

further, the voluntary principle, besides not being exhausted by the cases of the "outed" Free Churchmen, does not comprise merely the question of the payment of the clergy—it goes deep into many more important questions affecting the intended unionists in both their ecclesiastical and their civil capacities. It will meet them at their first step, and constantly come in between them as a wall of separation, if they still are, as they profess, of two minds.

Take the question of National Education, placed prominently in the bases of union, and which we scarcely know whether to treat as one of those points on which the unionists conceal their discord, or one of those on which one of the parties is preparing to sacrifice its principles. On this subject the resolutions tell us that in the event of union between the two Churches, "it is not necessary that any fixed principle should be laid down as to the power and province of the State." But though we are told it is not necessary to believe it, nor even possible to understand it. View the case even from the low ground of "practicability." Here are already the F. C. schools taking the State money, and the U. P. schools refusing it, both on principle. Supposing that, when the two bodies are blended, a certain congregation having F. C. principles on this subject, happens to call a pastor having U. P. principles, or *vice versa*, what is to be done? Is the new minister to follow the practice of his predecessor and forget his own principles? And how avoid or settle the differences in such matters between the congregation and the minister, and between the congregation and itself? When two sets of men profess opposite opinions as to what is religiously lawful and unlawful in a matter in which they cannot avoid acting upon the one view or the other, there can be no hope of their acting together save on the assumption that one of the two sets is insincere. The same question, too, must be met out of Church, so to speak. It is a great national question, constantly under discussion, and more and more pressing for adjustment—and here is a proposal that two bodies claiming to comprise two-thirds of at least the church-going population of Scotland should deal with it upon "no fixed principle."

But the chief, or at least the most obvious and most dangerous abdication of principle proposed in the bases of union, is that attempted in connection with the Sunday question. It is proposed to declare that the unionists, holding the "perpetual obligation" of the Fourth Commandment, "concur in regarding it as the duty and province of a Christian Legislature to enact such laws as are necessary" for Sabbath preservation. Intending to return to this part of the resolutions, we would here only point out that the question it raises is not merely that of the proper observance of the Day of Rest, and the best means of securing it, but of the question whether the fact of a certain Scriptural command being in the opinion of certain people perpetually obligatory, forms a warrant for the Legislature enforcing that view upon the

community at large. Laying the principle of voluntarism aside—as it would appear we might as well do at once—the question comes, if the Legislature may be called on to enforce one of the Scriptural commands merely because it is held to be a command, why not secularly enforce them all? A moment's reflection should show that this is a question of which no man can see an end, and of which we had better avoid a beginning.

When there are such radical differences not merely about theories, but affecting daily and inevitable practice—it may very well be doubted if union would promote peace, or even its semblance. To unite is not necessarily to agree, and on the contrary, often gives added bitterness, because increased opportunity to the disagreement. It may be questioned whether there is not more peace between Dr John Brown and Dr Caudlish, who are separate, than between Dr. Hanna and Dr. Candlish, who are "united." Yet Dr. Candlish does not differ from Dr. Hanna one tithe so much as he does from Dr. Brown. In the Presbyterian system, we fear, the best road to any "union" that can be attained among those that differ is something in the way of amicable separation. The Episcopalian plan for making peace is to unite all Episcopalians together but deny them the means of outvoting and expelling one another. The Presbyterian plan, or the result contrary to plan, has been to permit or encourage any Presbyterians who differed from any other Presbyterians to take themselves off and as the precursor said when he started in opposition to the minister, "set up a sma' doin' o' their ain." Experience has proved that this is the only safe or practicable plan in a Church of Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies—overtures, libels, and simple probations; and nothing but wars and fightings is ever likely to come of trying to make Presbyterian people walk arm-in-arm further than they are quite agreed.

FREE PRESBYTERY OF GLASGOW.

The Proposed Union between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches.

A special meeting of this Presbytery was held in Glasgow yesterday at noon—Mr Isdale, Moderator—in connection with an overture of which Professor Gibson had given notice on this subject.

The overture he had to propose was:—"That whereas certain resolutions have been for some time privately circulated in all parts of the country, and now published in the newspapers, bearing the following title:—Contemplated union between the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church," and signed by about seventy lay members' and elders of the Free Church of Scotland:

"Whereas the said resolutions propound certain views, either as a basis of union or as preparatory to it founded on a defective exhibition of the truths contained in the standards of this Church, which are the solemnly

professed and subscribed confession of the faith of all the office bearers, ministers, elders and deacons of this Church:

"Whereas, such views of union are further pronounced in the said resolutions on the principle of 'forbearance' on points for which the Church has always faithfully contended in times past, and still professes herself specially bound to exhibit and uphold:

"Whereas, such extra-judicial attempts at promoting union by private individuals are not only irregular, but fitted to obscure and misrepresent the true position and testimony of this Church before the world, to sow jealousy and disunion between elders and members, and ministers of the same, and tend rather to retard than promote true and scriptural union among Presbyterians in Scotland:

"And whereas, this Presbytery most earnestly longs for the time when the Presbyterian bodies in Scotland may see eye to eye, and is most desirous to see the union of all who hold the doctrines contained in the formularies of this Church, and own her principles of government and discipline, they deprecate all attempts at union which are not founded on the maintenance, in their full integrity, of her standards of doctrine, discipline and government:

"The Free Presbytery of Glasgow, therefore, most anxiously desirous to promote the cause of union in the truth and love of the Gospel and disclaiming all intention or desire of fettering the freedom of judgment and opinion in her own office-bearers and members, humbly overture the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland that, while cordially encouraging all Scriptural and constitutional means for the promotion of such union, they shall take such steps as in their wisdom may seem meet to discourage and prevent all such plans of union as are founded on any other basis than the full recognition, in their integrity, of the standards of this Church."

After reading the overture, he denied that those who went along with him in this matter were actuated by any base, worldly, selfish, interested, and secular motives, as had been attributed to them, and that God in his providence had placed him in a position in which he did not need to be very anxious about what such parties pointed to,—the loaves and fishes. He then read some passages from the Word of God to prove that they must first secure adherence to truth before they could expect love and union; and went over the proposed resolutions for union *seriatim*, contending that they did not harmonize with each other,—that although at the commencement of them it was stated that they adhered to the same doctrine and discipline, yet qualifications had to be introduced at the close, in consequence of the differences and diversities that existed. He then pointed out the difference which existed between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian on the Voluntary question,—the right of the civil Magistrate to interfere in the province of religion—and that the sixth resolution was apt