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MS 9/4/4

Perth, 26th Sept. 1811

Dear Sir;

On looking lately over some papers, I met with copies of one or two of the Letters which passed between ~~me~~ and you, in 1812: and it is impossible to read them without feelings of the deepest regret, so much so, that I am induc- ed to forget my youth, ~~and~~ my being a stranger to you, and the impossibility of my succeeding, where so many wiser heads and pens have failed. May I beg that you will for- get the same circumstances, while I ask your attention for a moment.

An Union of the Churches now separated, would, we must all feel, be an event that would bring the liveliest joy to the breast of every individual in both their fellowship. The question is this: Are we of one mind as to our hope before our Maker? to ascertain which is so desirable. This, Sir, I am persuaded, never will be ascertained until we leave Gas, Sandeman, Young, and Morison out of the question. The opprobrium cast upon A. M. in being the cause of the differences has often led me to consider this

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rowful subject with as much attention as I could command,
and so much has my opinion on it been strengthened by the
perusal of your Correspondence with X that I am induced
to use the freedom of stating it to you;— and beg, most ear-
nestly, as I do it without the knowledge of any, that you will
confine this Letter to your own mind.

Let the Church of Edinburgh, and those in connection with
it, draw up, in the Spirit of Meekness, without assistance from
any but the inspired Writers, a simple Statement of their pro-
fession of Faith and Hope, and of how they adhere to the all
things Christ has commanded his disciples; avoiding likewise
every thing like reflections upon the writings or opinions of
any man; and let this be laid before the Church of Perth
and its Connections, it will meet, I may take upon me to
say, a candid and unprejudiced examination. If it
does not agree with what they consider a Church of Jesus
Christ should profess, let them, instead of answering this,
lay before the Edinburgh Church a similar Statement
of their own; and thus neither side can be blinded by the
drosses or colourings which party spirit and personal

animosity so frequently throw over the truth. If, however, (what God, in his abundant mercy grant!) that Statement should contain nothing but what the Churches of Perth, &c can say amen to, both parties, there is not the smallest doubt, will be ready to forget and to forgive; and their only regret will be, that a Reconciliation was not effected when some were alive who appeared on both sides to have the welfare of Jerusalem much at heart, and to whom the healing of the breach, would have brought as much pleasure as they could have felt on this side the grave.

These, Sir, are the thoughts of a young inexperienced boy. If you do not consider them as totally unworthy your notice, it would give me pleasure to know how far they are conformable to your own, and how far you consider the proposed plan as practicable. We so good as remember this, that these sentiments I have never heard broached by any. They are entirely suppositions of my own, which, viewing it in the manner I do, I cannot refrain from laying before you.

That the God of all consolation and good hope, who often employs the most insignificant means to accomplish his pur-

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posed, may speak peace to us all, and unite us all firmly on the
Rock of Ages, is the prayer of,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c &c

Leith, 29th Sept. 1814.

Dear Sir,

I duly received your favour of the 26th ult. and consider myself obliged thereby. My only motive in writing ~~xx~~ the Letters to which you allude, I trust was, to bring about that Union in which I am happy to observe you to be also so much interested, and which, (if it can be brought about in conformity with the word of God,) I am persuaded would be highly agreeable to all those with whom I have the undeserved honour to be connected in Church Order. And, as I hope neither them nor me will be ashamed or afraid (when called upon) to give a Reason of the Hope that is in us with that meekness and fear which the Apostle (so properly) recommends, I shall, in as few words as possible, state what we are united upon, and hold for Truth. In the first place, that it must be without controversy in all Christian Churches, that God was made ma-

nifest in the flesh, &c. that there is no other name under hea-
 ven given among men whereby we can be saved, but that of
 Jesus; that Faith in him to the saving of the soul, is the free
 and sovereign gift of God, and that none (in the Scripture
 sense of it,) can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; that
 these three and glorious personages are one Godhead, - co-eter-
 nal, co-equal, in power, Omnipresence and Omniscience; - that
 this Faith uniformly (in all who have obtained it by lot) works
 by love to all who are of the Truth, and for its sake only; -
 that this love leads to self-denial and deeds of mercy, first to
 the household of faith, and then to all who stand in need
 thereof, for the unknown elects sake; - that a meek and quiet
 spirit, after the example of the ever-blessed Saviour, is the best
 ornament of Christians. Secondly, we hold that no Christian
 Church can (scripturally) go about the Lord's supper, receiving
 and putting away of Members, without a plurality of Elders,
 that they have all an equal authority, (tho' differently gifted)
 and that they must be the Husbands of one wife, ruling their
 children and houses well. Thirdly, that we must not suffer
 sin in our Brethren, but in every such case rebuke them and fol-

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low out the Lord's admirable Law of Love in the 18th of Matthew, and the other passages, respecting the discipline of his house. Fourthly, that (from the knowledge of the deceit of our own evil hearts, and the many temptations to which we are exposed) we consider it our bounden duty, and high privilege, to meet often together to exhort one another to continue steadfast in the Faith, the Love and Hope of the Gospel, and to have at all times a walk or conversation in the world becoming it.

I mention these things more particularly, as having heard that some of them were opposed, and the necessity of them denied by some leading men in the (once much esteemed) Church of Perth, but who (after having occasioned much distress and confusion) separated, or were put away from it; and on that occasion myself and many others, fondly hoped that the remaining members would have humbled themselves, first before God, and then to their Brethren in the sister churches, frankly acknowledging their guilt, and that they had been led astray by factious, evil, and designing men; and without such ^{repentance,} and steps followed out in a public Letter, signed by your Elders and Deacons, addressed to the Churches with whom you were formerly connected, and sent as that pernicious Memorial, &c. which occasioned the melancholy separation, I cannot see how the much desired Union can ever take place. I have (as you rightly ad-

wise) carefully avoided mentioning any names, and shall not mention, (as requested) your Letter to me, nor this its answer to any, till I have your permission;—and, wishing that our joint endeavours (however unworthy, and unfit we are for it,) may be blessed by the God of Peace and Love, I remain, with esteem,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c &c

Perth, 2^d October, 1814

Dear Sir,

I hasten to acknowledge receipt of your agreeable favour of the 29th ultimo, which gave me the greatest pleasure, as the Hope that is in you therein contained, is the same as what I have most unworthily professed, and is held by the Churches at Perth, Arbroath, &c. however unlike we are to that good profession. Although, on the subject of the character of the Elder, as the Husband of one wife, there are diversities of opinion among us, I believe as well as among others; yet, ^{both} that, and not going through the ordinance of the Supper, Excommunication, &c

without two Elders, have always been strictly adhered to. Your fourth observation (upon Exhortations) has always been a point which has been enforced carefully by the same churches; so that there are not, as far as I can myself judge, any things in your account of the Doctrine and Practices of our former friends, but would be cordially assented to by our connections.

Now, as to the much desired Union, I am happy to understand that you and your friends feel so interested about it. It would indeed be a most happy event. From your Statement I have little fear, (if, as formerly stated, allusions to the writings or opinions of men be carefully excluded) but that the Doctrines professed by both will be found to be the same. The great difficulty is, as to the manner of bringing it about: and on this I shall open my mind to you without reserve.

