people, for blood is there.²⁰⁵

The following week witnessed several developments in the unfolding story at John Knox's. On Thursday 15th January 1852, the Session met at Anderson's house to approve the election of new elders and deacons to replace those that had left. The Session had met to count the votes at one o'clock on Monday afternoon – the day they met the committee in the evening. It was agreed that intimation should be given to those elected. Clearly the meeting was pleasing to Anderson for he observes: "The session met in my house – the third precious meeting since we had our disruption. Oh, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"²⁰⁶ On the Sabbath Anderson delivered a broadside against the ten elders that had left. By his own admission he was severe and sweeping against the poor elders and adds, "not one of them was there of course: so that it could not be said it was meant for them".²⁰⁷ The following day (19th January 1852) he was summoned for the second time to meet the Presbytery committee appointed to confer with him and the ten elders about the troubles at John Knox's. His diary records both the confession he made regarding his attitude to John Milne and the disillusionment he felt with respect to the meeting of the committee. Anderson's confession was, however, only made after two of the demitting elders had revealed to the committee what he had told them privately.

I went to the Committee of Presbytery about the elders. But what a scene of injustice and harshness and cruelty! I took my life in my hand, and finding that two of the elders had betrayed confidence,

²⁰⁵ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 13.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 18.

and confessed that they had done so, I stated plainly I did not consider John Milne of Perth a witness for the pure truth of God, and had endeavoured to convince others of my people of this. I did not get home till between 2 and 3 in the morning – very burdened and sad.²⁰⁸

(ix) A visit to Devon – preaching among the Independents

The following day, after making this damaging confession, and in the midst of the Presbytery committee's investigation, and with new office-bearers to be ordained, Anderson left Glasgow for the south coast of England. He had received an invitation to go to Torquay for a week or two on 2nd January that year but had not agreed to go and was looking for guidance; he was, however, on his own admission, needing a rest. Then on the 17th January a further letter arrived asking him to preach in Plymouth if he went south. Anderson and his wife travelled to Birmingham on 20th January and he details in his diary the fight that he saw was in front of him:

My journey was not so fatiguing as I had feared. My mind was chiefly occupied with the case of the elders, which began to open upon me in a new and very solemn light. I saw that I might be compelled, in Church Courts, to raise the testimony, which in the pulpit, and through the Press, I have raised against the gigantic formalism of the present day in the pulpit and in the pew. But, instead of quailing at the prospect, my spirits rose, and I saw that here is a contest worth the maintaining. The enemy, I foresee, will labour hard to reduce it to a petty strife about men and men's reputation. But he who is higher than the highest will, I trust, order it so that this shall not be. I saw that hitherto the elders, and the Committee of Presbytery, and I have only been skirmishing, and that the battle is yet to be fought. I know not how matters may be arranged by the Presbytery, or what particular form the case may assume. But it is enough for me that the battle is the Lord's.²⁰⁹

Anderson was met at Birmingham railway station by one of his first wife's relatives, most of whom, as we have noted, belonged to

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 20.

wealthy Midlands families. He observes: “We met with a very kind reception from him and his wife. But what a scene of vanity and worldliness. I had to crave leave to ask a blessing at tea.” The following morning he was asked by the Freer family, with whom he was staying, to read a prayer and was handed a small prayer book. This he declined and read the scripture and prayed extempore before he set off for Torquay.²¹⁰ On the journey he was again reflecting on affairs in Scotland: “My mind still running on the trials that are gathering round me. I saw that the religion I oppose is embodied in the Evangelical Alliance, and that I may make that the point of attack in the defence I may make before the Presbytery. But, at length, I asked myself why I should be so careful about my acquittal or condemnation before an earthly tribunal, when I ought to look chiefly to the great white throne.”²¹¹

Shortly after arriving in Torquay he received a letter from John Bayne, his friend in Dunblane, which he describes as “very precious”, to which he responded the same day, updating him of developments:

The ten elders complained to the Presbytery of our minute. We were summoned to the committee. But what a scene! The poor elders have made shipwreck of the profession they have had for years, and are fairly over to the popular side, and why? Just out of spite at me because the truth cut them to the heart. “The Day at Knox’s” I am told was their second worst day. I cannot get notes of the worst, else I should print them too, and the people would see what it is they complain of. The ministers are all against us, and appeared to me to hunt for matter of accusation against me. But I calmly bide my time. I shall act upon the defensive till they drive on a crisis, and then I shall in Church Courts raise the testimony I have borne in the pulpit and in the Press.²¹²

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 21.

²¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

²¹² Jonathan Ranken Anderson, *Letters to John Bayne*, pp. 7-8, Letter dated “Torquay 23rd January 1852”. This is a bound volume of MS copy letters in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland Library in Glasgow. They are most probably copies made by Anderson himself. Regrettably, little is known about John Bayne, beyond that he was a close friend and confidant of Anderson. When Anderson was in Dunblane he would stay at Bayne’s house. From an entry in Anderson’s diary in 1851 we gather that Bayne was an elder in the Free Church in Dunblane. The entry reads: “I was told last night that John Ferguson of the Bridge of Allan and Donald Fergusson of Doune, had pressed the young minister of Dunblane (Henry M’Ilree Williamson – aged twenty-seven) not to let me preach according to engagement. But that Mr. Bayne, one of his elders, wrote to him saying, if he did so, he would no longer act as an elder, and so I was allowed to come.

His stay in Torquay and Plymouth lasted from 21st January to 2nd February 1852 and covered two Sabbaths, after which he travelled back to Glasgow via Bath and Birmingham. His diary provides details of his stay in England and is a fascinating and interesting account. The minister who had invited him to Torquay was Nicholas Hurry (1822-1909),²¹³ the minister of Abbey Road Congregational Chapel. The chapel had been opened in 1847 with seating for eight hundred. Anderson took the morning service at Abbey Road on his first Sabbath in Devon. In his diary he says, "I was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, but was carried through in a way that surprised me. The young minister spoke in strong terms of its faithfulness."²¹⁴ Following the service, Nicholas Hurry introduced him to Sir Culling Eardley, Bt., who had been in the congregation. This must have been quite a surprise to Anderson, following his critical thoughts about the Evangelical Alliance on the journey to Torquay. Eardley was one of the principal movers behind the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846.²¹⁵ In the evening he preached in the Methodist Chapel to a crowded audience which he said was very attentive.

During the following week the Abbey Road minister called on Anderson and challenged him on the doctrine he had taught concerning faith. Hurry told him that he held to Dr. Chalmer's view that faith is simply a mental act; this led to a number of discussions covering several days, when Anderson sought to correct both his Sandemanianism and other modern notions that he held. However, Anderson viewed Hurry as "very amiable and under sound tuition might come to something".²¹⁶ On the Wednesday evening he preached at the Abbey Road prayer meeting on Titus 3:1-7 and he records, "I was myself condemned by the

How fearful the opposition made to preaching the truth, and that by ministers, and evangelical ministers too, of the Free Church! Is it not time for Thee to work, for men have made void Thy law?" *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 1, 1851, p. 53.

²¹³ For details of Hurry, see the Surman Index Online, Dr. Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies, <http://surman.english.qmul.ac.uk>

²¹⁴ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 26.

²¹⁵ See the article on Eardley in *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)* which gives a little more information on his role in the Evangelical Alliance than John Wolfe's article in *ODNB*. On the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, see John W. Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship: A centenary tribute to the life and work of the Evangelical Alliance 1846-1946* (London, 1946), pp. 11-21; John Wolfe, "The Evangelical Alliance in the 1840s: an attempt to institutionalize Christian Unity", in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.), *Voluntary Religion* (Studies in Church History, Vol. 23, Blackwell, 1986), pp. 333-346.

²¹⁶ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 29.

principle in the opening part of the passage”.²¹⁷ This is surely a reference to verse 2 and the words, “To speak evil of no man”. In the evening of Friday 30th January 1852, Anderson went to Western College²¹⁸ in Plymouth, which was one of the Theological Colleges of the Congregational Union. The Head Tutor was Richard Alliott,²¹⁹ a fellow student with Anderson at Glasgow University. It was doubtless through the influence of Alliott that Hurry had invited Anderson to Torquay – possibly due to his interest in the Free Church and Thomas Chalmers. Both Hurry and Alliott were members of the South Devon Congregational Union.²²⁰

On his second Sabbath in Devon, Anderson preached both in the morning and evening to very large gatherings. With respect to the morning service he writes, “The congregation was the largest I have ever addressed in England, and apparently very respectable”. The service lasted two hours and to Anderson’s surprise a person from Glasgow was

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 30.

²¹⁸ The Western Academy, as it was first called, was founded in 1752 by a number of congregational ministers meeting privately in Exeter. The reason for setting up the new institution was the difficulty in maintaining a supply of well-educated candidates for the ministry. This was due to the universities being closed to Dissenters and many of the old nonconformist academies in the eighteenth century having a tendency to Arianism. At first it was the custom for the Academy to be held in the town where the tutor was minister, then in 1829 it was located in Exeter and was re-named Western College. By 1845 the premises in Exeter had become unsuitable and it was decided to move the college to Plymouth. For an account of the history of Western College see R. W. Dale, *History of English Congregationalism* (London, 1907, 2nd edn., edited by A. W. W. Dale) pp. 558-560; A. Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650-1875* (Manchester, 1962), pp. 206-207; and the online article on the history of Western College by Inga Jones at <http://dissacad.english.qmul.ac.uk>

²¹⁹ Richard Alliott, LL.D. (1804-1863), was born in Nottingham and educated at the Congregational College at Homerton and at Glasgow University from 1825 to 1827, where he distinguished himself by the prizes and honours he took. An essay, written by him for class, on the *a priori* argument for the Being of God was remembered for many years for its acumen. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws by Glasgow University in 1840. Following twenty-two years in the pastorate, most of it in the Castlegate Church in Nottingham, he began what was generally understood to be his true vocation as a teacher of theology. He was Principal at Western College from 1849 to 1857, where he taught theology and mental philosophy. Whilst he was at Plymouth he carried out a pastoral ministry among the Congregational churches in the area. He could not resist the invitation to become president of Cheshunt College in 1857. Cheshunt was the successor institution to Trevecca College, founded by the Countess of Huntingdon in 1768; it moved to Cheshunt in 1792. Alliott had a high reputation among his contemporaries and it was said after his death that nearly every Congregational college in England had tried to secure his services as a theological, philosophical, or mathematics professor. For biographical details of Alliott, see “Memoir of Rev. Richard Alliott, LL.D.” in *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, March 1864, pp. 129-135 and an online article by Stephen Orchard at <http://dissacad.english.qmul.ac.uk>

²²⁰ *Congregational Year Book 1856* (London, 1856), p. 123.

present belonging to “A . . . congregation”, regarding which he comments in his diary, “I may say, why came ye to me, seeing ye have cast me out”.²²¹ In the evening he preached in the Ebrington Street Chapel, which had been built in 1840 and was one of the main places of worship connected to the Plymouth Brethren. Leaders of the movement such as John Nelson Darby, Benjamin Wills Newton, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, and Henry William Soltau were all associated with the chapel. In the summer of 1848 due to theological differences amongst the early Brethren, particularly between Darby and Newton, and secessions from their ranks, they vacated the chapel and moved to a smaller building on Compton Street in Plymouth.²²² At this stage the chapel was taken over as a Calvinist cause by Henry Bellenden Bulteel²²³ who, along with

²²¹ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 34. The identity of the congregation in which Anderson preached in the morning is not clear. The minister was a Mr. N. and his deacons were “a fine-looking body of men”. The identity of the “A . . . congregation” in Glasgow, from which the visitor came, is also difficult to determine. The “A” could be an abbreviation of the name of the congregation or the surname of the minister. If the reference is to the congregation, then the most likely one would be Anderston, where Alexander Somerville was minister. Alternatively, the only minister in the Glasgow Presbytery in 1852 with “A” as the initial of his surname was William Arnot.

²²² For history behind the chapel and the controversy between Darby and Newton, see Jonathan D. Burnham, *A Story of Conflict: The controversial relationship between Benjamin Wills Newton and John Nelson Darby* (Paternoster, 2004); T. Grass, *Gathering in His Name; The Story of the Open Brethren in Britain & Ireland* (Paternoster, 2006), pp. 63-83; Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren* (Pickering & Inglis, 1967), pp. 227-266.

²²³ Henry Bellenden Bulteel (1800-1866) was appointed curate in charge at St. Ebbe's, Oxford, in 1826 where his Calvinistic preaching attracted a large following among undergraduates. In 1830 he took a leading part in removing John Henry Newman from the secretaryship of the Church Missionary Society at Oxford. His sermon preached before the University of Oxford in St. Mary's on 6th February 1831 on 1 Corinthians 2:12 – “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” – in which he condemned the establishment's Erastianism and its widespread rejection of the doctrine of predestination, caused a sensation. He then, along with William Tiptaft, another seceder from the Church of England, who would become a leading Gospel Standard Strict Baptist, went on a tour of the west country preaching both in dissenting chapels and in the open air, at which point the Anglicans revoked Bulteel's licence to preach. After a period when he embraced some of Edward Irving's views, such as general redemption and miraculous healings, he reverted back to a Calvinistic position. Following his mother's death in 1849 he moved to Plymouth and formed an independent congregation in the Ebrington Street chapel. For biographical details of Bulteel, see the articles on him by Timothy C. F. Stunt in Donald M. Lewis (ed.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860* (2 vols., Oxford, 1995), Vol. 1, pp. 164-165 and in *ODNB*. See also J. H. Philpot, *The Seceders (1829-1869): The story of a spiritual awakening as told in the letters of Joseph Charles Philpot and of William Tiptaft* (2 vols., London, 1930-32), Vol. 1, pp. 57-60; J. S. Reynolds, *The Evangelicals at Oxford* (Abingdon, 1975), pp. 96-97, 162; Burnham, *A Story of Conflict*. The most extensive account of Bulteel's career is in Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the via media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 252-283.

Darby and Newton, was a seceder from the Church of England. Bulteel called for Anderson at his hotel and walked with him to his church. Anderson preached from the text, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). He observes in his diary: “We had a large congregation, 12 or 1400 people. The truth simple and full and lowly, and at times tender and solemn.”²²⁴ Before Anderson left Devon he records, “I had a very striking letter from a Scotch gentleman that spoke to me in the vestry which shows that my visit caused a stir at Plymouth”.²²⁵ Anderson and his wife returned to Torquay on the Monday where he again had fellowship with the brethren he had met there and writes wistfully, reflecting no doubt on the opposition to him in Scotland, “we had a very pleasant time, and I was indeed sorry to leave my new friends”. On Tuesday morning Anderson and his wife went from Torquay via Bristol to Bath, where they stayed in a boarding house with an aunt of his first wife. From Bath they travelled to Birmingham, where they stayed overnight, before returning to Glasgow on 5th February.²²⁶

(x) The Report of the Presbytery Committee

Anderson had been back in Scotland for less than a week when James Henderson’s committee made its report to the Glasgow Presbytery on 11th February 1852.²²⁷ The Presbytery committee first commented on the minute, written by Anderson himself, when the Knox’s Session accepted the resignation of the ten elders. Their main conclusion was as follows:

The charge, which in this minute the Session has laid at the door of the demitting elders, is confessedly of the very gravest character. They whose duty it is to preserve and promote the peace of the congregation, are charged with having broken it, and adjudged to have adopted and pursued a policy for fourteen months tending to this effect; and finally, in the terms, or by the act of their resignation, to have virtually confessed the charge.

²²⁴ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 35. The size of the congregation seems to have been boosted by Anderson’s presence. The 1851 Census taken two months later on 30th March gives the size of Bulteel’s evening congregation at Ebrington Street to be 426. See Grass, *Gathering in His Name*, p. 79, n. 89.

²²⁵ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 35.

²²⁶ On the day of his return he learned that four men in the congregation had accepted the office of eldership and seven the office of deacon, *ibid.*, p.38.

²²⁷ The detailed report is contained in the *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 277-284. See also *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 10-13.

The committee then went on to make a series of observations:

- (a) The procedure of the Session was altogether irregular in point of form. If the conduct of the ten elders was as the Session concluded namely – that they disturbed the peace of the congregation – then they should not have merely accepted their resignations. They ought to have pronounced a judgment on their conduct.
- (b) The law of the Church and the interests of justice required, that before pronouncing judgment on their conduct they should have cited the parties before them, explained to them what they were charged with, and given them opportunity to answer the charges.

They then expressed the opinion that besides being objectionable in point of form the severe censure passed on the ten elders conduct was “wholly without warrant or justification”. The report went on to observe that the elders’ written statements were all perfectly consistent and Anderson’s reply did not invalidate their testimony or bring to light any proceedings on their part which may justly be said to have had the tendency to break the peace of the congregation. They were further of the view that the elders’ letter of resignation did not make any admission that they had broken the congregation’s peace and therefore were under a necessity to resign in order to heal the breach they had made.²²⁸

The recommendation to the Presbytery was to require the Knox Session to expunge from their record the minute complained of and simply to “receive the resignations”. In addition, they advised that the Presbytery should ensure that the Session observe the strictest regard for the laws of the Church and to the constitutional rights and the Christian reputation of office-bearers²²⁹ and went on to reflect on Anderson’s persistent censuring of his brethren in the ministry and harked back to his Hope Street sermon. They concluded their report as follows:

In reference to the circumstances of the case, which your committee were entrusted to investigate, they do not think it for edification that these, in detail, should be made the subject of public and judicial procedure; although some of them are of too serious a nature to be passed over, and ought to be dealt with by the Presbytery, as matters of privy censure and brotherly

²²⁸ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 10.

²²⁹ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, p. 283; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 12.

admonition. There is, however, one circumstance publicly known, in truth the root and origin of all his trouble, which, in faithfulness to their brother, Mr. Anderson, they feel it their duty publicly to advert to. They refer to what has been painfully manifest in their dealings with this case, viz.: the practice which he maintains, in his pulpit, of treating the character and teaching of his brethren in the ministry with censure and disparagement. Connecting this fact with the remembrance of former dealings of the Presbytery with him on the same account, your committee cannot withhold the expression of their disappointment that the wrong which he then professed to regret, he should so soon, and, as it appears, so often repeat. They think it strange and sad that he should be able to approve to his own mind a system of acting, so unjustifiable towards his brethren, so injurious to himself, as well as injurious to the ministry throughout the church at large; and they would anxiously trust that what has now befallen his Kirk Session and congregation, in the withdrawal of so many office-bearers who stood deservedly high in his, and in general esteem, may more effectually teach the needed lesson, that it is not by preaching against individuals, whether elders or ministers, but by affectionate, as well as faithful manifestation of the truth itself, that the great ends of his ministry, which, they doubt not, are dear to him are best attained.²³⁰

Henderson's committee also observed that such a grievous result might have been avoided if the Session had sought the mediation of the Presbytery.²³¹ Before coming to a decision on the committee's report, the Presbytery asked the parties if they had anything to say. Anderson and the two elders who supported him, Luke Henderson and Joseph Anderson, spoke first, the resigning elders then responded. Parties were then removed from the bar and after some discussion the report was accepted unanimously. The ten elders acquiesced in the decision; Anderson protested and appealed to the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. In consequence of the appeal the Presbytery appointed James Henderson, Robert Buchanan, and James Gibson to defend its judgment at the bar of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr.²³² Anderson's

²³⁰ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 283-284; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 12-13.

²³¹ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, p. 283; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 12.

