

were largely in its favor. Various reasons may be assigned for this. The very great distance from the mother country. The great length of time which necessarily elapsed before a vacancy could be supplied, and occasionally the very indifferent material which found its way to the missionary or ministerial field. Added to this was the absence of effective control or authority by the parent Church in consequence of its great distance. These and other reasons were no doubt cogent and all but irresistible in the eyes of many of our Presbyterian brethren in Australia, and to a large extent justified them in the step they have taken. We see however that even in Australia, where to some extent it was a measure of necessity that it works far from smoothly—that there is a great and natural longing after real connection in every sense with one or other of the Home Churches, that there are questions of principle and conscience which cannot be merged or held in abeyance, without creating confusion, contradiction and serious injury to vital religion. Mr. Miller is a staunch Free Churchman, and he states his case from a Free Church point of view, with a clearness and cogency which will not be easily answered, and will if we mistake not, among so intelligent and thinking a people as the Scotch, and above all among such sticklers for distinctive rights and principles as the Free Church people of Scotland; create an amount of sympathy which will make itself felt at next General Assembly.

A public meeting, to hear Mr. Miller on the state of the Free Church in Australia, was held in the Free Middle Church on Wednesday night—Provost Pollock in the chair. We observed on the platform the Rev. Gilbert Stewart, Barrhead; the Rev. Messrs. Thomson, Frazer, and Dixon; M. Muir, Esq., Greenhill; James Young, Esq., of Gallowhill; James Dalziel, Esq.; W. Muir Esq.; A. R. Pollock, Esq.; Captain McKean, &c. &c. There was a large and respectable attendance.

The Chairman, in introducing the subject, expressed his deep interest in Mr. Miller and his brethren.

Mr. Miller said he intended to hold a series of meetings to explain the state of the Free Church in Australia, and he felt that he had been well advised in commencing at Paisley. Many of those now associated with him in the defence of Free Church principles belonged to Paisley. William Montgomerie Bell, for instance, was well known here and in the colony as a man whose name was a

guarantee for all that is generous, upright, and honourable. He felt there might be a prejudice against him in standing up against union. There was a charm about the mere word to some minds. There was a general feeling now in Scotland in favour of unions engendered in the mind, he feared, by a logical process similar to that by which David Hume contrived to raise a prejudice against the miracles of Christ. They did not discriminate. Because some unions were good and to be promoted, people were ready to conclude this one in Australia must be so. He thought he could give good reason for opposing it. The most satisfactory way in which he could do this would be to give a short history of the Free Church in Australia. He then stated the origin and progress of the Free Church. He quoted documents, from which it appeared that the home Church had urged the Free Church party in Australia to separate from the Synod, which had resolved to stand in the same relation to both Churches. Dr. Welsh had said, that to occupy this neutral position would be a silent but significant surrender of those noble principles which had been the life and glory of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. After having separated, he and his brethren felt it hard now to be told that they must renounce their former conscientious convictions, and just resume the position they had abandoned. He gave a history of the negotiations for union, which ended in the expulsion of five ministers, with their elders, from the Synod, simply because they would not consent to enter into a body which was to stand in the same relation to both churches at home. From letters received yesterday, he observed that the expulsion was at last rescinded, and he honoured Dr. Cairns for doing it. He should have done it two years ago, and prevented great injury. It came now too late. He regretted he could not enter into the union because of the defective character of the basis on which it has now been consummated. The basis of union when the Assembly of 1855 had approved, had been abandoned, and a new one substituted, which left every one free to interpret the standards in any way he pleased. It was no security against Erastianism that they held the Confession; for the Establishment did that. But just as the Papists held the Bible, they interpreted it by their own traditions, and made it of none effect, so the Moderates interpreted the Confession by Lord Aberdeen's Bill. Then, as to the duty of the civil magistrate, by the first basis, the doctrine of the Church was, that he had to do with religion; but according to the new one, on this point every one took his own view, so that the Church might become Erastian or Voluntary, and, according to their articles, no Free Churchman could find fault. The first basis guarded the standards against both an Erastian and a Voluntary interpretation, and also secured the Church against corres-