The most distressing circumstance is, that each side thinks the other acted unwarrantably at the time of the separation. How ever blameable the Church of Perth appeared in the eyes of the Church at Edinburgh, yet the members of it thought, and I presume still think that they had great cause to complain of not receiving a candid hearing and mild answer. Any of those who are yet

alive, are all unanimous in declaring that the conduct of the meeting of Elders at Perth (the last one most likely) on the subject, was most unlike Christians, or Disciples of the meek and lowly One, and widened the breach much.

I mention these ^{circumstances} things to you, my dear Sir, not from a wish to complain, but that you may understand the minds of all on the subject, as far as I can understand it, or am able to state it. Such being the case, would it not be a most becoming matter to see all humbled under the Almighty hand of God in this, - for each to consider the hand he may have had in it. It is a Spirit of forgiveness in both that can alone heal the wound. I cannot be wrong to say, that the Churches of Perth, &c. would not hesitate to confess to their former friends the cause they have to fear how much they had been led away by pride and the deceit of their own hearts, and to forgive them for the unchristian conduct exercised to them before, did they see any thing like a disposition in their old friends to "go out one by one," - each ready to confess his conviction of the blame that might be laid to his own door, and each ready to receive them again. It is the want of appearance of this charity, that steels the minds of our friends from attempting a reconciliation.

Both have much to forgive, both have much to forget. — Let us hope, that from the daily experience we have of the pride and naughtiness of our evil hearts, we may all be led by the word of God, which is quick and powerful, to be ready to confess our faults one to the other, looking all for forgiveness to the throne of grace, where the hearer of prayer is ready to forgive, and rich in mercy free.

I have not shewed or mentioned your Letter to any; but would wish first to have your mind on what I have now stated. The frankness of your Letter encourages me to the same openness, and I hope you will see at least the propriety of both parties meeting as near half-way as possible. I will not take upon me to say whether your connections may not have much more to forgive, yet the readier they appear to do so, the readier will the hearts of their former friends warm to them, and their following the footsteps of Him who said "Neither do I condemn thee", will appear the more apparent.

May the Holy Spirit, which is promised even unto the end of the world, be the bond of our Union.

Waiting your reply,
I am &c

Dear Sir,

Perth, 6th October, 1814.

Upon the afternoon of the 4th I received your esteemed favour of 2^d curt. by which am pleased to observe that our sentiments are in general so congenial, but am rather apprehensive that they may not yet be so much so with some of your members, both at Perth, Dundee, and Arbroath. I know well, by experience, that when the passions of men are engaged in any matter, they are apt to get heated, and go too far, but as it must be allowed by your friends, that the unhappy differences originated from Perth, I humbly think that the first advances to a reconciliation with their (former) sister Churches, should proceed from thence, and (as hinted in my last,) should commence with humbling themselves before God, by Fasting, Prayer, and Confession, and after that transmitting to each Church such a Letter as I have taken the liberty to annex; and I will venture to say, that their Old Friends will cordially forgive them, and will meet them more than half way. It may appear to you and others rather presumptuous in a private, obscure, and but little instructed individual, such as I am, to interfere with such a

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subject; but, as I think, (if my heart does not deceive me,) that I have only the good and peace of Zion at heart, and (I trust) a share of the blessedness promised to the Peace-makers, (in which I wish you also to partake,) I shall be the less careful as to such opinions;—and hoping it will meet with your approbation, I remain, &c

The form recommended by him is

Perth

Very Dear Brethren,

(For such we take upon us now to call you) After having humbled ourselves before God, by Fasting, Prayer, and beseeching his blessing, we now address you, (to whom we were once dear, and closely united in love) acknowledging that, through pride, self-conceit, and the artifices of evil and designing men, we have been led away from the simplicity of the Truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, our common Lord, and love to his Brethren for its sake; and being now thoroughly convinced of our Errors, and earnestly longing to be reconciled to, and again united with you, ^{and} our old dear Friends, we beseech your forgiveness for Christ's sake, and your forgetfulness of all

the distress and trouble which we have occasioned to you, and the other Churches; and as we now profess to be of one mind with you, as to the Faith, Love, Hope, and Practices of the Gospel, we hope you will imitate the Divine Mercy, (displayed to us in the parable of the Prodigal Son) in receiving us again into your fellowship; and requesting a speedy answer, we remain, (we hope for the Truth's sake)

Very Dear Brethren,

Most affectionately yours

Signed by our Elders and Deacons
in our presence.

Perth, 10th October, 1814.

Dear Sir,

I hope you will not think me troublesome or fastidious, if, before laying your Letters before any of my Brethren, I should put a question, that I may have it ⁱⁿ my power to give a ready ~~answer to your letter~~ answer, and prevent unnecessary delay or discussion.

May I, with all truth, affirm, that those with whom we formerly stood connected, disclaim every doctrine which tends to build the

hope of guilty man, in presence of his Maker upon any deeds or works of his own? May I assert, with all boldness, that they preach Christ and Him crucified, according to the Scriptures, as the only hope of the hopeless, — while they consider that the Gospel calls for works meet for repentance, — while they consider that the love which God hath bestowed upon man ought to lead him to be known, as the Disciple of the First love, by his work of faith and labour of love abounding more and more, — are they likewise careful of maintaining that the entrance into the heavenly kingdom is administered upon the same plea to those that have born the burden and heat of the day, as to those hired at the eleventh hour, — "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?"

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, by your love one towards another." While they look upon this as the test of his disciples, — while they consider this love, as being what makes them appear as a city set on a hill top that cannot be hid, — do they at the same time maintain that at every examination into their own selves, will they be led to exclaim, "Lord is it I?" — to judge and condemn themselves as unprofitable servants, that they may be led to ascribe all the worthiness to the Lamb that was slain?

You will, I have no doubt, see the necessity of my having an answer to give upon these points before I broach this subject, we are so deeply interested in, ^{because,} as well as I can judge, what keeps us asunder is, that our connections do not think you can answer in the affirmative, to what I have now stated. For my own part I have little fear from your former Letters, that the answer will be satisfactory; but until I have it, you must see the propriety of my not saying how your last favour agrees or disagrees with my sentiments.

I hope and trust, my Dear Sir, that all our differences have been misunderstandings, heightened by the share that the passions of man took in the controversy, — and that we have both been contending for the One Thing Needful, — the Kingdom of Heaven and the righteousness thereof.

Meantime, I am, &c

Leith, 13th October, 1814.

Dear Sir,

I last night received your favour of the 10th. With respect to the questions proposed, I think that they were in great measure

replied to in my first Letter; but if a fuller answer is required you will find it (versified) at the conclusion of our present *My own Book*, both as to Individuals and as a collective Body. The sentiments or rather Precepts therein contained, I highly approve of (however deficient, alas! I have been in practice,) and cordially agree with, and, I think, agree well with the Doctrines you state, and to which indeed no sober minded Christian can object.