²³² *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 284-285.

diary records his assessment on the committee's report and the attitude of the Presbytery:

I went to the Presbytery House a little after one o'clock. The place was crowded, and I rather think a good many of my people were there. The report of the Committee was read by Dr. Henderson. I saw it had been prepared with great skill so as to keep back the business of Milne and if possible prevent a discussion which might have proved very inconvenient. The ten elders were asked if they acquiesced in the Report. Of course, they said they did. We were then asked the same question. I rose and, trying secretly to ask for light, I said I regretted I could not acquiesce in it. In regard to the form of the minute we were under correction of the Presbytery, but I could not admit the accuracy of the Report in other respects. The Presbytery spoke at some length, but all without exception against me. I had not one voice lifted for me. I sat composed and quiet under it all. But it looks as if what I foresaw is to come to pass, that the battle must be fought regarding the character of the ministry at large. I indicated so much in my speech, and charged the demitting elders with changing their position, and going over to the side of what may be termed Free Church Moderatism. Arnot let out his venom by talking of his conscience being uneasy at keeping a man in the Free Church who charged them with being hypocrites, not preaching the gospel, deluding men, etc. and used the word eject. My spirits rose at this.²³³

Although Anderson had received no support in the Presbytery, that was not the case among his congregation. He notes with evident pleasure: "One of my people – a young married woman, called to inquire how I was, and manifested great wisdom and integrity. I reap a rich harvest in my troubles. A goodly number of my dear people called to inquire for me and expressed the liveliest interest in me, and the strongest condemnation of the partiality of the Presbytery."²³⁴ Though he may have received a measure of support from his congregation the tension between Anderson and his ministerial colleagues showed no sign of abatement. He wrote to the Presbytery Clerk asking for a copy of the committee's report, to which James Gibson replied, somewhat curtly,

²³³ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 44-45.

²³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 46.

that he did not have a copy and indicated he would not be prepared to take the trouble to copy it for him as he would have to do so for the Synod. Anderson then wrote to James Henderson, the Convener of the committee, for information regarding one of the points made in the report and at the same time took occasion to “express my mind on their iniquitous procedure”. Henderson replied immediately in what Anderson describes as “a long and very bitter letter” that bore the marks, “in every line, of utter blindness and confusion, and this is one of the ablest of the spiritual guides of the Free Church. If the leaders be such, what must the led be!”²³⁵

On Monday 16th February 1852 Anderson met with his elders and after a “long and earnest conversation” they were beginning to see a way whereby they might fall from their appeal to the Synod. The following day as Anderson was about to begin a reply to Henderson, somewhat to his surprise, James Gibson called at his house; Anderson records in his diary what transpired: “He seemed very friendly, and was desirous for the sake of all parties that the business of the elders should be dropped. I told him what we had all but agreed upon and he was glad. He reprobated the language used by Arnot and Buchanan in the Presbytery, but this *in private* and the public knows nothing of it.”²³⁶

The practice of the Free Church required that if an appeal is made against a decision of a Presbytery, the reasons of the appellant must be either given in at the time, or in writing within ten days, to the Presbytery Clerk. With the ten-day deadline approaching, notwithstanding the fact they had considered falling from their appeal, Anderson met with his two elders to reflect on submitting their reasons to the Presbytery Clerk. An entry in his diary for Thursday 19th February 1852 records the meeting:

The elders with me in the evening. We talked over our case long and earnestly, and at length came to the conclusion that it is duty to give in reasons of protest and appeal from this judgment of the Presbytery. I had drawn them up and had only to write out a clean

²³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 47, 51. On the day that Anderson received Henderson’s letter, he notes in his diary: “I began to read Edwards’ Tract on ‘Terms of Communion’, and went cordially along with his admirable analysis, and found in it confirmation of the principles on which I have exercised the keys of doctrine and discipline. I need all the light I can get from every quarter,” *ibid.*, p. 50.

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 51-52 (emphasis in the original).

copy, which I did and signed it. We prayed – it was a solemn time and I arose lightened and refreshed.²³⁷

Anderson and his two elders gave in eight reasons for their protest and appeal. Their main objections were that the committee was partial and that its decisions were based on statements at variance with the facts.²³⁸ The third reason was rather strange; it stated, “we much doubt the right of a Presbytery, far less a committee of Presbytery to supersede a session in its proper place and functions”.²³⁹

(xi) Two crucial developments

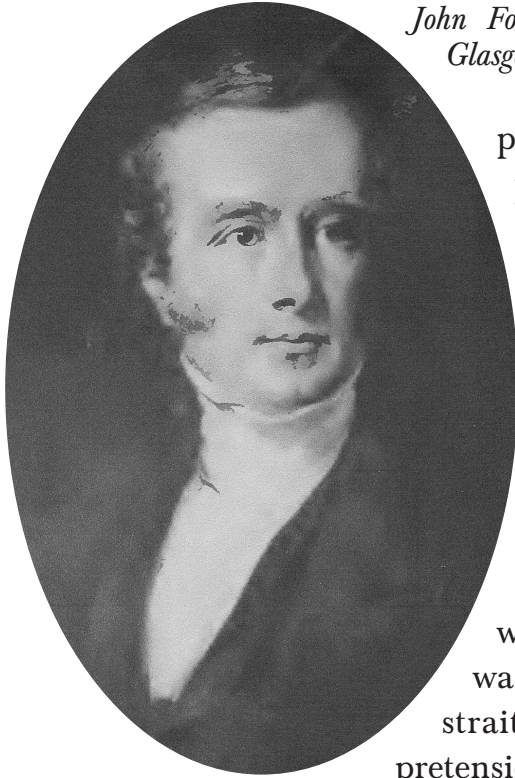
The events of the last week of February and the month of March 1852 proved to be a turning point in Anderson’s relations with the Free Church. The five-week period was marked by two crucial developments. His diary for Saturday 21st February details the first and the most significant; he writes, “I began a reply to the speeches in the Presbytery in the case of the elders, and wrote with great fluency and levity, tho’

²³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 54.

²³⁸ In responding to this point in the Glasgow Presbytery, James Gibson the Presbytery Clerk observed, “The statements certainly were not taken on oath, but they held them as proved on the statement of ten elders, uncontradicted by the other party, who had the full power of cross-questioning every witness,” *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 14.

²³⁹ *ibid.* Anderson’s eight reasons, along with a summary of the discussion in the Presbytery, were printed in the *Scottish Guardian* and reprinted in the *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 13-16. The reasons may be summarized as follows:

1. The Presbytery was not in a position to pronounce on the case.
2. The report of the committee was inadequate and took a partial view of the facts laid before them.
3. The matter should have been referred back to the Kirk Session. Anderson doubted the right of a Presbytery, much less a committee, to supersede a Session in its proper place and function.
4. The Presbytery’s judgment was founded on a report which contains statements at variance with matters of fact, or statements merely made and not proved.
5. Referring to John Milne, Anderson asserted, “The ministrations of the minister referred to in the report were not ‘peculiarly acceptable to the people generally.’”
6. The report takes no notice of the fact that, while Anderson resisted the attempt of his elders to sit in judgment, as a Session, on his ministry, he was quite willing to meet them in brotherly conference.
7. Referred to Cowan’s repeated apologies over the “Jezebel fast” statement. Anderson objected to the Session’s being interdicted from dealing with Cowan’s conduct after he had apologised.
8. The report made no mention of the ten elders’ unjust and oppressive act in dismissing a missionary from his situation . . . without a single reason, and breaking up a local mission.



John Forbes, minister of St. Paul's Free church in Glasgow, and a leading minister in the Presbytery.

painful interest. What a storm if it is printed.”²⁴⁰ As he wrote he could hardly have imagined that this pamphlet would have caused the storm it did and would prove to be the final breaking point in his relationship with the Disruption Free Church. The following Tuesday he resumed his work on the pamphlet. He records in his diary: “I resumed my *Reply to the Presbytery* and wrote *currente calamo*: but feared there was too much bitterness. I am in a great strait. I long to expose men of huge pretension, yet I dread hurting the truth by the way I manage its interests. . . .”²⁴¹ The *Reply* was almost finished two days later when he wrote to James Henderson, the Convener of the Presbytery committee, informing him that he was about to publish a reply to the speeches made at the Presbytery on 11th February and offering to submit it first to him and to John Forbes,²⁴² the minister of St. Paul’s in Glasgow, “if so be they could avert a storm”. He was still writing the following day and the entry in his diary gives an indication of the strength of the contents: “writing with ease and melancholy satisfaction, and saw I must guard against the law of libel.”²⁴³

Forbes and Henderson replied promptly to Anderson’s letter, in his words, “strongly dissuading me from publishing my reply, as being

²⁴⁰ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 56.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 56. The typed diary has been edited at this point by a deletion.

²⁴² John Forbes (1800-1874) was born in Moulin at the time of the revival in the parish under the ministry of the noted Gaelic scholar Dr. Alexander Stewart. He studied at St. Andrew’s University from where he was later awarded a Doctorate in Divinity. Before entering the ministry he was mathematics Master at Perth Academy. Whilst in a busy Glasgow pastorate he published a mathematical text book, *The Differential and Integral Calculus*. In the union controversy between 1863 and 1873 he identified himself with the Constitutional party of James Begg. See *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 157; *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860*, Vol. 1, p. 397.

²⁴³ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 63.

in their opinion unconstitutional and inexpedient". Then he adds, indicating how he viewed his stance as a matter of conscience: "I was by this letter brought into great darkness and trouble, and knew not what to do. I saw, as I thought, that if now I kept it back, I must retrace my steps, and fall in with the stream and be lost forever. But by standing my ground, I would, thro' grace, at least save myself, if not those who hear me."²⁴⁴ On the 9th March he took his *Reply* to the printer with the observation, "I . . . felt encouraged to set forth the truth and to suffer any reproach it may bring upon me".²⁴⁵ Two days later he began correcting the proofs and eventually found a serious slip he had made which he corrected and returned the proofs to the printer. Anderson viewed the *Reply* as another "testimony for truth".²⁴⁶ By 16th March proof copies of the pamphlet were in his hands and he sent out a number of them to friends for their opinion on whether it should be printed. A record in his diary for 16th March 1852 reads: "I wrote to Mr. L [William Lauder ²⁴⁷ the Free Church minister of Strachur] with a copy of the *Reply*, and asked his opinion whether it should be printed, and then I also wrote a few lines to D. M. and sent him a copy, that the materials might be used."²⁴⁸ John Bayne, his like-minded friend in Dunblane, whilst contradicting Forbes and Henderson, and giving it as his opinion that it was quite constitutional to review speeches, saw accurately the drift that events were taking. In a letter to Anderson he stated that the contest in which they were engaged was pointing to "our approaching ejection from the Free Church".²⁴⁹

The second crucial development in the five-week period up to the end of March 1852 was that the John Knox's congregation drew up a Memorial to the Glasgow Presbytery signed by over four hundred and

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 75.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 77, 79. Anderson's sermon at Hope Street preached on 23rd November 1851 on the text 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 had been published with the title, *A Testimony for Truth*, Edinburgh, 1852 (2nd edn.).

²⁴⁷ Four days before he sent the proof to Lauder, he had been with him in Paisley when they had assisted Allan M'Intyre in the Free Gaelic Church. Lauder came back with him to Glasgow and they talked at length about the situation in which Anderson found himself. His diary comment on their conversation indicates why he wanted his opinion of the *Reply*; it reads, "I felt somewhat lightened by his views of it, and was glad I had the opportunity of consulting one so judicious and cautious. I need to be humble and dependent", *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 78.

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 64, 69.

fifty of Anderson's supporters. What part Anderson played in the congregation sending a memorial in his defence we do not know. He clearly had some involvement. On 4th March he writes in his diary: "The deacons at tea. The worship somewhat free and solid, but the rest of the evening taken up about a memorial from the congregation."²⁵⁰ It would be quite wrong to think that Anderson was going on blindly and was impervious to criticism. Although it is not my purpose to detail this extensively, he was conscious of his sin and at times felt quite lonely. On 1st March 1852, in the midst of what he considered his duty to witness against compromise, he writes, "My troubles increase as I go on and my poor weak heart is ready to faint. I am quite alone, and have not a creature to counsel me in anything I propose to do. I must lift up mine eyes to the hills whence cometh mine aid."²⁵¹ That he had no friends is not correct. John Bayne was a faithful supporter, as were large numbers in his congregation who appreciated his preaching. In addition, in the period we are considering, Archibald Cook of Daviot wrote to him with words of encouragement and proposing to reverse the Presbytery's proceedings, saying, "The Lord shall fight for you".²⁵²

(xii) The Presbytery deal with the Memorial from the John Knox's congregation

The next meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery was on 10th March 1852, and on the agenda were Anderson's Reasons of Appeal against the Presbytery's decision of 11th February and the Memorial from the John Knox Congregation. An extended account of how the Presbytery dealt with the Reasons of Appeal was given in the *Scottish Guardian* newspaper.²⁵³ James Gibson, the Presbytery Clerk, read the Reasons of Appeal to the Presbytery and after each reason gave detailed comment refuting Anderson's objections. He then moved, "That a committee be appointed to answer these reasons of Protest", and concluded by saying that "if the Presbytery thought a committee was not required he was sure they could all well enough answer them off-hand at any time, but it was the usual way to appoint a committee". In seconding Gibson's motion to

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁵² *ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁵³ The account in the *Scottish Guardian* is reproduced in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 13-17. Anderson decided that he would not go to that meeting of the Presbytery, *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 76.

appoint a committee, Robert Buchanan drew the Presbytery's attention to a circular that Anderson had written to the newly appointed office-bearers in the Knox Church²⁵⁴ dated 16th January 1852; the letter read:

My dear Sir, – I take leave to inform you, that you have been elected to the office of elder (or deacon, as the case may be) in Knox's congregation, and the election has been cordially affirmed by the kirk-session. I trust you will respond to the call thus made to you with alacrity and zeal. I am well aware of the difficulties that will rise up to deter you from this course; and perhaps not the least may be a sense of your own insufficiency. But let me suggest that, in the peculiar circumstances of the congregation, time is precious. The cause of truth may suffer in appearance, if not in reality, if the gap is not speedily filled up. The enemy may triumph, and say that our cause is so bad no one will support us; and thus an election, which we meant for good may turn against us. From what I know, and from what I believe will soon transpire, you may count it an honour to have your name connected with such a contest. We are contending for the purity of the Word, for the independence of the pulpit, and for the good of immortal souls. Now, do come to his help, each of you in his own feeble way; and in so doing, you may help in a good cause, and countenance and comfort one who subscribes himself,

Yours sincerely in the truth

Jonathan R. Anderson²⁵⁵

Buchanan focused the Presbytery's attention on Anderson's comment at the end of the letter, “. . . you may count it an honour to have your name connected with such a contest. We are contending for the purity of the Word, for the independence of the pulpit, and for the good of immortal souls,” and went on to state that it was evident that if the facts were as they appeared to be, this was a proceeding unprecedented in the history of this Church. He had never heard of a minister or office-bearer of this Church whose own case was under adjudication pursuing a course like that indicated in this letter. It seemed

²⁵⁴ The ordination and admission of six deacons and four elders had taken place on Sabbath 22nd February 1852. See *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 57.

²⁵⁵ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 17.

to Buchanan that Anderson had no intention of allowing the matters to be fairly investigated, but was taking the unwarranted step of trying to commit his office-bearers elect to his position when they were unaware of all that had taken place.²⁵⁶

The Presbytery then went on to deal with the Memorial from the John Knox Congregation. James Gibson indicated that he had seen the Memorial²⁵⁷ at an earlier stage and noted that extra text had been added to the original version. Gibson suspected that the signatures had been cut off the original Memorial and then attached to the new one, as there had been no time to obtain the signatures a second time.²⁵⁸ On questioning the men presenting the Memorial, Gibson's suspicions were proven correct. As he proceeded with his interrogation it became plain that a number of teenagers had signed the Memorial. Gibson then asked the main spokesman – John Anderson, a deacon at John Knox's – “Did you explain to these young persons that in signing this document they were passing a judgment on points of law and matters of form in opposition to their Presbytery, pronouncing their conduct to be illegal, incompetent and inept?”²⁵⁹

Robert Buchanan said that “by the questions put to the parties, it appeared that this document – a long and elaborate document, very formally drawn up, and having attached to it 450 signatures – had never been submitted in any formal and regular way to the parties whose names were appended, but had been got up in some secret corner by a limited number of individuals, and then by agents appointed for this purpose, carried from door to door for signatures in many cases given by individuals who had not read the document nor had it read to them. These were the facts connected with the history of the memorial now on the table. If anything could add to the surprise and pain, which the document itself could not fail to have excited in the mind of every member of the court, it must be these facts connected with the getting up of it. It was quite impossible that this Court could receive that memorial.”²⁶⁰ In reply to questions from members of the Presbytery, John Anderson, the deacon, said that the memorialists were not all members of the Church, some

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

²⁵⁷ No copy of the Memorial seems to have survived, so we do not know its contents. It would undoubtedly have been supportive of Anderson.

²⁵⁸ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 18.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*

of them being adherents, and that the document did not distinguish between the members and the adherents. The Presbytery refused to receive the Memorial, largely because of the way it had been drawn up. It is not difficult to see how this decision would have had an alienating effect on many within the Knox congregation.

Jonathan Ranken Anderson records in his diary on the day of the Presbytery: “The Memorial from our congregation has put them (i.e. the Glasgow Presbytery) in a perfect rage – and a threat given to call up the office-bearers to be censured. A great deal of childish abuse poured upon us: but truly the men are wild and make fools of themselves.”²⁶¹ The following day, having obtained more accurate information, he comments: “The Presbytery seems to have been a stormy meeting, and from a gentleman who was present – not a friend – I picked up some things that may be useful to me. We evidently have traitors in our own camp, playing into the hands of the other side.”²⁶²

Five days after the meeting of the Presbytery, James Henderson and John Forbes, at their request, arranged to meet Anderson at his house. Whether this was as a result of a Presbytery decision, or their own initiative, we do not know. The meeting lasted two hours and was amicable; their main complaint with respect to Anderson was that he too easily condemned Free Church ministers in an indiscriminate way. He concludes his account in this way: “. . . but they dared not interfere with my judgment that things are in an excessively low state. We parted in a friendly way, after having concluded nothing but that we should agree to differ, and that I should expose whatever is contrary to truth, only keep off particular parties.”²⁶³

(xiii) Milne-Anderson exchange of letters

Unknown to the Glasgow Presbytery, John Milne wrote to Anderson seven days after the meeting of the Presbytery on 17th March 1852 expostulating with him over what had gone on. Milne had been ignorant, for sixteen months after preaching at John Knox’s, of Anderson’s objections to his ministry. He only became aware when a member of the Glasgow Presbytery sent him a newspaper that reported Anderson’s case in the Presbytery. Milne wrote:

²⁶¹ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 76.

²⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

²⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 82.

Leonard Bank, 17th March

My Dear Sir

I write one word, in the hope that you will contradict or explain the reports which have for some time been circulating. It is said, that both in public and in private, you have found fault with the sermons I preached on the occasion of our exchanging pulpits. You know the brotherly affection and respect with which I at that time welcomed you and the hope I felt that your visit might prove a blessing to me and my people. You never heard me preach and I cannot believe that you would condemn me on the report of others, without allowing me an opportunity of contradicting or explaining what they told you. I feel it duty to make this inquiry, though I do it reluctantly, for I would not willingly add to the pain you must feel in the existing state of matters. Hoping you may be soon brought out of this entanglement, and enabled again, in love and harmony, to carry on the work of God, believe me praying that you may be kept and guided.

