

The following reply drawn up by the Committee on Union was adopted by Synod as sufficient to meet all these brethren's objections, viz:—

Reply to reasons of dissent.

The Committee on Union having considered the articles of dissent signed by Messrs. Forrie and Jack, and referred by Synod to this Committee, answer as follows.

1st. It is true that the articles of Union which are advantageously brief, but not vague in the sense of not being clear do not define the duties of the Civil Magistrate, but they obviously devolve on him all duties set forth in the Westminster Standards, it being understood that these are not to be construed as approving persecuting or intolerant principles. In like manner the Civil Magistrate is shut out from all interference with the spiritual and ecclesiastical liberties of the Church by the assertion in said Standards of a government for the Church distinct from that of the Civil Magistrate and in the said articles of Union by the assertion of Ecclesiastical Supremacy of the Church, such supremacy clearly involving the incompetency of an appeal from the decisions of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Court to any other tribunal whatever, and the making of such appeals being the most direct and practical mode of denying the Church's Supremacy in spiritual things. It is true that in some cases the law of the land might sustain such appeals by doing violence to the Constitution of the Church, but the Synod possesses no other means of preventing that result than by asserting its own supremacy. It is further to be borne in mind that little danger is to be apprehended from this quarter, the complicated relations of patronage and Church and State in Scotland alone having suggested a different construction of the Westminster Standards.

2nd. The Synod having, as already shewn, asserted its independence and supremacy. A supremacy and independence derived only from the Lord Jesus Christ as the only King and Head of the Church, it is evident that no person can intelligently subscribe such articles without recognizing such Headship. In the amendment moved by the brethren who have signed the reasons of dissent, it seems to be admitted that in the case of a Union formed between persons far advanced in Christian grace the articles of Union would be sufficient, and it is evident that this Synod cannot assume the want of such an amount of Christian grace on the part of its own members as would disqualify them for entering such Union, nor can it with any due degree of Christian charity make

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