It is my opinion, and I believe that of all whom I have (the undeserved) honour to be connected with in church fellowships, that amongst the redeemed by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, ~~as~~ (as in the Angelic and natural orders) there are different stations and degrees of glory; but the orbit (if I may so express it) is completely filled and happy beyond expression; and this I think is clearly displayed to us in different passages of scripture, and I suppose will not be disputed.

In the address of your Friends to the different churches, with whom they were formerly so nearly and dearly connected, I would earnestly entreat that no mention be made of this our correspondence upon this subject, if they shall think it proper; for, let us, my Dear Sir, not seek the honour which cometh

from men, but only that from God; and if he shall (in his Divine goodness and providence) make use of us as (the mean and unworthy) instruments of bringing about peace and love amongst his people, I shall esteem it as the happiest incident of my life, chequered as it has been with evil and folly; and I have no doubt that this is also your sentiments; and, hoping soon to have the pleasure of addressing you by the tender and endearing name of brother;

I remain, with regard, &c

Perth, 15th October, 1814.

Dear Sir,

Having received an answer so very agreeable to my last, and having read that part of the Song Book which you recommended, and found it in every part in perfect consonance (to my mind) with the word of God, and agreeable to the Doctrine professed by the Church of Perth, (and which has always been professed by it,) it may not be improper to reply more particularly to your Letter of the 6th inst. with regard to the form to be observed in bringing about a reconciliation.

Would it not be a very strange matter indeed for those who have always held the same doctrine as that now stated in your Letters, and in the book referred to by you, to say to their old friends, that they had been holding the Truth in an error? If they have been holding it in an error, so have their former friends, - for, as far as I can judge there have been no differences but misunderstandings. The Churches at Edinr. &c. have always considered the Perth Churches as denying the necessity of the work of Faith and labour of love, and the operation of the Holy Spirit. - While the latter have considered that the former build their hope before their Maker upon that work of faith. Neither of them are found to be the case, - both are found to have been making the same profession. If therefore the one profession has been in an error, so, it follows of course, has the other. What I have always thought, and what your Letters perfectly confirm me in, and what I alone build the hope of an union on - is - we had misunderstood each other at the time of the separation, - with the pleasing hope that the time is perhaps come when it may please the Head of the Church to remove the film from the eyes of us all. It would be presumptuous in me to take upon me to say how

the proposal of an Union would be received by the majority of those whom I am most unworthily connected. This I am certain of that if they can be convinced as thoroughly as I feel at this moment, that no difference exists, they will not be a moment in confessing that they have been in a great error, with regard to what has been held for Truth by their former Connections. And the most heartfelt sorrow that the cause of all the misunderstandings, should have originated from them.

You anticipate my wishes in desiring that our names may not publicly appear in what may pass between the Churches. It will be proper that I should some time soon read our correspondence to those interested, and I earnestly hope and pray that a spirit of peace and forgiveness may be found actuating all the Churches, that it may not be a cause of glorying to any, but a cause of deep humiliation to all, — and fervently joining in the wish you conclude with,

I am, &c

Leith, 17th October, 1814.

My Dear Sir,

I have this day received your favour of the 15th, and am happy to observe that our sentiments are so much in unison. However sound your friends may now be, I humbly think that they were wrong and in error, when Mr John Glas Sandeman, Mr Henry Lindsay, and others their adherents, were among them, and from whom (but alas! after the mischief of dividing the Churches was effected) they had to separate, and (if I recollect right) made use of the very arguments that their (former) Sister Churches made use of against themselves. After parting with these men, how easy had the reconciliation then been, if they had addressed a Letter, signed by their Elders, to each of these Churches, acknowledging how much they had been misled and deceived by these people, with respect to the Doctrines and Practices of said churches, with whom (they now found) they were perfectly agreed, and I do not think it is yet too late. And O! that it may be given them, and to us, to attend to the exhortation at the conclusion of the 95th Psalm, and so earnestly repeated by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews: To day if ye will hear

his voice, &c.

Sincerely wishing that our joint endeavours may be blessed, I am, with much esteem, tho' in haste,

Yours, &c.

Perth, 6th November, 1814

Dear Sir

I resume the pen with very different hopes and feelings from what I received your most agreeable Letters; and this from having most painfully ascertained that the same spirit of sobriety and fear, and natural wish for a reconciliation among Old Friends, which your Letters breathe is by no means a general sentiment among your friends, at least at Perth. I should apologise for such a pause in the Correspondence on my side, but it has been lengthened a week, in consequence of absence from home. It is now incumbent on me to endeavour, as concisely as possible, to state the steps which have been taken in consequence of the Correspondence, and the consequence of these steps. I formerly mentioned that it would be proper to read the Correspondence to those interested; and of course it was read to my Brethren in Perth, and Copies sent (without names) to our Brethren in other places; and only one sentiment seemed to pervade all. — Joy to hear

that we were of one mind in the hope of the Gospel, and an anxious wish that we might not be disappointed in the hopes, that it could not fail to excite, of so desirable an event, — Mixed with a fear (alas! too well-grounded) that obstacles would be raised by your friends, and that they might not be so cordial about it as we would wish. It was therefore judged proper that a few on each side should meet and discuss the subject; — accordingly, your two Elders and ours, along with three members on each side, met last Monday, and had a pretty full conference, which I cannot pretend to recollect minutely; but will endeavour to state it as nearly as possible.

Your friends declared, in the first place, that any reconciliation as a Church was totally out of the question, — that it behoved to be one by one; each confessing his iniquity, — and that the Churches (your friends) have no cause to humble or condemn themselves in the least, as they acted with the most perfect propriety, and that it was us alone that were carried away with party spirit and errors of doctrine; — and that, so far from any harshness being used towards the Perth Church at the time, that there was in reality too much lenity shown them.

Secondly, That they not only insist upon all that are in their connection agreeing heartily with the practice of setting an Elder aside when married for the second time, but that they must say they think this practice

exactly conformable to the meaning of the Holy Ghost, — that this, as well as
 Faithful children. — they make a term of their communion.

Thirdly, That they adhere closely, and in the strictest manner, never to receive
 any one into their communion again, who has been twice put away, for
 whatever cause or causes he may have been put away, unless when the child
 had been in an error in some part of the discipline.

As to the first point, it was clear they were not all of one mind: — to prove
 which, the correspondence was read to them. As to that of individual
 confession, there was none but would surely think it an honour to have
 an opportunity of confessing that good Name, by which we profess to be called,
 if they felt convinced that they were confessing before those who seemed to
 be equally convinced of their own vileness of character in the presence of
 the Searcher of hearts, — and would not receive these confessions as any
 ground of glorying, which the very circumstance of asking these confessions
 rather contradicts; — but that it appeared, if all were at liberty to ask such
 questions, at every individual, as they chose, that the same purpose would
 be answered. Again, as to your friends having no cause to condemn themselves,
 it would have been agreeable to have heard much soberer language; for, it
 was attested by one of your connections, then present, — who was present at the
 meeting of Elders at Perth, (and these Elders were the representatives of the Churches)

that they acted as men not having the fear of God before their eyes; - and that if they had done their simple duty they should have come back again, - that it appeared to have been the means of wearing the minds of almost all in the Church from their former friends. It seems likewise to be a general opinion, that the spirit then manifested was what prevented the wound being healed, especially after the second separation.