Yours very sincerely

John Milne²⁶⁴

On the day the letter arrived Anderson reflected in his diary: "A letter from Milne of Perth, enquiring if it be true that I condemned his discourses in public and private. The dangers are thickening, but I solemnly rejoice at the approach of the opportunity of striking a blow at the preaching and profession of the Free Church. Oh! to be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove."²⁶⁵ Anderson replied two days later, in a rather long letter explaining both his public and private attitude to Milne.

Glasgow, 19th March

My Dear Sir

I received your note and will endeavour to answer your inquiries in the frank and kindly spirit which it displays. A great deal has been said about your services on the day you officiated in Knox's

²⁶⁴ Letter of John Milne to Anderson dated 17th March 1852 in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 57.

²⁶⁵ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 86.

Church, and the discourses you then delivered – some of our people highly praising them and others strongly condemning them. A fact or two will show in what manner I have acted with regard to them both in public and in private.

In public I ministered the truth so that, upon one occasion, immediately after you had been here, one who admired your discourses said to one on the opposite side, “The Minister is against you,” which certainly does not look as if I had condemned them. An interval of *five months* elapsed before the ten Elders showed any dissatisfaction with my ministry, and during that time – though it now appears they had all liked your discourses – I had most unequivocal proofs of their professed satisfaction with me. When after this interval, two of them waited upon me, and complained that I had attacked your ministry, I asked, “When and how have I attacked it?” The answer was, “We cannot tell”. In our session, one of the Elders that condemned the discourses gave an analysis of them, pointing out what he thought faulty. I said in reference to this, “I hope Mr. . . . will not take amiss, nor think it any disrespect to him, when I say that I paid no attention to his analysis, for with these discourses I have nothing to do”. I suppose this is somewhat in keeping with the rule you state that, not having heard them myself, I was not in a condition to judge of them.

So much for what I did in public. Now for what I did in private. The intercourse which I had with you in Perth must have convinced you that there was a wide and material difference between the character of your ministry and mine. I at least so judged, and took every opportunity of making you aware of that – always, however, within the line of what mutual respect demands and allows. I should be much surprised to find that you did not perceive the difference, when to my mind it came out so palpably, and at so many points. Be this as it may, I know the judgment I was led to form: and I know, too, the grounds on which it rests. Now I have not scrupled to express in private, and when duty called for it, what my judgment is as to the character of your ministry, and that of many more in the Free Church. And I presume both you and other Ministers do the same by me. Some have gone so far as to find fault with my preaching in their pulpits, so as to lead some people to express dissatisfaction with their own ministers, and

their sympathy with me. But I never trouble myself with these things, nor reports that are widely circulated to my prejudice.

I feel it my duty to testify against all which appears to me to be at variance with the Holy scriptures; and I leave to others the liberty I claim for myself. And if this mutual liberty be not conceded, I do not see how it is possible for the visible Church to subsist. We thought we could remain in the same Church with Erastians, though we arose *en masse* against Erastianism. And may not men meet in the Free Church, though it should one day perhaps come to pass that they differ as widely as ever the Moderate party did from the Evangelical. In public, my desire and aim are to deal with things, not with persons, though in certain circumstances people may apply things to persons even when the preacher did not, and perhaps could not, possibly intend it. But this is just one of the trials incident to a faithful and searching ministry, and must be patiently borne.

If you ask in what respects my ministry differs from yours, I do not know that it is imperative upon me to answer the question. I think it will be much better for each to look to himself – to endeavour to approve himself unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth – by manifestations of the truth to commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God – and to labour in the opening up of Divine truth, and the exposure of all that is opposed to it, that he may both save himself and those that hear him.

I think it right to inform you, before I close, that at a meeting of our Deacons and Elders on Tuesday evening last, when fifteen were present, we all came to the resolution to drop all further proceedings before the Church Courts in the case of the ten Elders. We were moved to this step very much for the sake of peace, and because we judged we could do so without any compromise of principle. I intimated this next morning to our Presbytery Clerk, that he might not proceed with extracts. I do trust this painful affair will be sanctified for good.

I remain, my dear Sir, Yours faithfully

Jonthn. R. Anderson²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 57-59.

His diary comment regarding his reply was, “I scrolled a letter to Milne after praying that I might be directed, and in reading it to my wife she was quite pleased”.²⁶⁷ There are two observations appropriate regarding Anderson’s reply to Milne.

- (a) The letter contains a most peculiar statement, and one which Anderson would shortly renounce. He says regarding the non-intrusionists prior to the Disruption, “we thought we could remain in the same Church with Erastians, though we arose *en masse* against Erastianism”. From this he then concludes, “And may not men meet in the Free Church, though it should one day perhaps come to pass that they differ as widely as ever the Moderate party did from the Evangelical”. This view of an all-comprehensive Church, where serious differences would be matters of toleration, Anderson would reject once his connection with the Free Church was terminated.
- (b) Anderson’s only comment on his difference with Milne was his affirmation that he had said nothing about him in public, though he made it clear to Milne that in his private conversations with others he had expressed disapproval of his ministry, and claimed the liberty to testify against anything that he considered to be unscriptural. Anderson must have meant by this statement that he had not mentioned Milne by name from the pulpit. From the testimony given to the Glasgow Presbytery he had clearly alluded to Milne from the pulpit. Anderson concluded the exchange by saying that he considered there was “a wide and material difference between the character of your ministry and mine”. Yet, extraordinarily, he refused to tell Milne the nature of this difference.

(xiv) Conciliatory moves by Anderson and his office-bearers

The next meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery had been set for 31st March 1852. With a view to achieving a measure of reconciliation, Anderson and his office-bearers made two conciliatory gestures. The first concerned the Memorial that had been organised by the John Knox’s

²⁶⁷ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 86. The significance of the comment regarding his second wife, Ann Alison, being “quite pleased” was that she did not agree with him on a number of matters. In his diary for 25th February 1852, Anderson observes, “I promised myself a quiet day when I was interrupted by my poor wife, more strongly prejudiced against me in my preaching and contending than any I know”, *ibid.*, p. 60.

deacons. They decided that they ought to apologise to the Presbytery for their irregularities in regard to the Memorial that had been highlighted by James Gibson and Robert Buchanan. It was agreed that this should be done by means of a letter to the Presbytery. Anderson was clearly pleased with the letter as he describes it as, “all I could wish and more than I expected”.²⁶⁸ Clearly, not everyone in John Knox’s agreed with the proposal to apologise to the Presbytery, as Anderson received a letter of objection from one of the elders. He states in regard to the objection, “I was vexed but tried to roll it over on Him who has the government upon His shoulder”.²⁶⁹ The elder must have acquiesced in the decision to apologise as, two days before the Presbytery was scheduled to meet, the deacons met John Forbes to explain to him their proposal. As might be imagined, he gave them every encouragement to send in their letter and took the opportunity of telling them that he disagreed with their minister’s overly gloomy views of the state of the Free Church.²⁷⁰

The second matter in which Anderson and his elders were willing to conciliate was with respect to their appeal to the Synod. Anderson appears to have been of the mind to fall from the appeal within days of making it at the Presbytery on 11th February. At a meeting with his elders five days after the appeal had been made, following a long and earnest conversation, they saw their way to fall from their appeal. A day later, at what Anderson describes as a pleasant meeting with his deacons, they were of one mind to drop the appeal, providing it could be “done without compromising our testimony”. Their minister’s observation with respect to their approach was, “I never saw so much wisdom and feeling displayed by my deacons”.²⁷¹ As we have seen, Anderson informed James Gibson on the same day as he met his deacons that they had all but agreed to drop the appeal.²⁷² As they had not come to a definite decision to fall from their appeal, however, Anderson and his Session thought it essential to give in their reasons within the ten-day deadline in order to preserve their position. Accordingly, any idea of falling from their appeal was put on hold. The decision to delay was confirmed by the attitude of the Presbytery of 10th March when they considered two items from John Knox’s; the congregation’s Memorial and their reasons of

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 98.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁷² *ibid.*, p. 52.

appeal against the decision of the 11th February. This caused Anderson to question the wisdom of falling from the appeal. He notes in his diary, "I feel quite at sea as to the appeal to the Synod, and if I could fall from it *with a good conscience* I would".²⁷³

It was typical of Anderson's mindset of making outspoken declarations from the pulpit or in some form of publication, rather than taking matters through Church courts in a regular way, that at the same time as he was struggling with the question of falling from the appeal to the Synod he was eagerly completing his pamphlet against the Presbytery. On the very day (16th March 1852) that he sent out several proof copies of his pamphlet which, if printed, he anticipated would cause a storm, he writes, following a meeting with his elders and deacons, "We all but agreed to drop our case [i.e. their appeal] for sake of peace".²⁷⁴

Three days later, in a letter to John Bayne, he gives a more detailed explanation of his thinking:

We have nearly made up our minds to fall from our appeal and let the elders go with the nice character the Presbytery have given them. We do not think we should make anything of it at the Synod or Assembly, and as we feel that no principle will be compromised it is perhaps better to suffer in silence than to embroil ourselves farther with a case which does not touch the testimony. I believe the Memorial from the congregation has done good, and *quietly* we have already reaped the fruits of it.²⁷⁵

This was not entirely accurate as Joseph Anderson, one of the two elders who stood by Anderson against the ten demitting elders, had absented himself from a meeting of the Session due to his not being reconciled to the course favoured by Anderson and the other elders of falling from the appeal. However, three days later, on 26th March, he and Luke Henderson met with Anderson at his house where they finally decided to drop their appeal. The diary account is illuminating: "The two elders came up in the evening when we finally resolved to fall from our appeal and to suffer rather than plead before judges utterly prejudiced and opposed."²⁷⁶

²⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 82. The emphasis is Anderson's.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁷⁵ *Letters to Mr. John Bayne*, pp. 11-12, Letter dated 19th March 1852.

²⁷⁶ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 94.

(d) Anderson's pamphlet against the Glasgow Presbytery

The meeting of the Presbytery on 31st March 1852 should have helped to defuse the situation. The John Knox's deacons had submitted their letter of apology and Anderson along with his two elders indicated that they were falling from their appeal to the Synod for the sake of peace and because they now considered that no matter of principle was involved.²⁷⁷ In reality the meeting was a turning point in the whole controversy, as the fourth and decisive strand of the Free Church case against Anderson surfaced publicly for the first time. James Gibson indicated to the Presbytery that he had been informed that Mr. Anderson had printed a pamphlet purporting to review the proceedings of the Glasgow Presbytery on 11th February 1852. Buchanan asked Anderson whether it was true that he had printed such a pamphlet. In short, his answer was yes, but only twenty-four proof copies had been made. Anderson justified this action on the basis that he considered the proceedings of the Presbytery on 11th February to have divided into two branches. The first branch was to be dealt with by his appeal to the Synod and the second branch in some other way. Hence, he had prepared a booklet commenting on the speeches delivered in the Presbytery on 11th February in order to address this second branch of the Presbytery's proceedings. He added, that the copies he possessed were proofs, and as he had now fallen from his appeal he would not publish the pamphlet.²⁷⁸ For the time being the Presbytery was satisfied with this explanation. As Anderson had fallen from his appeal to the Synod, the report of the committee which examined the affairs at John Knox's was finally approved. His diary account of the meeting is brief; it begins in this way: "I went to the Presbytery today, but the moment I entered it felt as tho' I were in a den of wild beasts. I intimated that we fell from our appeal tho' we retained our judgment."²⁷⁹ In the days following the Presbytery, Anderson was very troubled in his mind; he penned his distress in these terms: "I am faint-hearted, full of fears, closely sifting my conscience and doubting whether I have acted aright: and like to be overwhelmed with the thought that I have not managed my cause aright. . . . My mind working like a sea about

²⁷⁷ James Gibson was later to challenge Anderson on the statement that no principle was involved. He spoke of his position as "the mighty controversy that involves no principle", *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 30.

²⁷⁸ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 20-21.

²⁷⁹ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, pp. 100-101.

the *Reply*. I at last saw it was an infringement of His promise to fight for me.”²⁸⁰

The next Presbytery held just five days after the previous one, on 5th April 1852, took up Anderson’s conduct towards John Milne. This was now possible, as the appeal to the Synod had been fallen from. The facts of the case as outlined by the demitting elders were admitted as correct. In summary, these were that Anderson:

- (i) Held that Milne did not preach the pure gospel and, while holding these views before going on a visit to Perth, asked him to exchange pulpits with him.
- (ii) Took notes of his conversations with Milne which, he asserted, confirmed his assessment.
- (iii) Shared these notes with some of his elders to justify his opinion of Milne.

The Presbytery appears to have approached the matter in a constructive way and sought to press on Anderson that it was wrong to take notes of a man’s confidential conversation in his own house and then pass that information on to others without telling Milne himself. His defence at first had been that he “was not aware he had broken any law of the Church in asking Mr. Milne to preach, (even if he regarded him as not preaching a pure gospel) and that it would be a great relief to his mind if the brethren would show if it was expedient or no”. To this he received an indignant reply from a member of the Presbytery, to which everyone else concurred, that “it was not a matter of law or of expediency, but of morality. What, you, an under-shepherd under the Great Shepherd, on your own showing, bringing a wolf into the flock!”²⁸¹ At this stage Anderson admitted that he had been guilty of a moral wrong.²⁸²

Having received this admission from Anderson, and being convinced that the charges against Milne were groundless, the Presbytery was minded not to inform Milne’s Presbytery about the charges. It was confirmed in this view when Anderson promised to write to Milne expressing his regret for the wrong he had done to him and stating that he would send a copy to James Gibson, the Clerk to the

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁸¹ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 22.

²⁸² *ibid.*, p. 21.

Glasgow Presbytery.²⁸³ This constructive atmosphere was soured when it was brought to the Presbytery's attention that fifty copies, not twenty-four, of Anderson's pamphlet had been printed and that it contained statements highly critical of the Presbytery. Anderson was then enjoined, somewhat harshly, to put all the copies of the pamphlet into the Clerk's hands by 20th April at twelve noon, the date and time of the next Presbytery.

In the fortnight between the two meetings of the Presbytery was the April Communion at John Knox's. As in the previous year, Anderson invited Archibald Cook of Daviot to assist him. Cook came to Glasgow on Tuesday 6th April 1852, the day after the Presbytery, and was with Anderson for nine days. It was, as in 1851, a time of great blessing; on Friday evening Cook preached on the text, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" – Galatians 3:1. Commenting on the sermon, Anderson wrote, "The truth surpassing what I have ever heard from this dear man of God. . . . I could not speak when he came up to the vestry, but threw my arms round his neck and kissed him."²⁸⁴ Anderson's diary is relatively silent on the details of any conversations with Cook. However, besides sharing edifying anecdotes of the godly in bygone days, they must have discussed their relative ecclesiastical difficulties. On the Thursday of the communion Anderson writes in his diary, "I sat talking about various things with Mr. Cook till after 12 o'clock".²⁸⁵

Though the communion clearly had Anderson's main attention he could not escape the controversy raging around him. On the day Cook arrived in Glasgow, Anderson had begun to conclude that he should resign as a minister within the Free Church. What was troubling him was the fact he had invited Milne to John Knox's when he did not regard him as preaching a pure gospel and he had admitted that, on his principles,

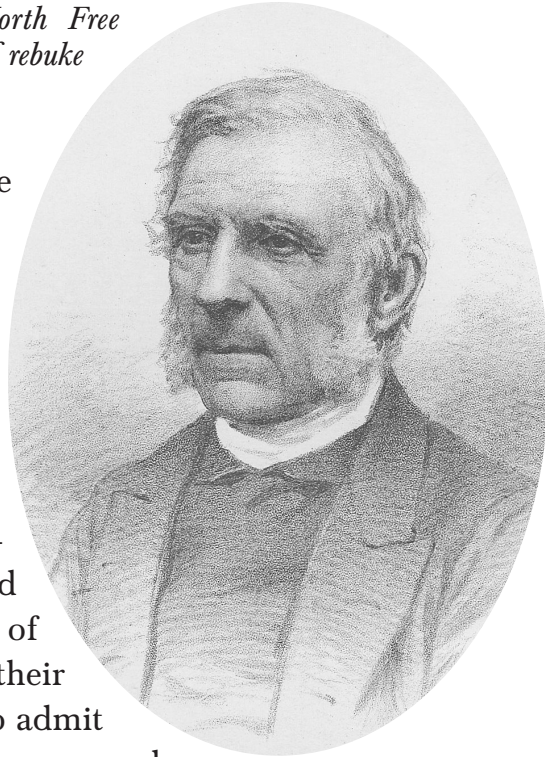
²⁸³ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 294-295, Meeting of 5th April 1852. See also *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 21-22.

²⁸⁴ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 112. An account of the entire communion season and Cook's visit is given in *ibid*, pp. 107-118. In a letter to John Bayne, Anderson comments: "I am sorry you were not here at the communion. I know not if we shall see such another on this side of Jordan. His ministrations were simple, weighty and savoury and while engaged in them, he was evidently near the fountain head; the solemnity was very great, and so far as I can learn, it was a good time to many," *Letters to John Bayne*, p. 13, Letter dated 23rd April 1852.

²⁸⁵ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 110.

Charles J. Brown, minister of New North Free Church in Edinburgh, who wrote a letter of rebuke to Anderson.

it was morally wrong for him to have done so. But then he remembered that James Henderson had admitted to his pulpit a man that he had convicted of heresy and Robert Buchanan had invited voluntaries to preach in his pulpit whilst saying “these men don’t preach evangelical truth”. Remembrance of these things pulled Anderson back from thoughts of resignation. He asked, “Where is their principle that it is a moral wrong to admit to one’s pulpit a man that one thinks unsound and unfaithful”.²⁸⁶ On the day after Cook left John Knox’s to return to Daviot, Anderson received a private letter from a Mr. C. B.²⁸⁷ which rebuked him for his conduct. The letter sought to show Anderson that he had incurred great guilt by what he had said about his brethren in the ministry. Anderson’s response in his diary was terse and brief, “The Lord judge between them and me”.²⁸⁸



Twelve noon arrived on the 20th April, the day of the Presbytery, and Anderson had neither written to Milne nor handed in any pamphlets. The next business of the Presbytery came like a bombshell. Gibson indicated that the ten demitting Knox elders had handed in a transcribed copy of the pamphlet. They had also submitted a second Memorial craving protection by the Presbytery from the injury done to their characters by statements in Anderson’s pamphlet. The

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 108. It is rather strange that Anderson defended his position with respect to the invitation to Milne in this way. By the time he was making this defence, he invited into his pulpit only those in sympathy with him, and as the years passed he became ever more exclusive.

²⁸⁷ The identity of the correspondent was hidden either by Anderson or by the transcriber of his diary; there is no reason to think that the correspondent concealed his identity. “C.B.” is almost certainly a reference to Charles J. Brown, of New North Free Church in Edinburgh, and the author of several volumes, including *The Divine Glory of Christ*.

²⁸⁸ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 119.

