

but willingly, whilst with those who are not christians, it is not willingly, but by constraint. Nations and rulers, so far as the individuals composing them are under the influence of grace, will acknowledge subjection to Christ, as the Church's King, and honour him as such, in discharging all their duties. But all in the body politic who are not under gracious influence, being still the Saviour's enemies, are under Him as King of nations, to be overruled and constrained by Him, and made subservient to whatever purpose He appoints. When our Free Church brethren speak of positive service being required from nations, or evil rulers, as such, to Christ, we must beg to differ from them, at least till that blessed period, when "the people shall be all righteous." For no such service is required, or could be accepted, from men in an irregenerate state: or, if attempted, it would be formal, not real, and an act of gross presumption and hypocrisy. Besides, it would be a blinding of Church and State matters, and thus the very Establishment principle, which we do not seek our brethren to renounce, but which they must forbear with us in meeting with our unqualified condemnation. God may make even heathen rulers unwilling or unknowing instruments of service to Him, as in the cases of Pharaoh and Cyrus: but, such service can never be true and acceptable obedience, and, therefore, never the obedience which the gospel requires of believers to Christ their King. Nations and rulers, as such, do not stand, as Mr. Ure supposes, in the same moral relation to Christ, as the law of nature places them in to God. For, the moral relation to Christ is economical, and thus, can only extend to those with whom He is graciously pleased to establish His everlasting covenant. Such, only, are Christ's willing and joyful subjects and servants, as King of the Church. All others are under Christ, as King of nations, i.e., of the heathen, or, in general, of unbelievers. But it is in their case, the government, not of willing obedience, but of involuntary subordination. Christ rules over His Church, and the people of Zion are joyful in their King. He rules also in the midst of His enemies.

From this, it will appear, that we entertain a somewhat different idea of the Headship of Christ, and His mediatorial kingdom from our brethren. Ours, we humbly think, is more evangelical than theirs. They seem to lean to the Armenian school. Our view, is what their own Professor Esson would call, "the Calvinistic statement," which our brethren should "ponder well." They think that the distinction between Christ's headship over the nations, and His headship over the Church, corresponds "not to the distinction between the Church and the World, but to the distinction between what is peculiar to the Church, and what is not peculiar. In other words, the headship of Christ over the nations implies that all men, whether members, or not members of the Church, are bound in every secular relation, and, especially as members of civil society, and organized under civil government, to honour and serve Him as King." Now, making all due allowance for our brethren holding this view, from their having so recently come out of an Established Church, and especially, out of one where the moderate, or Arminian party, prevailed till very lately, we beg to say, that to us there seems to be no foundation for this view in the scriptures, or even in their own standards. It is a mere figment; and, as our first Committee say, "of comparatively late origin, and brought into prominence for the purpose of sanctioning certain other acts which have proved very disastrous to the Christian Church." The Establishment principle, which Mr. Ure is willing to make a matter of for-

bearance, is imbedded in it, and founded on it. By this theory of our brethren, a magistrate is under Christ as King of the Church, when engaged in the ordinances of religious worship, but when in the civil court, and transacting civil business, he is under Christ, as King of nations. On reflection, they will surely see that this is very absurd. They affirm that Christ is King of nations, geographically considered, or, which is the same thing, in civil matters. Thus, like old King James, (as in the dedication of our authorized translation of the Scriptures,) our Saviour, who expressly says that His kingdom is not of this world, is made King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, as well as of all other nations of the earth. We are persuaded our brethren do not really mean this, although they have been heard to say it. Our view, on the contrary, is, that the christian magistrate, and all christians, are under Christ exclusively as King of the Church, and that in all duties, whether sacred or secular. Our brethren consider the distinction between Christ's being King of the Church and King of nations, as intended to separate into classes civil duties and devotional duties. We cannot adopt this view: but hold, that Christ is King of the Church, to regulate and bless His people, whether rulers or ruled, in their duties of every kind: and, we consider His being King of nations as expressive of His control over all persons and things besides, for the good of His Church. It has no reference whatever to nations and rulers as such, but, refers entirely to those who are without the range of the Christian Church. This, we apprehended, is the orthodox, scriptural doctrine: and it is the doctrine of the standards, for, in our Shorter Catechism we read, that "Christ executeth the office of a King in subduing us unto Himself, in ruling and defending us," that is, those who are destined to be, or have already become, members of His Church: "and in restraining and conquering all His, and our enemies," that is, not only Satan and his hosts, but the rejectors of salvation, who are in scripture language, called, the heathen, or the nations.*

In reference to civil society, we may further remark, that, as all are not christians of whom it is composed: and as, alas! in general, it is only a minority that can be considered christians, we would say, that whilst every christian magistrate is, in his official capacity, to act as a christian, he is only bound for himself; and although, doubtless, obligations lie on those who are not professors, to embrace christianity, and to act for Christ, yet, till they believe for their own salvation, they neither can, nor are required, to yield any obedience to Christ:—"No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Besides, as the service of Christ must not be performed hypocritically, which would render it null and void, all that can be expected is, that the magistrate enforce the laws of the land on such principles as are established as just and right. His being no christian,—as our Confession allows (see chap. xxiii. sec. 4.)—does not disqualify him from holding the office, or discharging externally, the duties which the office involves. The christian magistrate, however, serves Christ, in his official capacity. But, whilst he is at liberty to recommend his christian principles, and should act upon them himself, he cannot force them upon others. In a nation not christianized, should a christian be in office as a magistrate, he will be influenced by his

* In the expression in Scripture "O King of nations," (Jer. x. 7.) and many others, the word "nations," as all Hebrew and Greek scholars know, is simply, Gentiles, or heathen, in contradistinction from the Jews, that is, from those who are not included in the Church of God.