As to the second matter, it is well known that ever since the first erection of the Churches, there were some who thought differently upon that point, but as long as they did not disturb the Church, nor attempt to change the custom, they were allowed liberty of conscience upon that. - Our friends declared they would agree to the practice, as they have great cause to fear their own opinion upon such a subject, and being the safest side to err upon*; yet, as the consciences of some were weak upon it, they could not say with truth they were convinced of that being the interpretation, yet were quite willing the practice be adhered to. It could not fail, then, to strike our minds very forcibly, that your friends appear straining at a gnat upon this point.

But the third, and the momentous obstacle, is the second absolution! this, it is to be feared, will prove the great bar in the way. Indeed, I must say, that unless your friends give up this (to our minds) most unscriptural practice, or prove to us satisfactorily, that it is a commandment of the Lord

* This can only be the case, where the laying aside of an Elder does not deprive the brethren of the observation of the supper, &c. otherwise a doubtful opinion subsists an extent.

or his Apostles, (and I hope there are none of us but are open to conviction
 from the word of God,) — as long as it remains in our Bible, "O thou wicked
 servant! I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me, shouldst
 not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had
 pity on thee?" — as long, I say, as this and thousands of passages remain
 in the Bible, and as long as we profess to need mercy every hour, and to
 have hope only, because that mercy respects the very chief of sinners in
 all their strayings and wanderings, and as long as there is not a single
 passage on record which limits the forgiveness of the Church more than
 the forgiveness of the Head of the Church, (as to the second admonition,
 a greater corruption of the word of God never was made, than to call
admonition, absolution, — two words as diametrically opposite as words
 can be, except in sound), — as long, in short, as the Gospel is a Revelation
 of forgiveness to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, — so long will any
 professor of Christianity be disobeying the Commandment of his Lord
 and Master, who says to a repenting fellow-servant, "my Lord for-
 gave me a debt of ten thousand talents, at my request to have pa-
 tience with me, and I will pay thee all; but although you say the
 same to me, and in comparison of my debt to my Lord your debt
 to me be only as an hundred pence, — although you fall down

on your knees and ask patience and forgiveness, yet I will not."—
 Awful indeed are the words of Him who was often provoked with
 with the counsel of the Israelites, and brought them low for their in-
 equity,—who nevertheless regarded their affliction, when he heard
 their cry, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.—
 His words to the unforgiving servant are, "So shall my heavenly Fa-
 ther do unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his Bro-
 ther their trespasses." It is much to be wished that all the Churches
 were made properly acquainted with what is now the real ground
 of our difference. There are none of us but would do well to remem-
 ber the example of the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily
 whether these things were so. You may call it reasoning; but there can be no
 reasoning so awful as making commandments where the Great Lawgiver
 has made none,—indeed, in open defiance of his great commandment, for-
 giveness,—even to enemies. A sober consideration of such a momentous mat-
 ter,—a matter which keeps asunder many who are of the same mind in the
 Faith,—would well become all, whatever rules we may have laid down,
 and flourishing and numerous, or poor and despised in this world.—
 "Be not high minded, but fear," ought never to be absent from our minds.
 I am sorry to say that an impression was rather left on the minds

of our Brethren, who were at the conference, that your friends would have much need, as well as ourselves, to be put in remembrance of these remarkable words: "If any man thinketh he standeth, - take heed lest he fall." - There was a confidence and certainty about them that could not fail to put one in mind of what the Apostle says: "If any man thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

You will, I fear, think that my disappointment has led me to use too strong language, but if so, I can assure you I shall take it as the greatest kindness to point it out to me. I would wish, if possible, to state the minds of both sides without either concealing or magnifying, as far as it is in my power, upon the points about which we differ. And I say it freely, that however it may be the opinion of some among you, that you cannot humble us sufficiently, or appear too severe, I fervently hope that such an unchristian spirit is by no means general, and that our old friends will not think it beneath them to give these things a candid and unprejudiced examination, and either to confess that we have Scripture on our side in our view of the great (and I think I may say the only) ground of difference, The second Absolution, or to shew us from Scripture, that the practice of your Connections on that point is a commandment of the Great Shepherd. - That it has always been

held by the Churches, — is no argument, but in so far as it is agreeable to the word of God.

Let this, my Dear Sir, if possible, be fairly understood by all the Churches, that those who separated from them at the time of so much distress and perplexity in the churches, have no doubt that in the Church of Perth at that time, there were some great errors; but that since the second separation, both seem to have been speaking the same thing, and that nothing now retards the Union, but the want of the appearance of sober-mindedness upon the differences by your friends, and the difference upon the Second Absolution.

Again, I intreat, my Dear Sir, that you will not be offended with any thing I have said. I shall shew this Letter to your Elders here, that they may be convinced I have not mistaken what took place at the Conference; and either upon opinions or expressions I have made use of, which do not appear to your mind to be scriptural, I hope I shall have an ear to the reproof, if the reproof is from the word of God. This I feel convinced of, that the Spirit and the Bride ought never to be at variance in their language; and that we are assured, the language of both is "Come" — "Ho! every one that thirsteth" and that the Spirit of "stand by" is not the wisdom which cometh from above.

17th November— I have accordingly shewed this Letter to your Elders,
 but am sorry to say that it meets with their decided disapprobation.
 They confess I have stated the Subjects upon which we differed fairly;
 but they alledge that I have no right to attempt to bias your mind
 with our reasoning.— I again repeat it, if I have advanced any
 thing unscriptural, or strained, or forced, or reasoned away any part of
 of the word of God, you cannot do me a more real kindness than to
 point it out to me. That I most cordially wish and pray for an
 Union of Old, near and dear friends, is surely unnecessary in this
 stage of the Correspondence, to assure you of;— and that it is (if I
 do not deceive myself) one of the first wishes of my heart;— but here
 is one point, and one of no small importance, which prevents that
 desirable event. Is it therefore improper, that you should be
 made acquainted with our sentiments upon that point of difference?
 surely not. I feel my own incapacity for writing upon any subject,
 much more upon one of this importance, most strongly;— but had I
 opportunity, I would consider it my bounden duty to entreat,— to beg,
 of every individual in all the Churches, to take this matter into his
 most serious consideration,— not to think he had already attain-
 ed a complete knowledge of the Scriptures, but to consider, as in

the sight of God, upon what ground he is keeping a number at a distance from the Church, — whether in obedience to a command of the Lord, or of men? And if your friends are satisfied fully that they are obeying the scriptures in this practice, it is undoubtedly their duty to lay the reasons of this law, as well as the reason of their hope, before their former friends.

I fear I shall have completely wearied you, but begging you will make every allowance, I remain,

Yr

P.S. I beg it may be understood, that when your friends were considered to have shewn insobriety, at the Conference, it was just upon that point of saying that the Churches had no reason to be humbled, &c.

Leith, 14th Nov. 1814.