Memorial²⁸⁹ and then the entire pamphlet were read to a shocked Presbytery, which referred the business to the same committee that had considered the first Memorial of the ten Knox elders, with an instruction to report to the next Presbytery on 5th May 1852.²⁹⁰ Anderson, having left the Presbytery early, was unaware of these arrangements. On 1st May 1852 he penned the following: "I was led to write a letter to Mr. Gibson about my case before the Presbytery, and just as I finished it I got a note from home telling me of a committee that had been appointed to consider the whole proceedings and a report by them to be given in on the 5th. I think I should refuse to be there, or if I go, remain silent whatever the report may say."²⁹¹

The committee met in the Session House of Tron Free Church on 30th April and, as instructed, reported to the Presbytery on 5th May 1852.²⁹² They recommended that Anderson be instructed to lay a copy of the pamphlet (not all the proof copies, as previously) on the Clerk's table²⁹³ and to say whether he was going to fulfil his promise of writing an apology to John Milne. James Gibson, the Presbytery Clerk, observed with respect to Milne that "it was . . . obvious that the member of another Presbytery, whose name was mixed up with this case, was entitled to demand through his own Presbytery that this

²⁸⁹ Anderson was unwell when he went to the Presbytery and was too ill to remain. He was, however, allowed to withdraw only after the Memorial had been read; he was not present for the reading of the pamphlet. In his diary he expresses his feelings as he entered the Presbytery: "It felt again like a den of dragons and was glad to get into the open air and return quietly home. . . . I was long enough, however, to get new proofs of the rude and unfeeling spirit of the men." He then reflected on his fellow presbyters' spiritual state, "Oh what misery it would be to be shut up with them forever!" *ibid.*, Vol. 2, 1852, pp. 124-125. In a diary entry eight days later he writes: "I thought of the Presbytery as illustrating Habakkuk 2:13 ('Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?') and as very like the men of Sodom smitten with blindness so that they could not find the door of Lot's house," *ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁹⁰ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 295-296, Meeting of 20th April 1852. See also *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 22-23.

²⁹¹ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 138.

²⁹² The committee's report is given in full in the Presbytery minute of 5th May 1852. See *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 300-301; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 23.

²⁹³ Though this was the decision of the Presbytery, Robert Buchanan was far from satisfied. He considered that the Presbytery was entitled to be suspicious of Anderson's conduct and the use that might be made of the pamphlet. Buchanan was further suspicious of Anderson in consequence of his changing assertions on the number of copies of the pamphlet that had been printed and the fact that at least one copy was still in circulation. He was not prepared to leave the matter to Anderson's honour. *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 25-26.

Presbytery should give him a full opportunity of vindicating his own character”.²⁹⁴

On being given the opportunity to respond to the committee’s recommendations, Anderson vigorously defended his position and explained the confusion surrounding the number of copies that had been printed. He then re-stated why the pamphlet had been written originally and added that it was extraordinary that the Presbytery should demand him to give up his own property. Then, in a telling section of his speech as narrated in the Press, Anderson explained his motive in writing the pamphlet which interacted with the speeches of those who had opposed him at the meeting of Glasgow Presbytery on 11th February 1852. He is reported as saying: “For let men attempt to conceal the real point of controversy between them and him as they might, he believed the great day would bring out the real nature of the controversy, and show that it was a controversy between the religion of God and the religion of man, the religion of the Creator and the religion of the creature, the religion which was spiritual and the religion which was carnal.”²⁹⁵ In addition, he thought the Glasgow Presbytery, “instead of paltering with little questions regarding the number of pamphlets and the meaning of words, would act a more honourable and manly part by at once throwing themselves into the great controversy with those to whom he felt himself to be opposed, and to whom he felt that, in dependence on Divine grace, he should seek to be opposed”.²⁹⁶ With regard to his writing to John Milne he asserted he would do so at the appropriate time. The newspaper report of the Presbytery’s proceedings indicated that a section of the public applauded Anderson’s speech. It became evident from his speech that Anderson had circulated up to nine copies of the pamphlet around friends in order to obtain their opinion of it.²⁹⁷ After they had read the pamphlet they were asked to return their copy to Anderson.

Robert Buchanan was indignant at Anderson’s dilatoriness in replying to Milne. The Press report of the Presbytery stated that “he felt grieved and ashamed to hear Mr. Anderson say that in his own time, in good time, he would write the letter he had promised to write. In good time! Am I to charge a brother minister with not preaching the pure

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁹⁵ Anderson had made this point at length in a letter to John Bayne, written on 5th May before he went to the Presbytery, *Letters to John Bayne*, p. 16.

²⁹⁶ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 28.

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 28.

gospel, and after engaging that I will write a letter of explanation and apology, allow weeks to pass over, and then say – I will do it in good time. Would that conduct be tolerated among men of honour? Talk of right principle and pre-eminent religious principle! – that conduct would not be tolerated among men of the world. Mr. Anderson must bear the responsibility of having these things exposed.”²⁹⁸ The Presbytery, on the motion of Buchanan, approved the committee’s report and its recommendations and cited Anderson to appear at the next Presbytery on 10th May and to lay a copy of the pamphlet on the Clerk’s table by 12 noon.²⁹⁹

Anderson’s diary for 5th May 1852 provides no information with respect to what took place at the Presbytery; instead it describes again how he viewed his fellow presbyters. As he approached the Presbytery House he questioned whether it was his duty to go into such a place; he then writes: “I met first one and then another of the ministers and at last resolved to go in. But the horror I felt was inexpressible and I thought ‘The Breaker is gone up’ and I must soon follow. I had some weighty exercises and spoke with some strength and freedom. But what a scene followed! My soul is among fierce lions: I live among fire-brands. O deliver me. Bands of ill men robbed me of character and I believe if they could they would rob me of life too.” The diary entry for the day begins with words, “I was peaceful this morning tho’ somewhat anxious about our disruption for so it seems likely to prove”.³⁰⁰ From these words the direction of his thought is clear; he perceived that he would soon be leaving the Free Church. The Glasgow Presbytery of 5th May 1852 also received the Memorial from the ten demitting John Knox’s elders complaining about the injury done to their reputation by Anderson’s pamphlet. The Memorial read:

Glasgow 19th April 1852

To the Reverend the Free Presbytery of Glasgow, The Memorial of the Ten demitting Elders of Knox’s Free Church Respectfully showeth,

That in the pamphlet which was referred to at the last meeting of your reverend court, as printed and partially circulated, by the

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁹⁹ For a detailed account of the Presbytery of 5th May 1852, see *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 23-33. This account seems to have been based on newspaper reports. It is much longer than the Presbytery minutes.

³⁰⁰ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, pp. 141-142.

Rev. J. R. Anderson, there are serious charges brought against the memorialists, which are utterly unfounded, and are a great aggravation of the groundless stigma cast upon their character, in the minute of Knox's kirk session formerly complained of, and which your reverend court ordered to be expunged.

The memorialists hand herewith a written copy of said pamphlet, and would call the attention of the Presbytery to the passages on pages 39 to 44, inclusive specially, 49 to 51, and more especially, pages 61 to 72,³⁰¹ inclusive as bearing injuriously against their characters, both in an ecclesiastical and civil capacity, and they respectfully solicit protection of your reverend court against the attacks thus made on them by a professed minister of Christ, a member of your reverend Presbytery. The memorialists humbly conceive, that it is not enough that Mr. Anderson now suppress said pamphlet, which has already been seen by many, but that it is necessary that he withdraw the accusations contained in it against your memorialists, and make such an apology as the Presbytery judge to be adequate, for (to use his own expression) the "foul calumnies" which it contains, against men, who from their former connection with his congregation, and their endeavours to promote its best interests, some of them for a period of fifteen years, deserve very different treatment.

[Signed by the Ten demitting elders]³⁰²

The 10th May arrived and the public were crowding round the door of the Presbytery an hour before it started in order to be able to watch the proceedings.³⁰³ Once the Presbytery was constituted, the Clerk intimated that he had not received a copy of the pamphlet. Anderson was then asked by the Moderator, in the name of the court, to state the reasons why he had failed to obey the injunction of the Presbytery.

³⁰¹ It is highly probable that the pagination referred to in the memorial is to the handwritten transcript of the pamphlet and not to the pagination of the original printed version. The pamphlet was entitled, *A Reply to the speeches delivered in the Free Presbytery of Glasgow in the case of Elders of Knox's Session, on Wednesday 11th February, 1852*, by the Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson, Minister of Knox's Church. The writer of this paper has not been able to locate a copy of this important document. Ian R. MacDonald confuses this pamphlet with Anderson's published essay, *A Warning to Ministers*, see "Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson", p. 216

³⁰² *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 24.

³⁰³ From the report of the *Scottish Guardian* newspaper, cited in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 34.

In reply, Anderson stated he was not bound to comply with the injunction for two reasons. Firstly, the pamphlet was his property, and secondly, if charges were to be brought against him, he did not feel called upon to supply evidence supposedly capable of substantiating those charges. Anderson was then asked whether he was prepared to lay a copy on the Clerk's table. "No Moderator, I am not," was the stern reply.³⁰⁴

The debate that followed was largely between Anderson, defending his action of refusing to hand over a copy of his pamphlet, and probing questions on behalf of the Presbytery by Robert Buchanan and James Gibson. During the debate James Henderson, the minister of St. Enoch's and the Convener of the committee that had examined the breach between Anderson and the majority of his elders, stated what was clearly the view of the Presbytery: "The grand reason why Mr. Anderson ought to have obeyed the injunction of the Presbytery had nothing to do with the question of property, but was connected with a simple matter of right. He could not reconcile it with anything like a just sense of moral right that any one printing a pamphlet affecting the character of his brethren should withhold that pamphlet from their inspection. He thought that Mr. Anderson ought to feel at once that he ought to put them in a position to defend themselves as soon as possible. That was the reason why he ought to feel that the Presbytery had properly exercised their authority."³⁰⁵

The 1852 General Assembly was only a fortnight away, so the Presbytery decided to refer the whole case to the Assembly for their advice.³⁰⁶ Buchanan concluded with a speech in which he expressed his affectionate sympathy with John Milne, the injured brother, whose name had been so outrageously brought before Church courts. He ended by saying, "The Presbytery had done their best – and he believed their brother was sensible of it – to protect him from that injury, and he had

³⁰⁴ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, p. 303, Meeting of 10th May 1852; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 33.

³⁰⁵ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 36. During the discussion of Anderson's conduct at the meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery on 10th May 1852, Robert Buchanan pointed out a new issue of concern. In the transcribed copy of the pamphlet handed in by the demitting elders, Anderson's description of the "Hope Street Sermon Case", which had concluded with Anderson expressing deep regret, was diametrically opposite to that which he had previously given to the Presbytery. In Buchanan's view, this was a grave matter that should not be allowed to pass without searching investigation. *ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁰⁶ *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 303-304, Meeting of 10th May 1852; see also *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 33-34. A full report of this meeting of the Presbytery, from the *Scottish Guardian*, is contained on pp. 33-40.

no doubt they would continue to do so". Buchanan spoke of Milne as "a most esteemed minister of this Church, a highly honoured and much blessed minister of God".³⁰⁷

The significance of this comment by Buchanan should not be missed. Anderson's outspoken criticism of John Milne must have been a relevant factor in the opposition to him. Milne, a man of a kindly disposition,³⁰⁸ had recently experienced a number of bereavements. He married Robina Stuart in January 1847. Their first child Jessie, born in 1848, died after eight months. His wife died three days after giving birth to a son in June 1851.³⁰⁹ This was at the precise time Anderson was in controversy with his elders over Milne's preaching. Anderson's criticism of what he saw in the Perth manse must have been particularly hurtful to Milne after his wife's death, as it seemed to implicate her.³¹⁰ Milne's baby boy then died after fourteen months. This criticism of Milne in the context of these bereavements must have appeared very harsh.

In an undated letter, written by Milne, shortly after the death of his wife, to Andrew Bonar, he reflects on Anderson's criticism in these terms:

My Very Dear Brother,

I was favoured with your kind welcome note, and desire to reciprocate your brotherly love. You know how much I value it, and thank the Lord for it. What will heaven be, where those who love will never part! I wonder how completely I have been kept in peace, and free from all reflection and unkindness, during this affair of Mr. Anderson. On Saturday morning, at breakfast, I got the *Guardian* from A. Somerville, and I was rather annoyed, only, however, because I find he speaks of what he "saw and heard in my house". As long as he kept to myself, I really did not care: but this seems to criminate another dearer than myself. . . . But we must not be overcome of evil, and I only feel pity and regret that he is

³⁰⁷ Case of *J. R. Anderson*, p. 40.

³⁰⁸ Horatius Bonar speaks of Milne as "gentle and kind in manner; polite and affable even from his youth", *John Milne*, p. 7. He seems to have possessed a transparent character and would readily admit he was wrong (*ibid.*, pp. 225, 408-409). Bonar regarded him as so gentle that it was difficult to imagine him provoked; he once asked him, "when were you last angry?" (pp. 308-309). Milne would address those who opposed him as "My friend" or "My dear friend", which generally disarmed and won them (pp. 333-334).

³⁰⁹ Bonar, *John Milne*, pp. 124-125.

³¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 131.

ruining himself. It was evening on Saturday before I could get myself rightly to prepare, but I was helped; and on Sabbath I must own the Lord was gracious.³¹¹

In a footnote against Anderson's name, Horatius Bonar adds: "Mr. Jonathan Anderson of Glasgow, who had attacked Mr. Milne and his preaching. His case came afterwards before the Presbytery of Glasgow and the General Assembly. There are several allusions to the case in Mr. M.'s letters; all of them kindly and charitable. But we cannot go into details."³¹²

Whilst it is highly unlikely that Anderson was unaware of Milne's bereavements, it is worth remembering that Anderson had himself been similarly bereaved. His last child, a daughter, died shortly after she was born and his first wife Martha within a week of the child's death. Writing in his diary more than six years after his wife's death he observes, "I went to the Necropolis, and viewed with emotion the narrow house where the ashes of my beloved Martha rest".³¹³

The day following the Presbytery meeting of 10th May, a visitor called at Anderson's manse; it was James Milne Smith,³¹⁴ the minister of Pollokshaws Original Secession Church. Appreciating Anderson's difficulties with the Glasgow Presbytery of the Free Church, Smith urged him to join their section of the Original Seceders. The United Original Secession Church had agreed two weeks earlier on 27th April 1852, by a majority of just one vote, to unite with the Free Church. Smith and his congregation, along with twelve other ministers, led by James Anderson of Carluke and John Aitken of Aberdeen, contended that since acknowledging the obligation of the covenants on posterity was a qualification for church fellowship in the United Original Secession Church, they could not partake in any union where this was not a fundamental article of faith. This would not be the case following the proposed union with the Free Church, hence the minority continued as a separate Church holding to their original

³¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 131.

³¹² *ibid.*

³¹³ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 3, 1853, p. 99.

³¹⁴ For the history of the Pollokshaws congregation, see Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church*, p. 420. In May 1863 Smith demitted his charge and, along with a number of his congregation, emigrated to Pollok Settlement, near Auckland, New Zealand, *ibid.*, p. 583.

principles.³¹⁵ Anderson records in his diary how he responded to Smith's entreaties: "while I approve of their theory, I hardly think they would tolerate a testimony against their formality and deadness: nor would it be fair to take a place among them only perhaps to create a disturbance. I am for peace, if I could get it with a good conscience."³¹⁶

In the ten days between Smith's visit and the commencement of the 1852 Free Church General Assembly, Anderson seems to have been in a state of turmoil. After receiving a letter from James Gibson, informing him that the referral of his case to the General Assembly had the effect of citing all parties to the bar of that court, he reflects on whether he ought to appear or just absent himself. Then he adds, "I desire to do whatever may be His will, but to Him alone I have to look, for I have no other counsellor on whom I can depend".³¹⁷ The next day he doubts his own integrity: "I was led to review my conduct towards the Presbytery, and saw that I had sadly fallen in respect of open dealing and manly avowal of my real sentiments. I sought to humble myself for my sin, and saw that the discipline I had passed through may be necessary to bring me to glory."³¹⁸ The next day he is indignant when he is informed of what the elders said at the Presbytery: "the men are utterly bankrupt in truth and honesty, and that like all apostates, they make haste to please their new masters by eating up their former words."³¹⁹ Three days later, on the Monday of the week in which the General Assembly was to begin, he is discouraged by a minister informing him that the Presbytery and the elders are confident that they are in the right in all that they have done.³²⁰ In a letter to John Bayne, written the day before the Assembly started, he writes: "I feel at a stand with regard to the proceedings of Church Courts, and know not what more I can do, but let them take their full swing. I get no light on going to the Assembly, and do not know what I could do though I were there. We began a weekly prayer meeting last night and mean to continue it, till our affairs are settled

³¹⁵ For details of the historical background to the union and the rupture in the United Original Secession Synod, see Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church*, pp. 177-238; Charles G. M'Crie, *The Church of Scotland: Her Divisions and Her Re-Unions* (Edinburgh, 1901), pp. 187-214.

³¹⁶ *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 149.

³¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 150.

³¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 151.

³¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 153.

³²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 155-156.



Angus Makellar, Moderator of the 1852 Free Church General Assembly.

one way or the other. I expounded Habakkuk 1:1-4.”³²¹

(e) The 1852 General Assembly

The tenth General Assembly of the Free Church commenced its sittings on Thursday 20th May 1852 in the Tanfield Hall, Canonmills, in Edinburgh. Dr. Alexander Duff, the missionary, was the retiring Moderator. He opened the Assembly with a sermon on Psalm 2:7, “I

have set my king on my holy hill of Zion”.³²² The new Moderator, of what was to be

a crucial Assembly for Anderson, was Dr. Angus Makellar, the chairman of the Board of Missions and Education in the Free Church.³²³ Anderson read in the Press an account of the opening of the Assembly; while he perused it he says, “my nerves shook and my heart palpitated. I cannot stand this; it is too much for me.” He continues in his diary: “I wonder if I am to get away from this scene of flattery and delusion. A letter from Gibson telling me the reference is to come on the Assembly on Monday. I wrote him saying I did not see that my presence was needed, and hoped it would not be considered disrespectful to the Assembly.”³²⁴

³²¹ *Letters to John Bayne*, p. 20. The text he expounded is telling with respect to his state of mind: “The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.”

³²² *Scotsman*, Saturday 22nd May 1852, p. 4.

³²³ Makellar was the minister of Pencaitland in the Presbytery of Haddington and was the Moderator of the Church of Scotland prior to the Disruption in 1840. A minority of his congregation came out with him at the Disruption. He was immediately appointed to a central post in Edinburgh and left the pastoral ministry. His son William became the minister of the Pencaitland Free Church. See Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 1, p. 387; *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 260, Vol. 2, p. 28.

³²⁴ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 161.

The 1852 Assembly was an important occasion in the history of the Free Church of Scotland. It witnessed the consummation of the union between the Free Church and the United Original Secession Synod – the Church of Thomas M’Crie Senior. On Friday 21st May 1852 a deputation of four Original Secession ministers, including Thomas M’Crie junior and Robert Shaw,³²⁵ presented the proposals of the Original Secession. Six days later the union was agreed, with speeches appreciative of the Original Secession by Robert Candlish, James Begg, and James Gibson.³²⁶ It was in the midst of the harmony and warmth of these union discussions that the Assembly considered the reference from the Glasgow Presbytery concerning Jonathan Ranken Anderson. He was called on Monday 24th May, having been previously cited, but did not appear.³²⁷ The reason for his non-appearance was an acute headache that lasted all morning, after which he laid down on the sofa and fell asleep. Later in the day a young woman, who had been at the Assembly, came to his house to inform him what had taken place. He then writes: “I was thrown into a flutter by her tidings and felt swept into a sea of sorrow and perplexity. O that I were able to say ‘Lord keep me for I trust in thee. I have no other to look to.’”³²⁸

Anderson was cited again and summoned to appear before the Assembly on Thursday 27th May at twelve noon and to lay before the Assembly a copy of his pamphlet; again he did not appear. However, on this occasion a medical certificate was handed in, signed by two doctors, saying he could not undertake the journey to Edinburgh until later that day or the following day. One of the doctors who signed the certificate was Harry Rainy, the father of Principal Robert Rainy.³²⁹ He was called for a third time on the evening of 27th May but

³²⁵ Both men were highly respected ministers in the Reformed Church in Scotland. Thomas M’Crie junior was the author of many works, including a biography of his father, *Life of Thomas M’Crie, D.D.* (Edinburgh, 1840); *The Story of the Scottish Church* (Edinburgh, 1875) and *Annals of English Presbytery: From the earliest period to the present time* (London, 1872). He was the editor for several years of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. Robert Shaw was the author of a most useful commentary on the *Westminster Confession, Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh, 1845).

