

religion, and if he cannot co-operate conscientiously with magistrates who are not religious professors, his only alternative is to retire from office. As was well remarked by our first Committee:—"It is a mistake to suppose that the influence of religion cannot be felt in a nation unless the headship of Christ, and the Bible, be enacted by authority. Where christianity has leavened the masses, by its sublime principles, the administration of civil affairs will be influenced by them, and that in a way which can offend the conscience of no man, and encroach on no man's liberty or rights." It is the force of public opinion in a country that must establish its laws; and thus, the more a country is christianized, the more will its laws be found to correspond with the tenor of God's holy word.

In regard to Mr. Ure's third particular, that the word of God imposes new duties upon nations, we hold it to be a gratuitous assertion, founded on the mistaken view, already referred to, which has been adopted by the Free Church, of what is meant in scripture by Christ's being King of Nations. But, perhaps in speaking of new duties there is only between us a difference in words. Both Churches hold that the magistrate's duties are all civil. If so, what new duties do the scriptures impose? Mr. Ure does not specify, but he instances legislation respecting the Sabbath. But this cannot be for the sanctification of the Sabbath, for that is a spiritual duty, to which the Magistrate is incompetent. It is only to preserve that outward order which is necessary to enable the citizens to follow their spiritual duties without molestation. This is no new duty but belongs to the same class with the preservation of outward order on every other necessary occasion. As long as the Free Church holds with us that the Magistrate's duties are all civil, it seems to be mere trifling to speak of new duties. There may be a greater variety of the same class of duties, but there is no new class. As well might we say, that new duties are imposed on the Magistrate, since Railway Cars have been set in motion, or Steamboat navigation employed. Our brethren may be assured, however, that we have as much freedom as themselves in petitioning Parliament for the formation or enforcement of salutary laws, for external order on Sabbath, and for all other such matters which affect the moral and religious interests of the community. As is well known to all who are acquainted with the history of the United Presbyterian Church, it has been in the habit for generations of approaching the civil government in regard to matters of public interest.

We have extended this paper too far, and cannot now touch on some minor points in Mr. Ure's letter. We are, however, afraid that the Free Church are still wedded to the Establishment Principle: for they forget that if in any one thing the Civil Magistrate is allowed to give law to the Church, or to decide as to what is the true religion, it is mixing with his duties what does not belong to them, and thus leaving the line of demarcation between the Church and the world undefined, and endangering the interests of religion, and the purity of the Church,—so that the Magistrate once stepping over the line of his civil duty, may proceed to any extremity, either in patronizing or persecuting the Redeemer's Church. On this subject we would conclude in the words of Professor Esson, who was far in advance of his Church in enlightened scriptural sentiment:—"Suppose at this day, that all the States and Governments of the world were 'to take order, that the truth of God, (as understood and held by them severally,) be kept pure and entire,' is it doubtful what would be the

consequence? Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mahomedanism, Popery, Erastianism, Puseyism, would certainly be mighty gainers; but let the advocates of State-connexion themselves say, what true religion would reap, as the fruits of this principle, reduced to immediate and universal practice. I suppose, on the other hand, that if the principle of the non-interference of the Magistrate with religion, were universally acted upon, so that he should have nothing to do with the consciences of his subjects, except to secure to them perfect freedom, and to give full scope to truth and right to run and have free course and be glorified, then would China, Japan, India, and all Pagan, Mahomedan, and Popish nations, be opened to the beneficent influences of knowledge, science, and civilization, and above all to the light of the glorious Gospel. Then 'many would run to and fro, and knowledge would increase,'—the heralds of the cross would find everywhere a wide and effectual door opened to them,—a free and abundant entrance would be secured for truth, human and Divine,—'Magna est veritas et prevalebit.' If practice and experience be the best test of truth, is it questionable to which of those principles (the Establishment or the Voluntary) the preference is to be given? Enough we deem, perhaps our readers will deem more than enough, has been already advanced, to enable the candid, unbiassed, intelligent Christian to judge for himself, how far the views of our Voluntary brethren, have been justly appreciated, or fairly represented."

If any thing in the observations we have made appear disrespectful to Mr. Ure, or his Church, it is unintentional, and we are quite unconscious of it. We should be sorry were this the case, and would seek their forgiveness, especially as we forgive great wrongs committed by them, and wish always to reward evil with good. Some of us may not live to see it; but we are persuaded that our Churches will yet be one. Our successors, if not ourselves, and without compromise on either side, "will become one stick in the Lord's hand." We still proffer to them entire forbearance as to existing differences, whether real or supposed, and bid them reciprocate. We still believe that that is the best, the easiest, the only step to union. I am, &c., W. R. A.

In connection with the preceding, it is highly satisfactory to find that meetings are being held in various parts of Canada, calling the attention of both denominations to the great importance of securing a speedy consummation of the union contemplated. This course is highly commendable—a better could not be adopted: let these local meetings only become sufficiently numerous and bring their influence to bear on the two synods in the proper manner, and the incorporation of the Free and U. P. Presbyterians of Canada will soon be a matter of history. As indicative of the nature and tendency of these meetings, much pleasure is experienced in presenting

THE LONDON CIRCULAR.

LONDON, 26th March, 1855.

This day, by previous arrangement and public intimation, a meeting was held in the United Presbyterian Church, English Settlement, London, composed of the Rev. Lachlan McPherson, and elders and members of the Free Church Congregations of Williams and Lobo, under his pastoral inspection; and the Rev. James Skinner, and elders and members of the United Presbyterian Congregations of English Settlement and Proof Line, London, under his Pastoral care.

After public worship, conducted by the Rev. M