Dear Sir,

I duly recd your very long and interesting Letter, of the 6th and 7th inst. in which you give an account of a Conversation betwixt your friends and mine, at Perth, which confirms a Letter I lately saw from one of them, stating that my Letters had been perused at that Meet-

ing; and containing a very proper caveat to myself, to be careful as to what I wrote upon such subjects. Therefore, instead of replying to your observations, I shall begin with condemning myself, in misleading you and your friends, (though I think unintentionally,) in making you suppose that they could be restored to the fellowships of those Churches from which they were most justly (at the time) separated, as a body, whereas I might have known, as I now know, cannot be the case; but they received only as other Individuals from the world. In this matter I now feel that I have acted very improperly, although my heart acquits me (if I do not deceive myself) that therein I had no design to deceive either you or them. I therefore need hardly remind you, that I particularly requested, (in any application of your friends to mine, in the way of bringing about a Reconciliation,) my name might not at all be mentioned, in which you cordially agreed, nay wrote, that I had anticipated your own wish, both as to yourself and me: was it then fair or candid to expose these Letters (wrote to yourself, in confidence, and at your own solicitation) in the way they have been, and from the motives you mention? — Or, if judged necessary to read them to my friends, ought not a copy of them, without signatures, have been made, as in the other case you mention?

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but enough on this subject. With respect to what you state, of the behaviour and conduct of my friends at the foresaid meeting, I neither dare nor will set up my weak judgment in opposition to theirs, who are so much better instructed; and whilst I cordially agree as to the boundless extent of the Divine Forgiveness unto the chief of sinners, (such as I am) and the propriety of our exercising the same in our offences against each other, it appears to me that you have lost sight of another Scripture "The tender mercies of the Wicked are cruelty;" and that to see us properly humbled is the best service and greatest deed of love we can possibly show each other, however opposite this is to our evil nature and inclination. With respect to the conduct of the Churches of Christ, with regard to Excommunicants, it becomes them to go no further than the word of God points the way; and to stop where it stops, as, when we deviate from this (as, alas! we all too oft do) we take our own reasoning in its place; — and as all his churches are strongly commanded to be of one mind, to speak all the same things, and to seek those which make for peace, and whereby we may edify one another, marking those who cause Divisions, &c. and avoiding them. — had your friends attended to these things, I am fully persuaded, there would have been no amongst

us. But the Lord has his own way of purging his floor, and none dare say to him, What dost thou? and he will, in his own good time and way, gather all his sheaves into his garner. Let us therefore leave this matter to his over-ruling providence, and judge ourselves how far we have been acting in opposition thereto, and seeking more to please ourselves than Him who searcheth the hearts. As I am decidedly of one mind with my friends at Perth, and all the Churches connected with them in love, I request that our Correspondence may here stop, until such time as you are of the same Sentiments; and that this may soon be the case, is the fervent wish

A.

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c

Perth, 18th Nov. 1814.

Dear Sir,

After the wish that you express, in your favour of the 11th cart. that that Letter should close the Correspondence, I would not have thought it necessary to have troubled you with this, more especially as you lie under a caveat, which would render any further Correspondence vain and unprofitable, had it not been for the purpose

of clearing myself from the imputation of acting unfairly with your Letters. On reference to my Letter of 10th October, you will find that I mentioned expressly, it would be necessary to read the Correspondence to those interested; (otherwise it would have been to no purpose,) but that I agreed with you, it would be much to be desired, that neither of our names should publicly appear in what might pass between the Churches (as a body). This accordingly was done; and neither when the Letters were read to my Brethren, (in our Love-Feast Room,) nor at the Conference, were any names mentioned; but there were none who were ignorant who were the Correspondents, as all knew of your Letters with P. C. And what made it additionally necessary that the Letters should have been read at the Conference was, that some of your friends knew of it; and it was much better that they should have an opportunity of judging of it themselves than from common report. I have little doubt, when you consider these circumstances, that you will not think me so much to blame as you say. That it should have been the cause of any uneasiness to you, I am truly sorry, and beg of you to forgive me, as I can assure you, it was wholly unintentionally on my part: nor did

I think I was at all departing from the promise made. —
 I shall, I think, ever entertain the highest esteem for the man,
 whose unbiassed sentiments then expressed, will never do him
 any thing but honour; but I am truly sorry to see him at all
 ashamed of these words of Truth and Sobriety.

As this will, in all probability, be the last Letter which there
 will be any occasion to trouble you with on the subject, I would
 beg your indulgence a few words. I began the Correspondence with
 the firm determination to believe every thing I heard against your
 friends, as being dictated by prejudice against them; and to endea-
 vour to set the conduct of my own friends at the time of the Sepa-
 ration in the most glaring point of view I could to my own mind,
 (and you may believe to one who has to forget so much as our
Family have, it was no easy task.) When I observed our own
 friends ready to condemn themselves, ready to make the first
 advances to an union, by seeing the conduct of the Perth Church
in the worst light, and ready to confess that they had been
 carried away by pride and self conceit, it could not fail to in-
 still the hopes that it had at least pleased the Father of mercies
 to heal the Breach, and that the same spirit of self condemn-

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ation and readiness to meet half-way, would be found among their old friends. But in all these points I have experienced nothing but disappointment. In the first place, your friends declare they have no reason to condemn themselves about it at all, and will not meet us one foot of the way. (The same answer I have since been given to understand, was returned to our much esteemed Elder, Mr Miller, upon a similar application, but which I hardly now expected, when the great object of their hatred is out of the way.) They alledge, in the next place, that there are many things that stand in the way to prevent it. The Second Absolution, Elder twice Married Faithful Children, Eating with Excommunicants, Friendly Societies, and Bible Societies. As to the Second Absolution, I believe, had it been held in the way it used to be done, that is, only with regard to those who had been put away for the same lust, it would have been got over; but you now cannot receive them for whatever cause they may have been put away. All the other objections our friends unanimously declared they would give up. Some could not see some of them ^{as un-}scriptural; but all agreed to submit their minds, and beg the forbearance of their brethren; but to

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this it was answered, that such a thing as forbearance, except with natural tempers, is not now exercised by (those who stile themselves) Churches of Christ. And that all who are with them must think the same upon every tittle, however small; as also, that none are at liberty to express their minds, in the least different from the Churches, upon any passage of scripture, however much it might tend to illustrate it, and be in conformity with the rest of scripture. When I think, for a small moment, of this most awful manner of speaking, so evidently built upon the same foundation as the Church of Rome, — The infallibility of the Church, — connected with the Pharisaical spirit of stand by; and also the Lording which evidently appears to be exercised among you, — when all this, I must say most unwillingly, burst in upon me, I cannot but feel it as matter of the greatest thanksgiving to Him who can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, that he has been pleased to reveal such a scene as I hope will prove an useful lesson to many who have taken upon them to follow Him, who says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." I mentioned at the very outset, that, as the separation was, to all appearance, owing to heat and party spirit,

on both sides, unless there was now sobriety and a humble mind in both, there could be no hope of a reunion. Far, very far, does this appear from being the case. For my own share, I have much reason to condemn myself, that much as these words have been in my mouth, I know nothing yet of that meek and quiet spirit, which is, as you say, is the best ornament of Christians.