³²⁶ Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church*, pp. 207-209.

³²⁷ *Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, convened at Edinburgh, May 1852. With the Proceedings of that Assembly, and of the Commission of the previous Assembly* (Edinburgh, 1852), pp. 430-431 (cited afterwards as *AGAFCS*). See also *PGAFCS*, 1852, pp. 48-49.

³²⁸ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, p. 164.

³²⁹ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 43-44.

did not appear.³³⁰ That was the day the Original Secession union was agreed. One can imagine the contrast between the warm approval of the union and Anderson being cited, called and failing to appear. His repeated non-appearance had a further consequence; it put his former elders and the Glasgow Presbytery to a great deal of trouble and expense.

On Friday morning, before he had got out of bed, an officer of the General Assembly knocked at his door citing him to appear again at twelve noon on Saturday 29th May. This clearly disturbed Anderson and after discussing the matter with some in his congregation he and his wife left for Edinburgh at 5.30 in the evening, arriving in their hotel three hours later. Saturday was to be an eventful day; Anderson appeared in the Assembly. He gave in a six-point statement to the Assembly's Joint Principal Clerk, Thomas Pitcairn. In this document Anderson stated that he was casting himself on the indulgence of the General Assembly. The thrust of what he had to say was that he had good grounds for suppressing his pamphlet and that he viewed the Presbytery's demand as despotic; they were lording it over God's heritage and teaching implicit obedience. He also drew the Assembly's attention to another principle of the Glasgow Presbytery – that it was a sin to invite a man into your pulpit if in your private judgement you did not regard him as a faithful witness.³³¹ When asked if he would hand over to the Assembly a copy of the pamphlet, he replied quite simply – “No”.

Robert Buchanan, on behalf of the Presbytery, and then David Dunlop, one of the ten demitting elders, addressed the Assembly on why the Reference should be received.³³² Buchanan reviewed the history of the case, detailing Anderson's conduct throughout, which he characterised as trifling with both the Presbytery and the Assembly. He then went on to explain that it was necessary that Anderson should be “brought to understand that censoriousness in the pulpit was not faithfulness; that railing, odious everywhere, was pre-eminently so in the pulpit; that there was nothing in his commission to pronounce sweeping

³³⁰ *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 444; *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 193; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 44. Anderson's diary account for Thursday 27th May includes the following: “My mind recoiled from the idea of going to Edinburgh, and I thought of sending a protestation stating shortly my reasons for not appearing; at other times I thought I should keep quiet. In the evening I wrote a brief statement and addressed a few lines to the Clerk of Assembly enclosing it. But no sooner was it away than my spirits sunk, as if I was shrinking from duty and trouble in not presenting myself before them,” *Anderson's Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, pp. 167-168.

³³¹ Anderson's statement is printed in full in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 44-45.

³³² A summary of Buchanan's speech is given in *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 264.

censures of condemnation among large bodies of men; that there was nothing within the boards of the Bible to warrant the assumption that the pure gospel of Jesus Christ was preached nowhere save in Knox's Church, Glasgow." He went on to detail Anderson's objections to the preaching of John Milne, and the production of a pamphlet critical of the Glasgow Presbytery. Buchanan, after charging Anderson with gross hypocrisy, concluded by calling on the Assembly to deal with Mr. Anderson so as to bring him to humility and a proper sense of the wrong he had committed.³³³

At this stage Anderson spoke again saying that the closing part of Buchanan's speech had gone to his heart – this was Buchanan's call to the Assembly to bring him to see the wrong he had done. Anderson now stated that he would cheerfully submit himself into the hands of his ecclesiastical superiors. He said:

I feel as if it would be very congenial to my own feelings to gain genuine humility in the sight of God, at any expense. . . . I felt disposed, Moderator, cordially to say, while I heard my co-presbyter's closing sentences – cheerfully will I surrender myself into the hands of my ecclesiastical superiors, and pass through the most fiery ordeal of discipline which, guided by the Word and the Spirit of Christ, they may direct, so that I shall be sanctified for bringing me to the possession of that, without which I shall have no loveliness in the sight of God or man, without which I have no fitness for what I am feeling every week to be the most weighty and solemn work that can be laid on the shoulders of a sinful man – the work of the ministry. . . . I feel, Sir, that I cannot leave the responsible position in which this day I found myself placed, without generally acknowledging at once many, many imperfections about my ministry, – many, many grievous blunders, and certainly in the management of my affairs before a Church Court, for I have suffered on account of it what no tongue can express. And if in the course of discipline the Assembly may seem fit to appoint, other faults beside any that have been brought before me this day, with which, in whole or in part, I may at the moment have been disposed to acquiesce – for I may have erred in too readily making confessions, and not looking upon them in their true light – if in addition to all this, and any other faults, the Church

³³³ *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 264.

Court find it necessary to bring before me, as soon as my conscience is the evidence of guiltiness, I trust I shall be ready to admit my sin; and taking evidence from any obliquet of the past, to see to it that through grace I shall be simple-hearted, and as respects my confession that it shall be conclusive. With these things I must take leave, with all respect, to add this, in the only part of duty that now remains for me, so far as I can see at present to go through it in a way not inconsistent with the profession that I have now made.³³⁴

After this rather remarkable and distinct change of attitude, Anderson was asked again if he was now prepared to hand over a copy of his pamphlet, to which he replied – “That he was”.³³⁵ The Assembly reserved judgment on the case and on Robert Candlish’s recommendation appointed a committee to confer with Anderson and report back to a later diet of the Assembly. The committee, which met Anderson on Saturday evening, was under the convenership of Dr. Patrick Clason,³³⁶ the other Joint Principal Clerk of the Assembly. The committee was comprised of William Cunningham, Robert Candlish, James Bannerman, Andrew Gray, and Sir Henry Wellwood Moncreiff – Ministers; with Murray Dunlop – the author of the *Claim of Right*, Robert Paul, and Mr. Hawkins – Elders.³³⁷ Following Anderson’s change of attitude in the morning the committee doubtless expected to conclude the business in the evening; that, however, is not what took place. Cunningham, commenting on the meeting, later said: “After dealing with Mr. Anderson, the committee found themselves totally unable to

³³⁴ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 40-41. Frederic Monod, the distinguished French pastor, was present at the Assembly. Monod, who had studied theology in Geneva (1815-1818) and had come under the influence of Robert Haldane, expressed to the anonymous author of the *Case of J. R. Anderson* his amazement at the contrast between these expressions and Anderson’s subsequent conduct. “That the party who gave utterance to them should so speedily have fled from the discipline he seemed with such humility to court,” *ibid.* Within forty-eight hours of making the statement of his readiness to accept discipline, Anderson had sent in a resignation letter to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

³³⁵ *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 450; *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 265; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, pp. 45-46.

³³⁶ Patrick Clason (1789-1867) was made Joint Clerk of the Free Church General Assembly with Thomas Pitcairn in May 1843. He held the post for twenty-four years. His health made it necessary for him to winter abroad, which resulted in his doing good service to the Church in Egypt, Palestine, Malta, and Madeira. For biographical details, see *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 121, and James A. Wylie (ed.), *Disruption Worthies: A Memorial of 1843* (Edinburgh, 1881) pp. 161-164.

³³⁷ *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 451; *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 266.



*Leading members of the 1852 General Assembly Committee that met Anderson.
 Top row, left to right: Patrick Clason (Convener), William Cunningham, Robert Candlish.
 Bottom row, left to right: James Bannerman, Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff,
 Alexander Murray Dunlop.*

bring him to anything like a right sense of the sin of which he had been guilty and therefore none of the objects of the committee's appointment has been attained." Cunningham continued: "In one case, indeed, he felt he could not meet the statements and arguments of the committee, and in regard to the transaction in question, admitted that he had been guilty of a violation of the ninth commandment; but even that admission, wrung from him by statements which he could not face, and agreements which he felt himself utterly unable to answer, even that seemed to have nothing at all of a right scriptural sense of the nature of the transaction,

and the duty which that confession, had it been made in a right spirit should have led him to adopt with regard to Mr. Milne and the Presbytery of Glasgow.”³³⁸

Writing in his diary, Anderson described the committee meeting with the leading men in the Free Church, in these terms: “A Committee was appointed to confer with me, consisting of the leaders of the Free Church. We met at 8 o’clock, and sat two hours, and again I found myself in the inquisition – it was worse than Glasgow because the inquisitors were more acute and able. But at all points I found them men of the world; my language was strange to them and theirs to me. *I came away with horror, having seen my sin in recording such a judgment on the ten elders. I could not speak when I came to the Hotel, but sighed deeply. Mr. L was there, but nothing of any consequence passed.* I saw afterwards light, pointing me to leave the Free Church.”³³⁹ Commenting a year later on the same meeting he writes: “I found that I was in the presence of men of the world and not men of God and therefore I could not honestly remain associated with them in a church relation.”³⁴⁰

The Assembly committee came to three main conclusions:³⁴¹

Firstly, regarding the minute of the elders’ resignation, Anderson admitted he had written it and that it was not an accurate minute. The admission was in these rather stark terms as recorded in the report

³³⁸ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 42. For a summary of Cunningham’s speech, see *PGAFCS*, 1852, pp. 275-277; and Appendix II below. In the preface to his book, *Letters on the Free Church*, written a year later, Anderson commented on the confession that he made to the committee. Speaking of Robert Candlish, he wrote: “with a dexterity worthy of a disciple of Loyola and a Jesuitry with which I am unable to cope, (he) entrapped me into a confession, which ought neither to have been demanded or made” (p. vii).

³³⁹ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1852, pp. 170-171. See also Cameron, p. 16, where an abridged citation of the entry is given, the portion in italics being omitted (the original was not italicized). It seems clear that Neil Cameron was not responsible for this significant omission. In producing his extracts from *Anderson’s Diaries*, Cameron did not use the eight-volume set but rather a separate 186-page leather-bound volume, similar in format and entitled *Extracts from Diary of the late Rev. Jonathan Ranken Anderson of Glasgow, 1851-1858*. In this volume, the text above in italics has been omitted. It is evident that Cameron used this volume of extracts in 1913/1914 to produce his own book because all his selections are excerpts from the volume and are marked in red crayon. There are also several ink additions, usually correcting Scripture quotations, all of which are reproduced in Cameron’s book. The volume belonged latterly to the late Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow.

³⁴⁰ *Letters on the Free Church*, p. xvii. It is rather an amazing statement by Anderson to classify Patrick Clason, William Cunningham, Robert Candlish, James Bannerman, Andrew Gray, Sir Henry Wellwood Moncreiff, and Murray Dunlop as men of the world and not men of God.

³⁴¹ The Assembly committee’s report is printed in *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 43.

of the committee: “Mr. Anderson admitted that this minute was an untrue construction of the terms of the resignation of the ten elders in the sense of being sinful in the sight of God, and a violation of the ninth commandment.”³⁴²

Secondly, the confessions of wrong he had made on 10th December 1850³⁴³ in regard to his Hope Street sermon, and the reconciliation that ensued, were not as real as they had thought. In his pamphlet he said he had been “overborne by numbers” and that his defence would have been “thrown away on men who seem far gone in utter blindness and delusion respecting spiritual things”.³⁴⁴

Thirdly, in dealing with the reasons why he had not yet written to John Milne he said the explanation for the delay was that he was unclear about whether it was wrong to invite someone into his pulpit that he did not regard as a preacher of the pure gospel.³⁴⁵

The General Assembly took up the case again on Monday 31st May 1852. In the devotional exercises prior to the commencement of the General Assembly’s business, John Milne engaged in prayer and Alexander Somerville concluded the devotions.³⁴⁶ Anderson was again called three times but did not appear.³⁴⁷ At twelve noon, Dr. Clason gave in the report of the committee that had met Anderson on the previous Saturday evening, stating that it had led to no satisfactory result.³⁴⁸ A letter addressed to the Moderator from Anderson was then read to the General Assembly. It announced his resignation from the Free Church. Anderson’s resignation letter was as follows:

³⁴² *ibid.*

³⁴³ These confessions were made to a committee of the Glasgow Free Church Presbytery that met Anderson on that date. The committee reported to a meeting of the Presbytery on 8th January 1851, as we have seen. See *Minutes of the Glasgow Presbytery*, pp. 216-218.

³⁴⁴ The quotations are from Anderson’s pamphlet, *A Reply to the speeches delivered in the Free Presbytery of Glasgow in the case of Elders of Knox’s Session, on Wednesday 11th February, 1852*, and are cited from *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 272, and *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 60.

³⁴⁵ *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 43.

³⁴⁶ *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 269.

³⁴⁷ *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 452; *PGAFCS*, 1852, pp. 269-270.

³⁴⁸ *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 452; *PCAFCS*, 1852, p. 270; *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 46.

To the Reverend the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland Edinburgh, 31 May 1852

Rev Sir

I think the time has come when I must either renounce a connection with the Free Church of Scotland, or run the risk of losing what is dearer to me than life.

I have come to the conclusion, that it's my duty to accept the former of these alternatives. I therefore hereby intimate to you, and through you to the General Assembly, that I hereby renounce my connection with the Free Church of Scotland; and I subscribe myself, with every sentiment of respect, Rev. Sir, your obedient servant,

Jon. R. Anderson.³⁴⁹

To the Free Church leaders this was a rather surprising turn of events, especially when just two days earlier he had spoken of submitting himself to his ecclesiastical superiors and passing through the fiery ordeal of discipline.³⁵⁰ Following the reading of Anderson's resignation letter, Robert Candlish made a long speech reviewing the whole case. He made it quite clear that he considered Anderson to be a fugitive from discipline and he described his behaviour before the committee as "shuffling, evasive and disingenuous".³⁵¹ William Cunningham supported the position taken by Candlish and repeated the view that by his resignation Anderson was fleeing from discipline. Cunningham went on: "It was plain they could not accept of the resignation. That would be

³⁴⁹ The letter is printed in *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 452; *PGAFCS*, 1852, p. 272, and by Anderson himself, though very slightly modified, in *Letters on the Free Church*, p. 1.

³⁵⁰ In a letter to John Bayne of Dunblane, written on the day that he penned his resignation letter, Anderson said: "I was deeply distressed till light began to point to an exodus, and after passing through one furnace after another, my conviction was settled that I should depart. I wrote a letter today giving up my connection with the Free Church" (*Letters to John Bayne*, p. 22). In another letter, written two months later to Dr. Mackintosh Mackay, then the Free Church minister of Dunoon, Anderson assures Mackay his resignation was not a "hasty step" or "the result of a sudden impulse". Then he adds most solemnly, "I wrote my letter of resignation in a frame in which I might willingly enter the eternal world . . . and not a friend to say, I will stand by you", *Letters on the Free Church*, p. 11.

³⁵¹ This was a long and important speech by Candlish as it revealed, with some feeling, how the Free Church leaders viewed Anderson. The speech is given in *PGAFCS*, 1852, pp. 270-275 (citation on p. 271) and in Appendix II below.

a virtual admission that they had no moral charges against him. Mr. Anderson, with all his spiritual pride, his self-conceit, and his self-deceit, must have felt, as a result of the conference, in his inmost soul, that he was occupying a dishonourable and a degraded position. He must have felt that he was in a position which he could not and dared not face, and in which he could entertain no reasonable expectations of satisfying the minds of honourable and honest men.”³⁵²

The Assembly concluded Anderson’s case at the 1852 General Assembly with a motion moved by Robert Candlish, and approved unanimously. The long and rather carefully worded motion was in these terms:

The Assembly approve of the Report; decline to receive the resignation communicated in Mr. Anderson’s letter to the Moderator; remit to the Presbytery of Glasgow to resume consideration of the case; instruct them to prepare a libel against Mr. Anderson, embracing all matters competently brought before them and before this Court in connection with the case; authorise the Presbytery to proceed, notwithstanding any appeals or complaints, until the case is ripe for final judgment; enjoin the Presbytery to report to the Commission in August, or at any of its stated diets; and the Commission is hereby empowered to dispose of any appeals or complaints that may be taken, and finally to give judgment in the case in whatever way it may be brought before them. Farther, the Assembly, on a review of the whole circumstances of the case as it has come under their cognizance suspend Mr. Anderson from the office and functions of the holy ministry; instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow to intimate this

³⁵² Cunningham’s speech is given in *PGAFCs*, 1852, pp. 275-277 and in Appendix II below. See also *Case of J. R. Anderson*, p. 42. William Cunningham’s assessment of the Anderson case is also referred to in his biography. His biographers first give an overview of the case without mentioning Anderson by name. They speak of him as a “Minister in the West of Scotland, a man of considerable mental powers and very fair scholarship, and an impressive preacher”. They then state Cunningham’s assessment: “The whole history of this painful case afforded a striking warning of the extreme danger of men indulging in inordinate vanity and self-conceit. It was abundantly evident that this was Mr. Anderson’s besetting sin; and as they were all very prone to think more highly of themselves than they ought, and to imagine that somewhat more than an average degree of self-conceit was comparatively a light and venial offence, it might be well if this case, and there are many others, would lead them to reflect that vanity and self-conceit, unless very carefully guarded against and mortified, had a very strong tendency to make men knaves, and to involve them in breaches of morality.” See Robert Rainy and James Mackenzie, *Life of William Cunningham, D.D.* (London, 1871), pp. 389-390.

sentence in Knox's Church next Lord's Day; and authorise them to meet in their ordinary place on Friday the 4th June next, at twelve o'clock noon, to make arrangements for the sentence, and otherwise proceeding in the case. The Assembly direct intimation of this sentence to be made to Mr. Anderson.³⁵³

The Free Church's view of Anderson's conduct after the 1852 General Assembly is given quite starkly in its magazine:

Of Mr. Jonathan Anderson we desire to write with the feelings due to one who was long and justly regarded as a very valuable and promising minister of Christ. We are told that to many he has been an instrument of good, and that his gifts and attainments, under salutary direction, would have made him the instrument of still wider usefulness. But a root of bitterness springing up troubled him, and his recent melancholy course of procedure has made him an object of universal pity. It is something new we believe in our administration, to subject the spirit of Pharisaism to discipline. The Publican, for the most part, has monopolized the rod, and the Pharisee has escaped. We hope that this case will not be without weight, as a warning to others. There are some few men in our Church that give themselves offensive airs, as if they only preached the gospel, or served their Master faithfully. Let them see to it whether this profession does not spring from sheer vanity and self conceit, remembering that in this case it is impossible to say what debasing and loathsome fruit this seed of corruption may not come to bear.³⁵⁴

In sharp contrast to the Free Church view is Anderson's description of his appearance at the Assembly and his assessment of what took place. Both are provided in a detailed letter to John Bayne and by an entry in his diary. To his friend in Dunblane he writes on the day of his resignation:

³⁵³ See *AGAFCS*, 1852, p. 453. Robert Candlish, who was the leader in the Assembly, played a major role in handling Anderson's case. His biographer wrote: "This Assembly [1852] had to dispose of two cases of discipline [the other one being the case of Alexander Russell, the minister of Dailly], in which Dr. Candlish took the leading part, as indeed, he almost always did in such cases, showing a singular power in analysing evidence, and bringing out the real merits of the case." Wilson and Rainy, *Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish*, p. 476.