May the keeper of Israel, who walks in the midst of the candlesticks, yet, in his mercy, humble the pride of every individual in all the Churches: then, and only then, may we look for what would be to me as well as yourself, the happiest incident in my life, chequered, (as I may indeed join with you in saying,) as it has been with evil and folly. — Much regretting that we must give up all hopes, at present, of seeing brought about what I am sure would have been to many a joyful event; but venturing still to express a faint hope that the time may not be far distant, when those who are confident they have the form of knowledge and of truth, may see good reason "not to lean upon their own understanding," I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c

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Observations made by an Elder of the Old Connections,
about some lesser points of Difference.

In the course of conversation* with an Elder of our Old Connections in Perth, there were several things stated, which, from whatever spirit they proceeded, (and as far as one could judge, they were advanced in the spirit of meekness) well deserve our most serious consideration.

He said that he considered the great bar to an union consisted in this, that the consequences of the separation had been, on their side the necessity of greater strictness, and on ours a very great slackness, — That this slackness on our part consisted of so many particulars, — when we not only spoke inconsistently among ourselves, but acted inconsistently, — that it rendered the Union much more impracticable, than it would otherwise have been.

Leaving the matter of Discipline, properly speaking, where he thought we were slack, and that of the second Absolution, and the Elder's character, as the Husband of one wife, out of the discussion, there still remained some points to be touched upon.

The first one, he said, was that of eating with Excommunicants. Our practice upon which point was very stumbling; for some abstained from eating with Excommunicants entirely, — others did

* The writer of the foregoing Letters, dated at Perth, was one of the Parties in this Conversation, and the writer of this Account of it.

in a haffling sort of manner; while some went so far as to throw temptations in the way of some of their connections at Perth, and said to them that it was wrong to say that it was over intended to separate people from their daily connection, &c. &c.

Another thing, which he was afraid might appear hard to some, was, that they require all in their connection to give up with what are called Friendly Societies; for different reasons: in the first place a man may be laying up treasure on earth, by extending his business, &c. &c. but may satisfy his own mind by considering that his money is afloat, and is in daily danger of being lost; but here is an open confession of laying up treasure in the most secure manner, independent of any misfortunes: Secondly, That it not only bespeaks a total independence of the Brethren, but of God himself; and is much to be avoided, on account of loosening the ties of the Disciples of Jesus to one another; however amiable it may be in a worldly point of view.

The other point which he thought there might be some demurring upon, was the giving up with the Bible Societies. They consider that the Gospel declares in the strongest manner that The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations; and consider this as being very near a kin to having fel-

lowship in Religious matters with Infidels. None can shut their eyes to such an evident fulfilment of the Scriptures, as the great spread of the Gospel at present is, - yet the followers of the Ruler among the nations are not required to take any hand in this, further than their light shine forth unto the world, that others seeing their good works may be led to glorify God. The nations of the world have often been made subservient to "help the woman"; and much cause of thankfulness it ought to give those who love the Truth, to see the use they are made of to bring about the glorious appearance of the Great God, our Saviour; but joining with them in any religious work of conversion, however plausibly it may sound, appears to be contrary to what is laid down for their walk in this world.

These, as far as I can recollect, were the things which he said he feared might prove barriers in the way, as well as the great one; and he dwelt much upon the impossibility of our dwelling together in unity, as long as we did not even walk by the same Rule.

Perth, 27th Nov. 1814.

N. D. B. M.

There were some things mentioned in the course of conversation, in the view of an Union between the Churches, which, though they may have partly had their origin in a wish to find fault, and to justify themselves by condemning us; yet, as we must all feel we have given much cause to the Adversary to blaspheme, instead of putting the reproof away from us, we ought surely to consider seriously, what grounds we have given for the reproach. Although, far be it from us, while we have had such a warning before our eyes, to dare to confine or join the consciences of one another, upon points where the word of God does not expressly require unanimity; yet surely it ought to be as far from us, the opposite extreme, — by such contrariety of conduct, as to give any reason, to those who will always be on the watch, to say that we do not all walk by the same rule, — one doing what another would not do.

What have been mentioned as bars to the Union, besides difference of opinion upon the Second Absolution, Elder the Husband of one Wife, Faithful Children, &c. are, Slackness of Discipline, Slackness of meeting together; and an almost total giving up with

Exhorting to the Faith and good works of the Gospel; - also, Eating with Excommunicants, Friendly Societies, and Bible Societies, and going repeatedly to other places of worship in an evening, &c. It is impossible to recollect all that was urged upon these points; but as nearly as memory can go, it was to the following effect:

That our Slackness of Discipline appears greatly in a want of that carefulness and watchfulness the one over the other, which will ever distinguish those who are loving one another for the Truth's sake: - in a great neglect of our Lord's Law of Love, xviii. Matthew - "Go, and tell him his fault, &c." and even although that should be done, yet that we bear with our Brother, although not turning from the evil of his way, taking repeated confessions of "I repent," although too evident that he still continues in the same fault. On this head, it was wished that the charge could be proved by some instances, but this was avoided.

On the second charge of inattention to Exhortation, it was just mentioned that it was generally reported so, by any who had access to know; and that they could not persuade themselves, but that some such doctrine as was held at the time of the Separation of "Good works ought to be seen, not spoken about," was still held among us, when the fruits of this doctrine appear so plainly.

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As to Eating with Excommunicants, they knew several instances among us, where some eat without any scruple, and even throw obstructions in the way of some of their friends.

Friendly Societies. they said they well knew that several are engaged in, - as also, in Bible Societies.

I consider it my duty, as these things were mentioned to me in a particular manner, to state them to all my Brethren, and I do hope, - I fervently hope, that we shall one and all unite together in wiping off the reproach.

To say, that in a Church of Jesus Christ, every Individual will be precisely of the same mind upon every subject, surely betrays not only a great ignorance of the heart of man, but of the Scripture itself, for what a great example of forbearance have we in the first Church who had the inspired Apostles themselves to instruct them, in the forbearance exercised towards those who observed the Law of Moses; and in the same breath that the Apostle is calling upon the strong to bear with the weak, he likewise calls upon them, "with one mind and one mouth to glorify God." - But, at the same time the Scriptures do surely call upon those who profess to take up the Cross and follow the Lamb, - "to walk all by the same rule." Now, if any Brethren, here

fare, either in religious or worldly matters, is doing what another Brother would think unjustifiable by the word of God, forbearance is then undoubtedly carried too far;—nor can they, in this state, be said to be walking charitably, subject one to the other.

Upon the charge of lukewarmness in our profession, appearing both in our Assembling and Exhortation, we must all confess that they have too just ground to accuse us, (at least we may say so in Perth,) and it has been much spoken of and lamented among ourselves;—but, when it comes in this manner, what a deep matter of conviction ought it to be, when we consider that by this conduct, we have been publicly dishonouring that Good Name by which we profess to be called? Condemned, as I must stand, in my own conscience, as a deep transgressor, on this and every occasion where any thing like the fruits of the Gospel are called for, yet I would beseech,—I would earnestly intreat, all my dear Brethren, for that Truth's sake, upon which I hope we are firmly united, by Him who was not ashamed to call such as we are Brethren,—to remember the frequent admonitions of the Lord and his Apostles, "By their fruits shall ye know them;" and that these fruits, in the eyes of the world, instead of leading any to say of us, "That God is in them of a truth," have, on the contrary confirmed them in the mind, that it is a Vineyard forsaken by the Lord

of Hosts, by our "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, and exhorting one another daily, lest any be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin;" - forgetful of the awful warning with which the Apostle follows up this, "For, if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more offering for sin" And that we have not only caused the way of Truth to be evil spoken of, by this our evil conduct; but have confirmed many in adhering to the Traditions of the Fathers, and making the Commandments of God of none effect; - while by the opposite appearing, we might have made those "ashamed, who falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ."

The other matters, of Eating with Excommunicants, Friendly Societies, and Bible Societies, - it is much to be wished that the Church would take these into their serious consideration. There are differences of opinion upon them all. If all could see them in the same point of view, it would surely be very agreeable; but as this cannot be expected, it would be highly necessary that the minds of all the Brethren should be known upon them, that if any person find his conscience at liberty to do either or all of the three, he may know, whether, in so doing, he would be giving offence to any of his Brethren. The two last were not discussed here; but the first, and

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that of going to other places of worship, except upon a very rare and particular case, indeed, were almost unanimously reprobated; and those who could not enter altogether into that way of viewing them, yet cordially agreed to abstain from them, for the sake of the consciences of their Brethren.

I believe that it is a very general sentiment here, upon the Bible Societies, that although few have any connection with any of them, nor think that the Bible calls them to take part with them, but rather the opposite, yet that there are none, as far as I can understand, who are offended by others doing so; when they do not appear taking a very public or leading part in them. — But with the Friendly Societies it is quite different: there are several who look upon them as not only being a most direct denial of dependance upon the Giver of all Good for daily bread; but that it tends much to loosen the bonds of dependance one upon another, which ought ever to be a bond of Jesus' disciples. Those who see it in this point of view, certainly would be far from demanding, like our Old Friends, that those now concerned, should see their iniquity in taking part with these Societies, — yet they most assuredly would expect that they would give up with them, rather than hurt the mind of a Brother.

These are matters upon which it would be very agreeable to have the
of the Brethren in Dundee and Arbroath. It is surely a most un-
seemly thing for those who ought to be joined together in unity, to
inconsistently in their conduct; - and, as it has been a matter of
reproach against us, in this point of view, it ought to be the
particularly taken into our consideration; and I feel most con-
fident that there is not one amongst us but will be more anxious
than another to put to shame these accusations; and disap-
point the malice of the enemy, by proving to them that forbear-
ing one another in love, and having ourselves subject, not only
to the Word of God, but to the consciences of one another for
that word's sake, - that our good may not be evil spoken of,
is not inconsistent with the unity of the Gospel, but is one of
the strongest bonds of it. It may, and will expose us some-
times to self-denial; but who can talk of the self-denial
obedience of the Gospel, but must blush and be ashamed, when
seldom we have to exercise that self-denial; and when it does
occur, how easily we get it shifted off.

I am much afraid that any of my Brethren may think I
am at all wishing to dictate to them. I hope what I have now
written proceeds not from this motive; - nay, if I am not de-

ceiving myself, I would wish their guidance and assistance. They may judge how I felt, when these things were laid to our charge, and I could not contradict them, — on the contrary felt that none deserved the reproof more than myself.

We have very great cause to fear that the blood of the Church has seen meet to exercise upon us that judgment threatened and often executed upon his people of old, making Our heaven brass, and our earth iron; — Shutting up heaven that there be no rain, upon that ground, which has been often rained upon, and hath brought forth nothing but briars and thorns. While he hath done so, he hath left it upon record for those in this situation, — "If they pray towards his Holy Temple, and confess his Name, and turn from their sin, when he afflicts them, then he will hear in heaven, and forgive their sin, and teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon the Land;" and the Lord shall open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing.

That the Good news, and glad tidings proclaimed in the Gospel, through the death and resurrection of the Lord of Glory, may be our only ground of assurance of Hope, in the last hour of our lives, as simply as when believed at the

first, is the prayer of
 your affectionate Brother,
 (Signed) D. Morrison, Junr

Copy of a Letter sent from — Perth, to — Leith

Dear Sir,

Perth, — June 1815

When I last wrote you, I did not think I would be called upon again to trouble you, as I felt that I had already trespassed too much upon your patience. Indeed it appeared that we differed so widely upon some subjects, that it would not be at all necessary to call your attention again to the subject, either of the once looked for Union, or now ascertained Differences.

When it was discovered that these differences, especially upon the Second Absolution, were so very strong, I could not but consider it better not to enter at all upon the Original Differences: and rather to rest it upon the present differences in practice, where there is less room for misrepresentation and reasoning. But I have been in a manner obliged to depart from this determination by one of your Friends sending me a copy of the answer sent by the Church of Nottingham to the circular ^{Letter} of the Church of Perth at the time of the Separation, and by his calling it, even now

a proper answer. On perusing ⁵¹ it, I feel it my duty to state to you, that had I seen it before, at least, had I known that you still ad-hered to the Doctrine contained in it, I would have thought it wholly unnecessary entering into any Correspondence, as it contains a Doctrine of Evidences, which has been and is considered by the Church of Perth and those in connection it, as having no foundation in the Word of God, but being built upon the Corruption of certain passages, in direct opposition to the whole tenor of the Scriptures; and tending greatly to overthrow all the rest of the Doctrine preached by Glas and Sandeman.

It would be idle in me to attempt to take up your time with entering into a particular consideration of these distressing Differences, upon both sides of which too much perhaps has already been said; but in justice to my friends and to myself I feel it strongly my duty to state, that we never could give our assent to such Doctrine as I shall presently quote from that Letter; (as you may perhaps never have seen it,) - And further, that it was only when we supposed that your Friends would be willing to grant that their side as well as ours, had gone too far at the time of the Separation, that we had any hopes of an Union taking place; and it was thus I always saw the ne-

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cessity of concession on both sides.

Extract of a Letter from Nottingham, &c

"But the minds of the Brethren must surely be strangely per-
verted, to reject, on that account, the possibility of the Assurance
of Hope being attained to, because that possibility is expressly
represented and urged in the Scriptures, as a strong induce-
ment to the believers of the Gospel, to persevere in a self-denied
attachment to the saving truth, obedience to the Lord's commands,
and patient suffering for his sake. We are unable to affix any
correct and simple meaning to the words of Jesus Christ, to which we
have referred, if an increased, or increase and manifestation
or enjoyment" (How difficult it is to define this assurance! - Is
there no reasoning here?) "is not promised in connection with,
and as the effects of keeping his commands; and if the Believers
of the Gospel are not in this way to prove that they are his friends.
What language can convey a more obvious sense than the words
of John - We know that we have passed from death to life, because
we love the Brethren? and of Paul - The Spirit itself beareth
witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God? With
which his own experience perfectly accords, as stated to the
Churches of Galatia, - Who loved me and gave himself for me!