³⁵⁴ *The Free Church Magazine*, New series, Vol. 1, 1852, p. 296.

I went to the General Assembly on Saturday in obedience to their second citation – having been prevented from obeying the first by sickness. I was helped to speak twice, and that with some little freedom; but I found in my spirit before I closed that the breaker was gone up before me. I met a Committee in the evening for conference, and had my sin pointed out to me, and pressed upon me in the form of our minute accepting the resignation of the Ten Elders. I owned it as soon as I saw that I had done them wrong in having put upon their language a sense which it cannot bear; but it is curious the detection by Ministers of my iniquities has given me farther insight into their characters, and taught me that they are a people void of understanding, and speak a strange language.

I was deeply distressed till light began to point to an exodus, and after passing through one furnace after another; my conviction was settled that I should depart. I wrote a letter today giving up my connection with the Free Church. I think it well for us that the beginning of our case was the preaching of Mr. Milne – one of the best of the modern school. I pronounced condemnation on it, and then it has been tested in the congregation – the Session – the Presbytery and the General Assembly. In the congregation too many were carried away – in the Session ten to two – in the Presbytery not a voice was raised for the truth – and not one in the General Assembly. But besides all this, I have got such a view of the spirit and conduct of Ministers that though they had blotted out the case, and asked me to come back, I could not.

I have been very graciously dealt with, and though I have had to pass through fire and water, I have had many a wealthy place. I think I never had such a Sabbath as yesterday; though in the house all day, and partly in bed, and today has been fully equal to it. The snare is broken, and we are escaped. “Come out from among them and be separate.”³⁵⁵

The diary record for the same day is as follows:

A memorable day – my separation from the Free Church. In the morning very early I was set upon by the adversary to submit to discipline – my sin was so great that it could not be got rid of but

³⁵⁵ *Letters to John Bayne*, pp. 21-23.

by a public confession, and such like causing such a terror of conscience, that the perspiration broke forth from the pores of my body. I was in distress, but battled on, when the deliverer appeared, and by means of light on His word freed me from the entanglements of the fowler. I had this passage “And when Pharaoh would not let them go”. In prayer after I rose I was led to the name proclaimed to Moses in the cleft of the rock and in a feeble way was led into covenant with Him or rather in the Mediator. I went down to breakfast, and felt rather shut up in prayer at family worship, and was fairly driven from it by noise without and emptiness within. In asking a blessing was helped, but in returning thanks the heavens seemed to rain down a copious rain, such as I never felt. I went aside and feeling under the eye of the Three Divine Persons wrote my letter to the Moderator, renouncing my connection with the Free Church. I now felt such strength in my position that, tho’ the whole Assembly had asked me back I would not go. For He was now with me and I have for years seen He is not with them.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ *Anderson’s Diary*, Vol. 2, 1952, pp. 172-173.

APPENDIX I
NOTES OF JONATHAN RANKEN ANDERSON'S
SERMON IN HOPE STREET FREE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND ON 17TH NOVEMBER 1850³⁵⁷

Isaiah 27:11

When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women came, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy upon them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.

By the judgment of God we must stand or fall. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of the deeds done in the body." God tells us in His Word the estimation he has formed of men's character. He lays down the rule of judgment. Now, if we are wise we shall take care that the summons of judgment shall not take us by surprise. We must, therefore, look into the Word and see what it says about us: and here is a passage selected from it at which we propose to look. "It is a people of no understanding."

Two things here:

- I. A description of certain people.
- II. A judgment pronounced upon them.

I. A description of certain people. "It is a people of no understanding."

There are three things to be considered here:

- 1st What is it to be without understanding?
- 2nd Who are without understanding?
- 3rd How has it come to pass that they are without understanding?

1st What is meant by the description given here?

It means:

1. That they have no understanding of the living and true God. Some say it because they think it, and think it because they desire it,

³⁵⁷ These are notes taken by a hearer whose identity is not known. They were copied into a volume of Anderson's sermons between sermons preached in 1856 and 1857. The explanatory footnotes have been added by the present writer. From the comment of the copyist at the end of the sermon, it appears that these are the notes used by the Glasgow Presbytery in dealing with Anderson over the sermon.

“That there is no God”. These are atheists. Others have many Gods, as one cannot serve them. These are idolaters. Some deify the material, animal and mental universe and call this God. They call this the religion of nature and reason, but they will be found while looking down upon atheists and idolaters to be endued largely with these qualities. Others are pantheists. With them everything is a God.

2. No understanding of the Word of God. Some don't allow that it exists; infidels, who have no faith and with nothing to believe. Their infidelity has its root in the head, and they believe not because they do not wish to believe: some profess to receive the Word of God, but say that it is to be heard in the human mind, the human understanding, the human soul, the human conscience. These are rationalists, one of the most villainous species of infidels. Some profess to believe only in their own reason, and summon the Word of God to its bar. Reason sits in judgment on the Word and what it appears passes current. These are the Socinians, who are occupying a synagogue of Satan not far from this place, where we are endeavouring to worship the living and true God. Some acknowledge the Bible to be the Word of God, but say they hold only the doctrines found in the New Testament and plume [pride] themselves on this. One day they will find themselves away from Christians altogether. These are fashionable and liberal Christians so called. Vast multitudes will not come under any of these classes. If you have been honest you would not be here in the house of God unless you profess to value His Word. I take you bound by your presence here to recognise the whole scripture as the Word of God. But the vast majority of people in this land who profess belief in the scriptures are a people of no understanding: and so when time comes they will be found in the ranks of Satan.

3. No understanding of the worship of God. “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” He is revealed on a mercy seat; and with a new and living way of access, even Christ. A precious spirit is provided to teach men to pray, so that they may “draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith”. A brief sketch this of Christian worship, the only worship God will tolerate. Those in the text have none such. Many in the land call such worship superstition, good enough employment for silly women and children but not for rational men. They profess to believe God's Word, yet hold the author of it in contempt. Like a farmer using land and deriving benefits but despising the landlord. They are without God and without Him in

the very world which He hath made. You dishonest, unprincipled men treading His soil, eating His food, inhaling His air. You [text missing] are to Him.

It would be endless to refer to the various forms of false worship in this country. Here for a moment think of these various forms and see how fearfully they differ from the true worship of God which He requires at your hand and which He has provided for in Christ and the Holy Ghost.

We pass over Papists and Puseyites, their younger sister in arms, Socinianism which should be classed with heathenism or Moham-
medanism, for the Socinians are more at home with both of these than with Christianity. Let us come at once to our own worship, "They know not God". They have no knowledge of Him who is the sole medium of true worship. Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. They have no knowledge of the Spirit without whom they cannot offer an acceptable worship. The most of our congregation(s) are sensual, having not the Spirit, as far from God as the heathen, as far from the faith of Christ as infidels, as far from the Spirit's graces as the beasts, yea as reptiles of the earth.

4. No understanding of the law of God. They understand not the covenant of works, that whatsoever Adam did his posterity stand the consequences. Had Adam stood the trial none would have objected to life through connection with him. Now the principle is the same and holds as good in regard to the breach of the covenant as to the observance of it, and if we had any understanding of it, and if we had any understanding we would adore God's wisdom in instituting a covenant so "well ordered in all things".

5. No understanding of sin. They don't know the infinite evil, the demerit, and are therefore contented to be under bondage and condemnation, the slaves of Satan in the world. They are not concerned to escape from the disease of sin, a disease far more dangerous and deadly than any other which can afflict man.

6. No understanding of salvation. How can you look for forgiveness when you never feel condemned? How cry for liberty when you feel not the bonds of sin, the devil, the world and death? God is pouring out a deep sleep on this generation and we see no one alive to this state. Men understand not the wisdom of God in which the scheme of salvation originated, the riches of God with which it is replenished, the power of God that will carry it on to perfection, the mercy of God that will never

wearily till that scheme is completed. They know not the price of salvation, that none but God could purchase it, and that He could purchase it only in the human nature.

Behold the mystery of the incarnation, often reviled in this infidel age which many preachers do not [text missing]; but which lights up heaven and the Word with an ineffable glory! "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." Being in the flesh Christ was a surety. Suretyship is as strange a thing with our theologians, yet it is known to us, that Christ was our surety, that He paid our debt, that He bore our burdens, that He discharged our penalty, and stood there in our room till He cried, "It is finished". There is the great Saviour. O let sinners hear, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world". We have no Saviour for you that are at ease in your sins, for you that are satisfied with a human saviour, for you that think it enough to be members of a church; but if any are ready to perish, and feel their guilt and danger, then, O sinner, I have a Saviour for you.

Men have no understanding of how to get an interest in this Saviour. The only way possible is through faith in the Gospel, that faith is the gift of God: that faith the purchase of Christ's death, that purchased gift of faith wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit in the day of regeneration. There is no salvation but in the mercy of the Father, no salvation in the mercy of the Father, but through the blood of Christ. No salvation in the mercy of the Father, through the blood of Christ but by regeneration of the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven. The Holy Ghost awakens a sinner, shows him his heart, and sends him into God's presence a condemned criminal, with sin like a rope about his neck ready for execution. Men have no understanding of the way of conversion. It is astonishing the childish descriptions given by ministers who think themselves good teachers and delight in the character of highly evangelical. With them it is, "Believe on Christ and you will have peace". Have as much confidence as you can, bustle away preaching, teaching, visiting the sick and you will get salvation. Ah, the Gospel plan is very different. Salvation consists in holiness. Christ died to "purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" that He might wash us "and present us to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

7. No understanding of the times. There have been many times in this world's history. Geologists³⁵⁸ may go back beyond the history of Moses and may tell us of times antecedent to man's existence on the earth, but to hell they must go and be buried with their own Megatheria.³⁵⁹ No man is a philosopher save in the light of the Word of God, and who has confined his studies to history to epochs since Adam. You will say, "Here is a tirade against modern geology by one who probably knows nothing of the subject".

Let any knowledge be what it may, I am to "know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." I appeal the case to the tribunal of the great Creator. Before the great white throne will I stand and plead my cause, not before any geological or scientific association whatever. Study the various times of the earth, especially our own times. Many there are who care not for them, except in so far as they affect themselves. Others study them and think them exceedingly prosperous, saying "peace and safety". Bye and bye sudden destruction will come upon them, and travail as of a woman with child.

8. No understanding of eternity. Some deny it altogether. Those who believe it, how dim and dead is their sense of it! Even God's people are lamentably behind in the matter.

2nd Who are the people described here as without understanding?

We stay not to enquire whether it be the Medes or the Persians or the Babylonians that the prophet meant. It is the people of Great Britain with whom we have to do. It is they who are without understanding. First with regard to the state. The state contains rulers and ruled.

³⁵⁸ Prior to the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in November 1859, there had been considerable discussion in Britain on the relation of science to the Genesis account of creation. By 1850, as we have noticed, Anderson was highly critical of the Free Church; one suspects that he had in view here the opinions of Thomas Chalmers and Hugh Miller. Whilst holding that the days of Genesis were literal days, Chalmers also asserted that there was a gap of an enormous duration between the initial creation in Genesis 1:1 and the subsequent creative activity in Genesis 1:2 onwards. Miller did not view the days of Genesis as literal days but rather as protracted epochs. See the essays by David W. Bebbington, "Science and evangelical theology in Britain from Wesley to Orr", and by Jonathan R. Topham, "Science, natural theology and evangelicalism in early nineteenth century Scotland: Thomas Chalmers and the Evidence Controversy", in David N. Livingstone, Daryl G. Hart and Mark A. Noll (eds), *Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective* (Oxford, 1999), pp 120-141 (esp. p. 130) and 142-174, and Michael Shortland (ed.), *Hugh Miller and the Controversies of Victorian Science* (Oxford, 1996).

³⁵⁹ This refers to an extinct class of huge, herbivorous, toothless sloths.

1. Our rulers are without understanding. They give mournful evidence that they know not God, that they are not under the power of truth, that they are not zealous for it. I speak with all respect of our estimable Queen and would blame her advisers not herself. Yes! There was one who spoke to the Queen of Scotland in the simple sternness of truth, and well would it be if another Knox had access to our Queen and could draw the tears from her lovely eyes by his stern and faithful admonitions. John Knox is in eternity, and Mary Queen of Scots is in eternity, and she knows now who was her best adviser on earth! Victoria will soon be in eternity and her advisers will be there too, and then will they both see their lives in the clear light of the judgment seat. Her Majesty's ministers are men without understanding. How treated they the Claim of Right³⁶⁰ presented to them by the Church of Scotland? If there was any truth in the Kirk of Scotland it was embodied in that Claim: if there was vital godliness in the Kirk it was found in the men who presented that Claim. Yet it was utterly rejected, and the Government underlies the responsibility of rejecting it and embracing Erastianism.

Look at their conduct in regard to Popery; they have cherished it at home and in the Colonies. Laws against it have been repealed³⁶¹ till there is no power in the constitution to repel the present aggression: and this is all owing to the cherishing of Rome. Government took the viper into their bosom, and now that revived by the genial warmth of emancipation and endowments and honours it has bit the hand that cherished it.³⁶² Lord John Russell³⁶³ professed to be mightily alarmed

³⁶⁰ The "Claim of Right" was a Protest by the 1842 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland against the intrusion of the civil authorities into the spiritual domain of that Church. Its full title was the "Claim, Declaration and Protest anent encroachments of the Court of Session". The Government refused to meet the demands of the Claim which led inevitably to the Disruption of 1843. See Sir Henry Wellwood Moncreiff, *A Vindication of the Free Church Claim of Right* (Edinburgh, 1877).

³⁶¹ They were repealed by the Catholic Relief Act of 1829.

³⁶² This is a reference to the Papal Bull, *Universalis Ecclesiae*, issued by Pope Pius IX on 29th September 1850, less than two months before Anderson preached this sermon. The purpose of the Bull was to recreate the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England which had become extinct with the death of the last Marian bishop in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. It was as a result of this action, which was regarded as papal aggression, that new societies were formed to combat the activities of Rome. The Scottish Reformation Society was formed in Edinburgh in December 1850 and the Protestant Alliance in London in June 1851. In mid-1852, James Begg and the members of the Scottish Reformation Society launched a new journal, *The Bukwark*, to oppose this papal aggression. See John Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 249-253.

³⁶³ Lord John Russell (1792-1878) was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the time that Anderson preached this sermon. He was an English Whig and Liberal

and to be anxious to put it out. They will do nothing of the sort. They may think to stem the current, but they are too deeply involved and the tide has now commenced that will roll on unchecked, and Lord John himself may be the first to sink beneath its deadly waters.

Look at their conduct in regard to Puseyism.³⁶⁴ Puseyites are allowed to remain in the Church of England where they know that they can do more mischief than if openly under the colours of the scarlet woman. Certainly in Lord John's letter³⁶⁵ he lays great blame at their door, and we must give him credit for this: yet it has been proved this very Puseyite party are far more honest than either the High Church or Evangelical party; the latter especially have made the most fearful sacrifices of principle to retain their livings and status.

Both Houses of Parliament forming an integral part of the legislature have proved that that they are devoid of understanding by scorning proposals made to them for the observance of the Sabbath Protection of the Free Church.

politician who served twice as the Prime Minister from 30th June 1846 to 21st February 1852 and from 29th October 1865 to 26th June 1866.

³⁶⁴ Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882) was for more than fifty years the Regius Professor of Hebrew at Christ Church, Oxford. Unlike many of his Tractarian colleagues, he did not become a Roman Catholic but was a leader of the Oxford Movement and of the High Church Romanising party in the Church of England.

³⁶⁵ In response to a letter of alarm about the restoration of the Roman hierarchy from his friend Edward Maltby, the Bishop of Durham, Lord Russell sent an open letter to *The Times*, dated 4th November 1850, which was published in the issue of 7th November 1850 – just ten days before Anderson's sermon. In the letter the Prime Minister stated that he considered, "the late aggression of the pope upon our Protestantism" as "insolent and insidious". He continued: "There is an assumption of power in all the documents that have come from Rome; a pretension of supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and undivided sway, which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishops and clergy, and the spiritual independence of the nation." In addition to providing his appraisal of Romanism, Russell went on to critique the Romanising Tractarian party in the Church of England. He wrote: "There is a danger, however, which alarms me much more than any aggression of a foreign sovereign. Clergymen of our own church, who have subscribed the thirty-nine articles and acknowledged in explicit terms the Queen's supremacy, have been the most forward in leading their flocks, 'step by step to the verge of the precipice'. The honour paid to saints, the claim of infallibility for the church, the superstitious use of the sign of the cross, the muttering of the liturgy so as to disguise the language in which it was written, the recommendation of auricular confession and the administration of penance and absolution – all these things are pointed out by clergymen of the Church of England as worthy of adoption," *The Times*, 7th November 1850. For the historical background, see G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832-1868* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 209-228; Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in the United Kingdom* (Longman, 2008), pp. 182-183; Edward Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 104-105.

Magistrates and Town Councils prove by their acts that they are without understanding. They “neither fear God nor regard man”, and they use their power against the truth. The voluntaries have much to answer for all this. They say, “The Queen does not reign by the favour of God but by the will of the people. Though she may live by the favour of God, though she may be a wife by the favour of God, though she may be a mother by the favour of God, she does not reign by the favour of God.” They say our Judges may not sit in the name of God, they may live in the name of God, but judge they may not, and so throughout the whole government. Voluntaries say they have nothing to do officially with God, “God shall arise and His enemies be scattered”. The voluntaries are sinking fast, and the infidelity, absurdity, profanity and immorality of voluntaryism will be made known to all men. Gillespie and the Erskines were not voluntaries! Unworthy sons of noble sires, your sires will disclaim you when you meet in an eternal world!

The Press may be called one of our rulers, a great engine so powerful that it ruled the Cabinet in the recent Post Office question, and made them rescind the resolution of the legislature. A step insulting to both Queen and Parliament.³⁶⁶ It was too good a movement to come from such a quarter, and from the first I foresaw its downfall, that there was no pillar of strength there to support a measure so weighty. What is the character of the Press, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly? All without understanding: its managers men who fear not God nor His Son Jesus Christ.

Our schools and schoolmasters are also without understanding. I speak not of those who wish an exclusively secular education. I speak not of that hellish invention of a Glasgow [text missing] who in order to save that spawn of the devil called voluntaryism invented a proposal that the

³⁶⁶ What is being referred to is the campaign spearheaded by the Lord’s Day Observance Society, but also involving other Sabbath protection organisations, to end collection and delivery of mail by the Post Office on the Sabbath. The campaigners flooded Parliament with nearly four thousand petitions. In May 1850, Lord Ashley (who the following year inherited the title the Earl of Shaftsbury) carried a motion in the Commons against Lord Russell’s Whig Government to stop Post Office Sabbath working, by ninety-three votes to sixty-eight. Both the Queen and the Government accepted the vote and Sabbath mail collection ceased. This led to an outcry, initiated by the Press, to re-institute the collection of mail on the Sabbath. Following a Government inquiry into the whole matter, Sabbath working by the Post Office recommenced. See Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftsbury* (London, 1887), pp. 419-420; Richard Turnbull, *Shaftsbury the Great Reformer* (Lion, 2010), pp. 122-125; John Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 64-66.