"The first and grand inducement to obedience, to keep the command-
 "ments of Christ, is the perception of the love of God, or the love of Christ
 "in laying down his life for his enemies;— but, as a farther inducement
 "to persevere in keeping his commandments, the Lord promises in this
 "way to manifest himself to his people, that He and the Father will
 "love them, and make his abode with them, which we consider the
 "same as the Apostle styles The love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost,

With the "Precepts to the Churches," which you pointed at formerly
 I most fully and cordially agree:— with the Doctrine I have transcribed
 above, I could not feel happy. — The difference then appears shortly
 to be this, that instead of calling the perception of the love of Christ
 the principal inducement to keep the commands of God, in connec-
 tion with another additional experimental inducement, those with
 whom I have the undeserved honour to be connected, consider
 the wonderful display of the Riches of the Glory of the Grace of
 our Lord Jesus Christ, as contained in the Scriptures, (the per-
 ception of which is brought to the mind of the guilty by the
 Holy Ghost,) to be the only and sole inducement to keep the com-
 mands of God, — to take up the Cross and follow the Lamb, — to per-
 sever in self denied obedience and love to his Name, and to his Name.

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shen for his sake, with the joyful full assurance of hope at
ends set before them when mortality shall be swallowed up in life
— and that the Spirit of God witnesses in the same manner to the
oldest professor of the faith as when he first was taught to call
Jesus Lord: — "Be ashamed and confounded for all your ways;" — know-
ing by convincing of sin, but making alive by pointing to the
Lamb of God, who bore away the sins of the world.

With regard to the Circular from Perth which gave rise to the
Letter just mentioned, I can say nothing, as I never had an op-
portunity of seeing it. Those who had any hand in the Separation
were always willing to confess that much pride and party spirit
had been manifested in the length matters were at that time
carried: but, when such a Letter, as the foregoing quotation
was taken from, is at this day called proper and insisted upon,
it shews that the Perth Church had too good ground for separa-
rating from its sister Churches; and that when I called these
Differences misunderstandings, I was only displaying my
own ignorance.

I am, &c.

Arbroath, 4th Feby 1815.

The letters written in 1812, referred to by the foregoing correspondents, were four in number. They took their rise from a letter, addressed to a member of the Church at Perth, in consequence of his Brethren being informed that he had given up with their connection, and had taken part with the Church at Edinr. being perused by a member of the Church at Edinr. residing at Leith, who approved of the Doctrine it contained, and addressed himself accordingly to the writer of that Letter at Perth. The stile in which he wrote merited an answer, at the same time it called for some particular notice being taken of the cause of difference between the Churches. This was replied to from Leith in a stile of bitterness, which produced the following concluding one from Perth.

Perth,

1812

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 17th came to hand in due course. Its contents indeed surprise me. If I was so happy as to express myself in my Letter to Mr J. Peat, upon the Doctrine which the Scriptures hold forth for the hope of guilty man, so as to attract your attention as one professing regard to that Doctrine, and draw forth your assent to what I said, as Scriptural and congenial to your mind,

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what was my surprise, on finding that, while I endeavoured to
be more explicit as to what was really scriptural and what was
not, you immediately expressed your displeasure, and that
without attempting to correct what I said by the Scriptures.
I have, since receiving yours, read over a copy of what I sent
to you, and I do not think it disagrees in any way from that which
I sent to Mr Peat; and I could not account for your being pleas-
ed with the one and displeas'd with the other, did there not
appear, throughout your Letter so very great an anxiety to
vindicate the Traditions of the Fathers: such I hold, where-
ever I read or hear of any thing, under whatever name, by
which man can attain to any farther assurance of Faith or
of Hope than what the knowledge of the Truth imparts. At
the same time, as the path of the Just shines more and more,
— as the many folds of the Grace of God are opened to
man's view, — so he will rejoice more and more in the
hope of the perfect day.

It appears to you that I and my Brethren are holding by
what you call Mr James Morison's Statement, which you
say "occasioned the melancholy separation." — Here, Sir,

I would beg to put you right: — the Separation took place ^{5th} long before the Statement was published. It took place in consequence of many passages of Scripture having been farther opened up and explained (no matter by whom) than they had been by Mr Glas and Mr Sandeman, whose views of them were inconsistent with the Truth which they boldly maintained: — and of course, in consequence of adherence to the Doctrine maintained in the Extract from Mr Buchanan's Letter, which I gave you in my last; — excepting which, as I wished to keep human authority out of our Correspondence, there is not another word in my Letter copied from the writings of men. — It seems, however, I have erred, (and that too by not copying the falsacious Statement;) or you very uncharitably put a construction upon my words which they will not bear: — Did I or my Brethren build our hope upon our assurance of believing, we might without hesitation salute those who hold by the Doctrine of the forementioned Extract. The Truth itself, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, is the solid ground of hope; yet no man can hope in it or for what is connected with it, unless he believe it.

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I know no Scripture that promises the Holy Spirit to men to witness with their Spirits that they are the children of God: — though the words are to be found in Rom. viii. 16. I cannot read them as a promise, but as expressing what had taken place in the Gentiles receiving the Spirit of adoption, ver. 15. Thus I understand the words, and in the same sense many similar passages; — but I forbear noticing them particularly; for, it is long since it was said, "Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?" — the Spirit that dictated which is most abundantly displayed in Mr Young's Letters. And here, Sir, allow me to say, that, whether Mr Young has (as you alledge) given a fair and just view of the controversy is to me of little moment, compared with What Doctrine does he contend for? — If you think what he contends for agreeable to the word of God, there need be no more correspondence between you and I on this head, for I decidedly differ. — But if you or any one else should be disposed to continue or renew this correspondence, I beg that the characters and writings of men may be entirely excluded, — that it may have respect solely to the faith of the Gospel, as the confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. — God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish but have eternal life. In this truth all who believe it rejoice in hope of the glory of God, without respect to works of any kind. At same time, those who are united in the one faith and one hope of the Gospel, cannot but enjoy the comforts of love (deeds of love to one another,) and fellowship of the Spirit, comforting one another from the words of the Spirit, testifying of the anointing of the Head and all the members. Psalm cxxxiii.

Before I conclude, however, I cannot help saying that you and I have much need to beware of a spirit, which is strongly breathed in both your Letters, of blaming others to clear ourselves. Those who were once, perhaps too highly, esteemed in the Church of Perth, were separated from it. To their own master they stand or fall. Let us judge ourselves: Have we learned what we contend for from the Bible? or by the precepts of men? — Do we search the Scriptures daily, whether these things are so? — Here we shall have so much cause of self-condemnation, (whether the numbers on our side be great or small,) that we may well go out one by one. Happy will it be for us, if this is not the case with us at last;

but that, (although we fain would fill our bellies with the husks which the swine eat,) our attention may be drawn to the abundance of bread in our Father's house, - to the unmixed milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.

If I have written any way unbecoming the subject, I beg you will forgive; and am,

Dear Sir,

With much respect,

Yours,

Pat. Cochran