Government should pay for secular [and] the parents for the religious education of the children. I name no names but that name is known well enough to you all, and his character will one day be seen in the flames if he repent not. When it is, I will say “Halleluiah! Amen.” I speak not of those, but of your religious schools,³⁶⁷ and I fear not though all earth’s inhabitants should rise against me, they can but “kill the body” and after that there is no more that they can do. I fear not to declare that your Christian school masters are a people of no understanding. The rule may have exceptions, but they are few indeed. In almost all of our schools the truth of God is not taught at all, but the teachers serve up the children doctrines quite contrary to the Word, and why? Because truth is one, error is manifold; and it is no easy matter to expound the truth of God aright.

2. Ruled as well as rulers are without understanding. Swarms are uneducated, not able to read or write, perishing in destitution of any knowledge. But we stay not to consider these, and come to see that the Churches show Great Britain to be without understanding.

- (i) The Church of Rome shows this. Her recent measures show it. They have been watching their opportunity, biding their time for years, and now they see their way clearly. I have never doubted they will prevail.
- (ii) The Church of England is without understanding. Take the High Church Party for instance. Give them their livings, honours and coats, it is all they care for. Their communicants are uneducated, and ignorant, almost the entire mass of them without understanding.
- (iii) The English Dissenters are without understanding, busy carnal politicians trying to save their voluntarism and so bound by it as unable to beat back the aggressions of popery. That is voluntarism in its true colours.
- (iv) The Scottish Establishment. Church I do not call it, is without understanding. Its ministers are there to be fed and supported. Their manses and stipends are the end of their existence, for them they live and die, most of them are carnal; many are fearful

³⁶⁷ This is doubtless a reference to the Free Church Schools set up after the Disruption. For details, see Andrew R. Middleton, “The Attitude of James Begg and the *Watchword Magazine* to the 1872 Education Act”, *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal*, Vol. 3 (2013), pp. 159-219, esp. pp. 165-171.

drunkards. Their people are without understanding too, for they tolerate them, and accompany them in the solemn farce they are ever acting.

- (v) The United Presbyterians are without understanding. The Secession was without understanding and so was the Relief also, and how fearful a union!³⁶⁸ They are so fearfully corrupt that their ministers may publish the most notorious corruption without being checked by their brethren. And what think you of the Free Church ministers that bandy compliments with such as these and are hand in glove with them in the Evangelical Alliance,³⁶⁹ that one hour pay compliments to them on the platform and will not speak to them if they meet them the next in a Railway Carriage. You will say, I have been told, “Why don’t you tell the Ministers that instead of telling it to their people?” I don’t think it worthwhile to tell them. I tell you rather, to warn you of them as wolves in sheep’s clothing. I condescend not to tell them, but if they must have an explanation, I appoint a meeting before the Great White Throne and there will defend my cause. Let God maintain the right.³⁷⁰
- (vi) The Free Church is without understanding. Her testimony, thanks to God, is yet pure and entire. The *Confession of Faith* has not yet

³⁶⁸ This is a reference to the union in 1847 of the United Secession Church with the Relief Church founded by Thomas Gillespie. The United Secession Church was itself a union in 1820 of the New Light sections of the Burgher and Antiburgher Seceders.

³⁶⁹ This was an interdenominational organisation formed in 1846. Delegates to the founding conference came from fifty denominations ranging from the Established Churches of England and Scotland to the Primitive Methodists. From Scotland the Free Church, United Secession, Original Secession, Relief Church, and Reformed Presbyterians were all represented. See *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference held at Freemasons Hall, London from August 19th to September 2nd 1846* (London, 1847). Appendix C of the *Report* contains a full list of individuals and Churches present at the Conference. The doctrinal basis of the organisation was a brief nine-point statement that was regarded as the minimum of evangelical belief. Approval of the Alliance was not unanimous; doubt and disapprobation began to be expressed within the Free Church. It was asserted that the Alliance’s reduced creed had the effect of minimising the importance of doctrines for which the Free Church was called upon to contend. The issue led to the first formal debate in the Free Church Assembly since the Disruption. James Gibson viewed membership of the Alliance as “fraternising with Arminians and Erastians”. For a recent discussion of the origins of the Alliance, see Wolfe, “The Evangelical Alliance in the 1840s: an attempt to institutionalise Christian unity”.

³⁷⁰ Criticising men in public in this way and refusing to speak to them individually or raise a case against them in Church courts was typical of Anderson’s method. It was this unconstitutional way of dealing with what he considered compromise that understandably resulted in action being taken against him.

been tampered with; but practically her people are without understanding. There is but one testimony from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West that her congregations are dead and her ministers are like them too.

- (vii) The Reformed Presbyterians are without understanding, with their Covenants and Testimony, just a dead carcass. No spiritual life in it, but bearing this sad inscription, "Ichabod, the glory is departed".
- (viii) The Congregationalists are without understanding. Many obliged to withdraw from their communion and seek elsewhere the food for their souls denied them in it.

Many on hearing these things are like to stone me with stones like Stephen, an honour I fear I am unworthy of.

3rd How has it come to pass that the people of Great Britain are a people of no understanding?

There are many reasons:

1. Because of man's original corruption, "All mankind sinned in Adam and fell with him". So we came into the world blind by nature. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." "There is none righteous, no not one."

2. Because of men's special sins. What sins?

- (a) The sin of atheism. This people are remarkable for that sin. Seeking to banish God from their families, from the country as well as from their own hearts.
- (b) The sin of profanity. God's name used impiously, in levity or in passion. You hear boys and girls whose tongues are set on fire of hell. A flagrant expression of this profanity is a so called worship. We hear prayers which are from beginning to end a profanation of God's Holy name. We have high Evangelicals who often drive God's people from His house, or force them to stop their ears while sitting there, while they profane God's name under a pretence of lofty evangelical discourse.
- (c) Hypocrisy, a gangrene through the whole body ecclesiastical. Under the mask of a plausible profession men practise abominable iniquity. I refer to the hypocrisy of the Evangelical Alliance. There

are men in it who let others into their pulpits that are convicted of heresy. Men who though they loathe them in their hearts bandy compliments with them on the platform of the Alliance.

- (d) Sabbath breaking.
- (e) Malignity and slander.
- (f) Intemperance.
- (g) Dishonesty.
- (h) Lying.
- (i) Covetousness
- (j) Discontent.
- (k) Rebellion. Influences added to the sinfulness of the heart which account for the people of Great Britain being of no understanding.

3. Because of the nature of the religious profession of the day. This vast Alliance. I'll tell you something that will show you its evil nature and results. When its members are pressed as to their rules and fundamental doctrines, they cut the knot by saying these mean nothing at all. This is pandering to infidelity and rationalism. This is making a mockery of religion.

4. The Sabbath Alliance³⁷¹ imposed on some simple men at first. It never imposed on me, for I always said it was a carcase, not a thing of life from the number of eagles that clustered around it, moderates and voluntaries, all sorts and sizes. The Sabbath school union some think an instrument for good. It is rather a mighty engine in the hands of Satan for sinking this people in deeper darkness. Most Sabbath school teachers have no more religion than Hottentots and are utterly devoid of the grace of God.

**(Notes used by the
Presbytery)**

Our pulpits too, are not instruments of good. Mark the sad reality when vast multitudes are

**(The elder's notes of the
same passage)**

We have however ample cause for lamentation for it cannot be denied that in many instances the

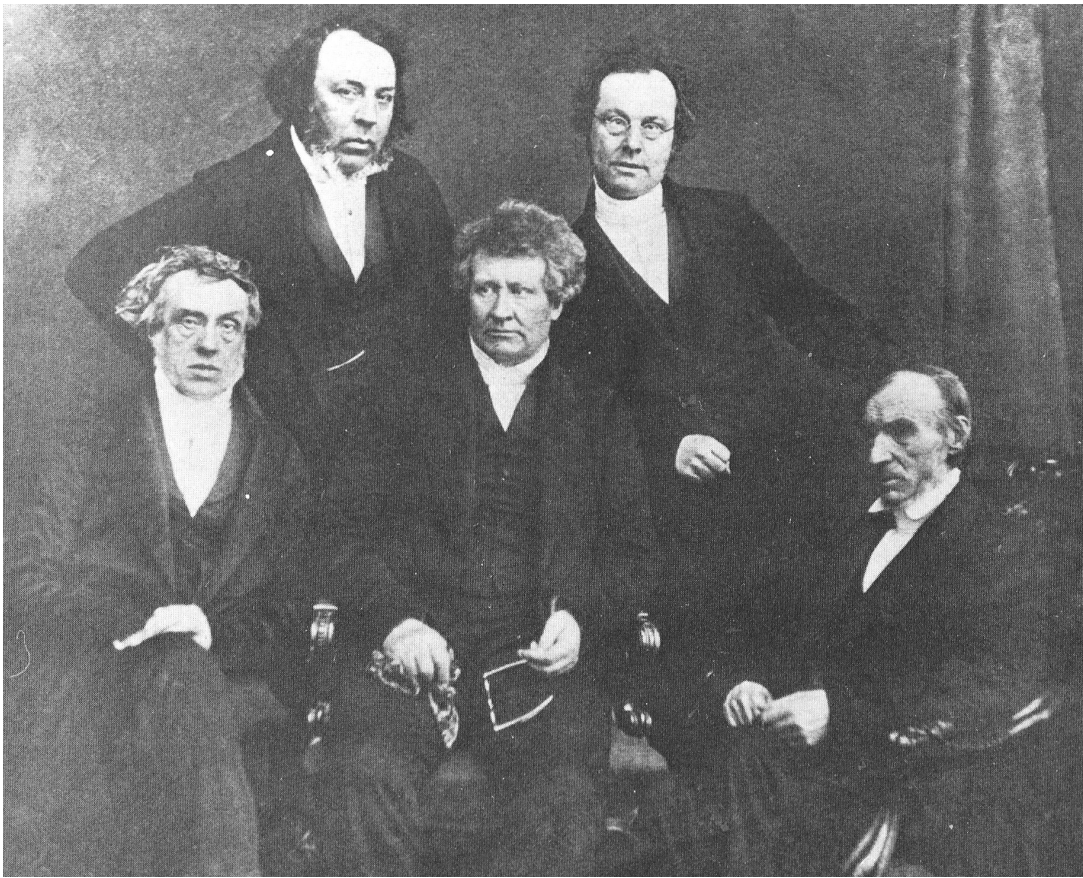
³⁷¹ In the campaign to defend the Sabbath, the newly formed Evangelical Alliance began to raise its voice. However, the Scottish members were dissatisfied with the attitude of most of the English nonconformists and set up the Scottish Sabbath Alliance in 1848 to take a more decisive stance in defending the Sabbath. The Scottish Sabbath Alliance eventually merged into the Lord's Day Observance Society.

gathered in this place for their Sabbath evening services. *From one they have an oration in due form, every period polished, the handkerchief handled most fastidiously, and every gesture according to square and rule, while poor souls perish for lack of knowledge. That's pulpit instruction with a vengeance! From another they have pulpit sermons filled with graphic delineations of the land of Israel, with pictures of the Mount of Olives, the garden of Gethsemane and the shores of the sea of Galilee, as if the poor sinned soul could learn the law of God from sacred topography and could by some magic agency be wafted to "peace in believing" in the waters of the sea of Tiberius. That's pulpit instruction with a vengeance!*³⁷² Another entertains his audience with illustrations from science and art; nay we are informed he often has pictures on the paper before him, so as to do the thing to life. That's pulpit instruction with a vengeance! Another deals out to a mass like you his soft and siren notes giving you disguised poison, or rather poison scarcely disguised at all which you cannot but take in, but reject with loathing as unfit for your souls. That's pulpit instruction with a vengeance!

³⁷² Anderson eventually admitted that the section of the sermon in italics was aimed at two ministers in the Glasgow Presbytery – William Arnot and Alexander Somerville.

pulpit is a channel of conveying rank heresies and soul destroying errors. And these must necessarily increase the darkness rather than dispel it. To others, pulpit ministrations seem fitted to make a display of the preacher's talents or even his person and dress: and at least to entertain the people with a rhetorical harangue rather than to feed their souls with the bread of life. In too many cases the style is too turgid and flowing that any little truth which the sermon may contain is utterly lost beneath the [unclear word] verbiage. In others, the attention of the hearers is distracted from the weighty things contained in the law and the testimony by matter, however valuable, as ornament or illustration can never compensate for the absence of plain solid truth. In other cases an indiscriminate mode of address is adopted. Men do not find their several places in the sermon, and it were hard to tell who they are the preacher has been addressing, or whether he was addressing immortal creatures at all. It is said to be very common among ministers to speak to congregations as almost all Christians, with perhaps an exception or two: whereas mournful facts proclaim it to be the very reverse: and hardly one or two decent Christians will be found in most mixed assemblies.³⁷³

³⁷³ See footnote 114 above.



In 1850 the New College, Edinburgh, was the institution in which almost all the Free Church professors taught. In the portrait above of the New College faculty are (seated, left to right): James Buchanan, William Cunningham, John Duncan. (Standing, left to right): James Bannerman and George Smeaton – who was not appointed a professor until 1853.

Whenever I have been asked to conduct these Hope Street services I have tried to preach to you as a company of hell-deserving sinners. I treat you all as guilty. They preach to you never a word of your sin. Professors too have much blame in regard to this state of the land. The mass of these are blind leaders of the blind. We speak not of them merely, but of the cream of them and say that judicial blindness seems to possess them: and you will seldom see a clear judgment in the land.³⁷⁴ The slaying of witnesses has begun. You cannot see one witnessing for the Church from the North to the South, or take individuals instead of Churches, very few do we find witnessing for God.

³⁷⁴ It is unclear whether the term “Professors” refers to those professing to be Christians or to college professors in the Free Church. If the latter is intended, the professors in the Free Church in 1850, of whom the mass of them were “blind leaders of the blind”, were

5. One other cause of this state, the most awful of all – the judgments of God. I have told you of the sins of Great Britain. These sins are provoking the judgments of God, which are even now gathering around the land. A breach has already been made by the artillery of the Vatican and Rome’s densest masses are entering in. Vain is all the agitation, vain all the meetings and letters and declarations that this country will never submit to foreign aggression. Vain are meetings mongrel or Presbyterian, vain are petitions though backed by thousands and ten thousands of signatures, vain is it buckling on our father’s armour and fighting the battles of faith.

Our hands are not clean for this warfare. “Be ye clean who bear the banners of the Lord,” we have an Achan in the camp and as Israel’s hosts fled from the handful at Ai, so will we flee from even one Cardinal. We have grieved God, and have despised His law. Many of His faithful ones have sunk under these trials, especially at seeing banner-bearers deserting to the enemy. If these men will shake hands with the enemies of God and of His Christ, if Free Church ministers will lecture in the same course with Residuary and Voluntary ministers,³⁷⁵ we at least have counted the cost and will have nothing to do with these vile associations. If they will not keep from us we will have them as leprous, infected, diseased.

In all these things you see God’s judicial visitation is that Great Britain shall be suborned by the Church of Rome. In vain Archbishops direct, and Bishops charge; the Church of England must bow to Rome unless Great Britain repent. Cabinet ministers may counsel and take measures in their wisdom; the Cabinet must bow to Rome unless Great Britain repent. English Dissenters may fume and bustle, but English Dissent must bow to Rome unless Great Britain repent. The

William Cunningham, John Duncan, James Buchanan, Robert Candlish, James Bannerman, Alexander Black, Patrick Macdougall, John Fleming, and Alexander Campbell Fraser in Edinburgh, and James Maclagan in Aberdeen. For the dates of appointment of the professors, see *AFCS*, Vol. 1, pp. 46-59.

³⁷⁵ It is not entirely plain to what course of lectures Anderson is referring. The most probable identification is a course of lectures on popery, delivered a few months after the sermon on behalf of the Scottish Reformation Society. The Society itself was not formed until 5th December, but the course of lectures was probably already being advertised and was subsequently brought under the auspices of the newly formed Society. The preface to the printed lectures is dated May 1851. Besides Free Church lecturers, who included James Begg, William Hetherington, Charles J. Brown, and Robert Candlish, there were lectures by several voluntary ministers from the United Presbyterian Church, a Congregationalist, and an Episcopalian. See *The Truth of God Against the Papacy: Being a Course of Lectures on Popery, delivered in Edinburgh, 1851* (Edinburgh, 1851).

Scottish Establishment may try to issue a faint and feeble cry for its so-called Protestantism; all it has are its churches and glebes and stipends. The Scottish Establishment must bow to Rome unless Great Britain repent. In vain do United Presbyterians try the shifts of a wretched voluntaryism. United Presbyterians must bow to Rome unless Great Britain repent. In vain the Free Church rallies around her standard, the Free Church must bow to Rome unless Great Britain repent. “For this cause the Lord will send them strong delusion that they may believe a lie.”

It has cost me much brethren to declare these things unto you. They have been much on my mind. Often has my heart been like to break on account of them. “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law.”

II. The judgment pronounced on the people above described

He that made them shall not have mercy on them and He that formed them will show them no favour. And notice here:

- 1st The character of God as creator.
- 2nd The nature of the judgment taking away all temporal and spiritual mercies. What destitution!

By way of:

Application

- 1st All you are without understanding. Deal with yourselves alone before God. Deal faithfully and follow the truth and not any preacher.
- 2nd See where your real danger lies – in sinning against God. Not in fostering Popery, or letting in Puseyites. The root of the evil is our controversy with God.
- 3rd See your sole refuge. Christ the Saviour. We came here to preach Christ, you came here we trust to hear Christ preached. You will not deal faithfully with the word and with us unless you use all that has been said as inducements “to flee to the strongholds as prisoners of hope”. A Saviour is preached to you now. How long He may be preached I know not. Our day at best soon will end.

4th See the sole means, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord!"

Glasgow 17th November 1850.

The foregoing copy of Notes of a sermon preached in Hope Street Free Church by the Revd. J. R. Anderson of Knox Free Church. Made use of by the Presbytery of Glasgow against Mr. Anderson when attempt was made by that Court to criminate him for preaching it. The notes were disclaimed by Mr. Anderson as unsound.

APPENDIX II
SPEECHES OF ROBERT CANDLISH AND
WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM AT THE FREE CHURCH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, MAY 1852, IN THE
CASE OF JONATHAN RANKEN ANDERSON³⁷⁶

Speech by Robert Candlish

The Committee had just reported, through Dr. Clason, that the conference they had held with Mr. Anderson had led to no result that could at all interfere with the prosecution of this case in the ordinary way by the courts of the Church. Had this letter³⁷⁷ not been laid on the table, they were prepared to recommend that the case be remitted to the Presbytery of Glasgow, with instructions to prepare a libel, if they saw cause, and to embrace in it all the particulars bearing on Mr. Anderson's conduct, whether in proceedings before the Presbytery, or towards this venerable Assembly. Of course, the letter they had now received in no respect altered their duty, excepting only to the effect of making it, he thought, absolutely necessary for the General Assembly to come to a somewhat more stringent sentence as to the intermediate period between the commencement and termination of the process. They could not accept of a resignation tendered in such circumstances. (Hear.)

It was just a new instance of contumacy, and one of the clearest and most unequivocal instances that ever occurred of fleeing from discipline. Mr. Anderson had put himself in the position of a person not merely contumacious, but fleeing from the discipline of the Church while lying under the burden of some of the most grievous accusations that could possibly be brought against an honest man, not to say a minister of the Church. One did not exactly understand the meaning of the terms of Mr. Anderson's letter, when he spoke of either renouncing his connection with the Free Church, or running the risk of losing what was dearer to him than life. If Mr. Anderson, by what he alluded to as being dearer to him than life, meant his character and his reputation for fair dealing, he had taken a marvellously extraordinary way of saving it, in refusing to meet judicially the charges brought against him, and acting the part of a fugitive from discipline.

³⁷⁶ The speeches are taken from *PGAFCS*, 1852, pp. 270-277.

³⁷⁷ This is a reference to Anderson's letter of resignation from the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland.

If, on the other hand, he meant the privilege and right of preaching the gospel without sentence of suspension or deposition being passed against him, he feared Mr. Anderson must have proceeded on a false impression of the effect his letter was to have. If he thought his letter was to lead to his connection with the Free Church being closed, without any judicial finding or sentence – if he thought the letter was to end in the severing of his connection, without giving the Church an opportunity of pronouncing its opinion on his conduct – he would find himself most grievously mistaken; for it was plain, according to the rules of the Church, that his connection did not terminate till they accepted of the resignation, or disposed of the case before them. Every one must see that they could not accept of this resignation without becoming partakers in another man's sin. It would be the duty of the Church just to proceed in the case with the additional aggravation now before them, calling Mr. Anderson before them in the usual way, treating him as still a minister of the Church, and giving him the fullest opportunity of being heard in his own vindication. If there had been no such letter, the Committee thought the case might have been disposed of by the motion he had alluded to, but the appearance of this letter had made it necessary that more should be said.

It was not for him to say much about the conduct of Mr. Anderson in the conference; but he could not discharge his conscience without saying, that anything more shuffling, more evasive, or more painfully disingenuous than his conduct among his brethren he had never met with. (Hear.) They went over in detail the various charges. They put it to Mr. Anderson to tell what he thought of the minute of 23rd December 1851, accepting of the resignation of the elders, in which there was not merely a statement by Mr. Anderson, that the demitting elders were the cause of dispeace in the congregation – even that would have been most objectionable, as a condemnation of men in their absence, and without their being allowed to speak in their own defence – but the minute went a great deal further than this, and put down an expression of regret that these brethren should have pursued a line of policy “which, it appears, they themselves judged to be such as was fitted to break the peace of the congregation”. (Hear.)

No man who understood the English language could hold up his face and say that the letter could by any possibility be made to imply the construction Mr. Anderson had put upon it. They did obtain some expressions of regret from Mr. Anderson, but nothing to satisfy them

that there was anything like a clear idea of the precise iniquity involved in the minute. Again, Mr. Anderson having, in the opinion of the Presbytery of Glasgow, and, as had since appeared, in his own opinion, wronged Mr. Milne of Perth, volunteered to write a letter to his injured brother that he had committed a double wrong, sin, or offence; first, in asking a man to preach in his pulpit, of whom he was not sure whether he would preach the gospel; and secondly, in founding upon notes of a private conversation, a charge of his brother not being able to preach the pure gospel, and that without ever having intimated this to the brother whose hospitality he had so foully wronged. That promise to this good hour had never been fulfilled – (hear, hear) – and when Mr. Anderson was asked to give an account of his reasons for not fulfilling his promise, they got nothing from him that could be satisfactory to an ordinary mind. He said he had begun to doubt the soundness of the doctrine he had undertaken to write, – that he ought not to invite a brother to his pulpit of whom he was not sure whether he would preach the true gospel; a strange ground certainly, for a man who took such high ground, and thought himself at liberty to comment upon and condemn sermons that had been delivered in his own pulpit.

For such a man to insist that he was entitled to invite men who did not preach the true gospel to occupy his pulpit did appear to be a flagrant absurdity. It was asked whether, on these scruples occurring to him, he communicated his difficulty to the Presbytery; but he answered in the negative. They also put it to him whether the scruples he entertained about inviting such men to preach the gospel interfered with his obligation to repair the injury done Mr. Milne by the offence he had committed in making use of privately-expressed opinions, without making Mr. Milne aware in a brotherly way of his intention, – how could his scruples about the abstract doctrine interfere with the plain admitted duty? They could get no other explanation, however, than that it was a complex promise which he had made – and that his scruple about one part of it made it difficult to comply, though certainly this was a difficulty that no honest man could ever have seen. Another matter about which they dealt with Mr. Anderson, and a matter peculiarly painful, was that alluded to by Dr. Buchanan on Saturday in his singularly strong statement, – a statement so strong that it must have sent a thrill, almost of horror throughout the Assembly, especially as affecting the conduct of a minister of Christ. The Presbytery of Glasgow on a former occasion had dealings with Mr. Anderson in regard to the famous sermon, – in

which he had, not by name, but by the plainest possible description and allusion, held up the ministry of certain of his brethren to public contempt. The Presbytery dealt with him in a Committee of privy censure in regard to these offences, which were committed against Mr. Somerville and Mr. Arnot in particular. After long conference, Mr. Anderson admitted certain representations of his sermons to be correct, admitted that allusions had been made to these brethren, professed to see his sin, and to repent of it. That was entered even in the minutes. When the matter was reported to the Presbytery, Dr. Buchanan stated that he had never been more surprised or vexed by anything than by the contrast that was presented between the sermon, as Mr. Anderson had admitted it to have been, and a sort of sketch which he professed to have got up *ex post facto*; – and further, the contrast between Mr. Anderson's tone and spirit in the conference and when he appeared before the Presbytery. It ultimately ended, however, even in the Presbytery, in Mr. Anderson's acceding to the report, and the Presbytery endeavoured to hinder the whole proceedings from getting into the public newspapers, being satisfied with having brought him to the same state of mind as that to which he had been brought in the conference. They even on one occasion gave him the right hand of fellowship, on the understanding that all was settled.

Then the Assembly had heard read from the bar a representation of the proceedings, in a pamphlet by Mr. Anderson, in which he said, that he had yielded on a former occasion because he was “overborne by numbers”, and because “the faithful and stirring appeals which he made were lost upon those to whom they were addressed”. If these stirring appeals were at all like those to which they had listened during their conference with Mr. Anderson, they must have been of a very singular character indeed. He could not wonder to hear that such appeals, had been made in the conference, – but he could testify, that if shuffling, and evasion, and disingenuousness, were stirring appeals, then they had plenty of them, but of nothing else. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Anderson further went on to say in his pamphlet, that he was amazed at what he heard in the Presbytery. He had prepared a sketch of his sermon, and a defence of it; for it was not the case that he had any notes of it previously; and he was led in his simplicity, to hope that plain truths would tell on the minds of his brethren. On the contrary, however, Mr. Anderson proceeded to say, it only raised such a storm as he had never before encountered. He would not trust himself to characterize the speeches that were made, but

they confirmed all that he had previously thought of the state of the ministry of the Free Church, and proved he had fallen short in the description he had given.

Mr. Anderson further said he withdrew his statement, not because it was touched by anything that had been said, but because he felt that "it would be thrown away on men so far gone in blindness and delusion in spiritual things". He was grieved to think that precious truth was so contemned, and was "ready to suffer in silence, when he could not prevail by argument". Upon a comparison of this statement with the facts, Dr. Buchanan had informed them that he could come to no alternative but either that the account of the proceedings given by Mr. Anderson was untrue and false, or that his conduct before the Presbytery was grossly hypocritical. He must say, that for one he was perfectly prepared to say that he acquiesced in this opinion, as the only alternative the matter admitted of. When this was put to Mr. Anderson, they got a sort of acknowledgment that he believed his brethren intended more to be meant by the shaking hands than actually was meant, and that he had some sort of idea, from something that happened after, that his brethren had come to see the matter in the same light. At all events, the grave and serious matter was, that Mr. Anderson stated, when asked if he adhered to the statements in his pamphlet, replied unequivocally in the affirmative, – told them that he adhered to his representation of that transaction, – a transaction that brought out most clearly the tenderness with which the Presbytery of Glasgow had treated their confessedly offending brother, and the faithfulness with which they had discharged their duty towards their offending brother, and to the cause of truth and righteousness. The more the conduct of the Presbytery in this matter was examined, the more would it redound to their credit. Greater kindness and forbearance man never experienced at the hand of his fellow-man. And yet Mr. Anderson told them that he adhered to the offensive, injurious, and untrue representation given in his pamphlet.

It was their intention to propose that the case should be entirely left to the Court below, but seeing Mr. Anderson as a fugitive from discipline compelled them to more stringent measures, it was thought that they could not ask the concurrence of the Assembly, or of the Christian community, in the step it was now necessary to propose, without going a little into these matters, from an inquiry into which Mr. Anderson was now skulking and shrinking. The charges brought against Mr. Anderson were charges that an honest and honourable man would

be in haste to meet; and if he could not meet them, he would acknowledge to the full extent their criminality, before God and the brethren against whom he had offended. There was another point in regard to which they had not so much dealing with Mr. Anderson – the business was so painful, and Mr. Anderson, indeed, abruptly retired without giving them any intimation of his intention to do so. The other matter to which he referred was what was said in the pamphlet regarding the elders. The Presbytery, it would be remembered, were not the only parties at the bar on Saturday. There were also parties who alleged they were personally aggrieved by Mr. Anderson's conduct. There were no complaints from Mr. Milne, Mr. Somerville, or Mr. Arnot, though they would have had a perfect good standing in the case had they chosen to bring forward their complaint. They, however, consulted more the dignity of their characters, and did not appear. But it was otherwise with the demitting elders. They were not bound to sit silent, and could not, as men having a character to maintain in the world and in the Church. They complained of a wrong inflicted on them in Mr. Anderson's pamphlet, and it was this fact, in a large measure, that made it necessary to have the pamphlet produced. About fifty copies of this pamphlet, it had been admitted, had been thrown off, and it was alleged and confessed that a considerable number of them had got into partial circulation. In any such case this amount of publication – the printing of fifty copies, some of which were professedly put into circulation – would have been enough, he supposed, to establish the libel in any court of justice.

Dr. Candlish then read a paragraph from the copy of the pamphlet on the table of the Assembly, to the effect that Mr. Anderson³⁷⁸ might think it humiliating that ten of his elders, after adhering to him during the events of the Disruption, and others hardly less trying, after professing unlimited attachment to his ministry, in spite of reproaches, and earning to themselves the reputation of men of judgment, discernment, and piety, should, after all, suddenly turn round and labour to defeat one of the principle ends of the ministry – the separation, by the faithful exposition of the Word of God, of the chaff from the wheat, – venture upon an act of barefaced injustice in putting out a catechist to put in a favourite of their own in his place, to draw his salary, and eat his

³⁷⁸ The original text reads at this place “Mr. Somerville”. This would appear to be incorrect as the text following refers to Anderson's conduct. See *PCAFCS*, 1852, p. 274.

bread; and, when they could not thus accomplish their fondly cherished scheme of bringing down the minister, and standing by their friend, gave up their office, in a vain attempt to damage their minister, and make him capitulate on any terms they might be pleased to dictate. Mr. Anderson, in the conclusion of the extract, expresses his conviction, that this will yet appear a very serious matter to “these infatuated men” themselves; and that the screen with which the Free Presbytery of Glasgow sought to shelter them, would be found to be no protection from the piercing rays of truth from without, or from the agonizing voice of conscience within.

This was the paragraph of which these men justly complained. It held them up as being guilty, first of labouring to defeat one of the principal ends of the ministry, – that of separating chaff from the wheat. They were charged, secondly, with an act of vengeance, inasmuch as when they found themselves baffled at all points, they ventured upon an act of barefaced injustice in turning a catechist out of his situation, without a reason given or received, and putting in a favourite of their own. Thirdly, they were charged with having, when defeated in this, in order to accomplish their fondly cherished scheme of bringing down the minister, and standing by their friend, throwing up their office with the disingenuous purpose of forcing their minister to capitulate and submit to them on any terms they might dictate. They were further held up as being obnoxious to the piercing light of truth without, and of conscience within. The Presbytery, moreover, were expressly charged with screening these men in their audacious acts. He thought it beyond all question that Mr. Anderson was guilty of contumacy in the Court below, – indeed, he could give no reason that could be held at all satisfactory for refusing to lay the pamphlet on the table.

There was something like contumacy in his non-appearance before the Assembly on Monday; and he was clearly guilty when, in answer to the question of the Moderator, he refused to lay his pamphlet on the table. What effect his subsequent acquiescence might have, it would be for the Assembly to decide. But, above all, he had been guilty of contumacy to-day, – guilty of contumacy in not appearing, and, still more, in attempting to stop the progress of discipline, and arrest ecclesiastical procedure by resignation of his connection with the Church. He had thus manifested himself as guilty not merely of contumacy, but of being a fugitive from discipline, to which, in painful and solemn expressions of exaggerated humiliation, which did not

convey conviction to his mind, Mr. Anderson had expressed himself so anxious to submit.

He would now indicate the sentence which he thought ought to be pronounced by the Assembly. He did not know that it might be possible to have it immediately written down accurately; but it might be remitted to the same Committee to prepare it in a formal manner, and bring it up again to-morrow, with a view to its being passed as the finding of the Court. Mr. Anderson would, of course, have an opportunity of withdrawing or of explaining his letter, as he would be regularly cited in future proceedings. In strict law, – he would almost say in strict justice, – they might be prepared to proceed immediately to the high censures of the Church; or they were prepared simply to accept of his resignation, and declare Mr. Anderson no longer a minister of this Church. This course, however, he would resist. The letter could not relieve them from the duty of going on in the ordinary process of libel, in order to bring out his offences in such a manner as might, by the blessing of God, strike his conscience; and they owed this to the brethren who had been assailed, the elders who had been maligned, and the Presbytery whose forbearance and kindness were so miserably requited, as well as to the cause of truth and righteousness.

Mr. Anderson could not cease to be a minister of the Church till they accepted of his resignation, or in some other way terminated his connection with them. What he intended to move was, that the case be remitted to the Presbytery of Glasgow, with instructions to prepare a libel, embracing all the charges competently brought before them by Mr. Anderson's procedure in the Court below or in the Assembly, – instruct them to use all expedition, to disregard protests and complaints till they ripen the case for final judgment, and reserve the value of these complaints till they bring up the matter before the Commission, which should be empowered finally to pronounce sentence. It was also absolutely indispensable that the General Assembly should proceed, on the plain evidence of contumacy before them, at once to suspend Mr. Anderson from the office and functions of the ministry while his case was under dependence. Under the act, now a standing law of the Church, every case in which a Presbytery should resolve to order a libel, the accused minister ceased to exercise the duties of his office till the libel was finally disposed of. The resolution of the Presbytery to libel would therefore have the effect alluded to, only, however, on the footing of an expedient arrangement instituted by the Church and not necessarily inferring guilt.

But he was not prepared to leave Mr. Anderson's suspension on the footing of a mere necessary consequence. It should be put on the footing of a judicial finding of the House. They had enough before them to warrant such a finding; and the ends of justice required that, he should be suspended by a special sentence. Mr. Anderson would still be cited and summoned in the usual way, and have all opportunities and facilities for defence or explanation. He proposed this as the very least that would vindicate the discipline of the Church, be honourable to God, or beneficial to their brethren. Discipline they believed to be ordained of God, for His glory and for the preservation of the purity of His Church, as well as the special good of those on whom it might be exercised; and if anything was to be done in the way of opening the eyes of their brother on the grievous extent to which spiritual pride had blinded him to the ordinary duties of life, it must be, not the Church's going out of its ordinary course of procedure, and dealing with him in a very special way, but simply and calmly going on to exercise that discipline which was ordained by God, and which God had promised, in answer to prayer, to bless for the recovery of the fallen and the honour of His own great name.

Speech by William Cunningham

He rose chiefly to assure the House of the entire unanimity of the Committee, and to give his thorough confirmation to the statements of Dr. Candlish. The Committee were of one mind, in virtue of all they saw and heard, in entertaining a very strong and a very cordial approbation of the wisdom and forbearance in this case of the Presbytery of Glasgow and a very strong and decided sense of disapprobation of the whole course of conduct pursued by Mr. Anderson. They had been more confirmed by all they saw and heard in the conviction that the Presbytery of Glasgow manifested great kindness and forbearance in the matter; and though many members of that Presbytery had been foully slandered and bitterly calumniated by Mr. Anderson from the pulpit, not the slightest indication could be detected of their having violated the dictates of forbearance and brotherly kindness.

The object of the conference was either to get such explanations from Mr. Anderson as might influence their view of his conduct, or to endeavour to bring him to a right sense of his guilt, induce him to confess his sin, and to express penitence for his offence. In both these objects, the

meeting with Mr. Anderson entirely failed. He denied some of the facts alleged; brought forward nothing to explain these facts differently from their *prima facie* aspect, and they could not bring him to anything like a right sense of sin. They dealt with him in the way of showing the manifest dictates of the laws of integrity, honesty, and fair dealing, hoping thereby that he might be brought to some sense of his guilt. In this, however, they failed.

In regard to some points, Mr. Anderson did make a formal expression, to the effect that he had violated the law of God: but, even then, there was evidently nothing like a right appreciation of the sinfulness of his conduct. It just seemed as if he had been merely intellectually convinced of its being sinful. He admitted that his conduct in adopting the minute was an act of sin, and a violation of the ninth commandment, but it was clearly because he felt the moral impossibility of saying one word in answer to the grounds on which the Committee maintained the true view of that transaction. Even then he seemed to have no true sense of the right nature of the offence. In regard to the contrast between Mr. Anderson's statements in the Presbytery and in the pamphlet, they got nothing from him but what had justly been characterized by Dr. Candlish as shuffling, evasion, and disingenuousness. He declared that he adhered deliberately to all the statements in that pamphlet, – an admission which involves him in the fearful alternative that has already been before the House. The whole seemed to him just a very offensive specimen of practical Antinomianism – (hear) – a man evidently priding himself on being possessed of far higher spiritual gifts and graces than other men, and a far higher discernment of Divine truth than any other minister of the Church, and yet indulging habitually in the practice of deliberate violation of the plainest principles of morality, and the clearest and most express violation of the law which requires that integrity, adherence to promise, and fair and honourable dealing,

The Committee were unanimous in this judgment, and were prepared to propose that it should be remitted to the Presbytery of Glasgow to proceed with the case, in the possession of the pamphlet which threw such a fearful light on the subject. It was plain that they could not accept of the resignation. That would be a virtual admission that, they had no moral charges against him. Mr. Anderson, with all his spiritual pride, his self-conceit, and his self-deceit, must have felt, as the result of the conference, in his inmost soul, that he was occupying a

dishonourable and a degraded position, He must have felt that he was in a position which he could not and dared not face, and in which he could entertain no reasonable expectations of satisfying the minds of honourable and honest men.

Finding this, he had taken the course of fleeing from discipline; and this act was of such a nature that they might at once have proceeded to cut him off from all connection with the Church, or suspend him *sine die*, were they so disposed. He concurred in the opinion that it was more expedient that they should still leave room for penitence on Mr. Anderson's part. That certainly was not very hopeful but it should not be shut out till the last hour. It possibly might be, that Mr. Anderson, feeling the humiliating and degrading position in which he was placed, might have taken this step rashly. They had seen strange things on Mr. Anderson's part: but it would be the most strange feature of his case if anything but a sense of humiliation had been called forth in his mind by the conference. He (Dr. Cunningham) cherished the hope that, under the impression that he was as unable to meet the Christian community on the subject as he was undoubtedly unable to meet the conference, Mr. Anderson might have taken this step rashly, and that he would yet withdraw his letter. The case presented serious moral aspects, and they were bound to investigate the true nature of the transaction, and bring out the evidence on which the charges rest: and it might be that Mr. Anderson might be thus enabled to escape from the fearful delusions under which he labours.

The motion of Dr. Candlish was then unanimously agreed to.