

the leaders of the Scottish movement from prejudicing their cause. The theory, *as such*, can do no harm, except to those who hold it, but we unfeignedly regret the tendency which its laboured advocacy must necessarily have, to limit the practical expression of that sympathy, which the abettors of voluntary Christianity have to so large an extent manifested in relation to the movements of the Seceders. We sincerely trust that the experience of a few years, and the results of calm investigation on the part of these good men, will lead them to abandon the untenable position which they 'are so anxious to occupy—and to admit, what with others, has long been an axiom—that state *pay* is incompatible with exemption from state control.

#### THE FREE CHURCH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, OCT. 17.—At 11 a. m., the second General Assembly of the Free Protestant Church of Scotland met in Glasgow. The place of meeting was the City Hall. The attendance of ministers and elders was very large. Among those deputed to attend from distant churches, the Rev. Caesar Malan, of Geneva, attracted much attention. The Marquis of Breadalbane and the Hon. Fox Maule were present, and were warmly received on their entrance. Dr. Chalmers took his seat in the Moderator's chair, and subsequently Sheriff Monteith, Sheriff Spiers, Sir David Brewster, Sir Andrew Agnew, and other members, took their seats on the platform. The doctor's discourse was a very eloquent one. The roll of the Assembly was then called over, and a number of new commissions were given in. On the motion of Dr. Chalmers, seconded by Dr. McFarlan, of Greenock, Dr. Thomas Brown, of Glasgow, was unanimously elected Moderator. On his appearing on the platform the whole of the members rose and received him standing. The thanks of the meeting were voted to Dr. Chalmers, who was then requested to print his sermon, which he consented to do.

At a subsequent meeting, Dr. CHALMERS read with great animation the addresses from the Eastern Reformed Presbyterian Synod, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, and the Board of Congregational Ministers in and about the cities of London and Westminster. I have confined, he continued, my reading to these three, but I received one yesterday from what I consider a very important body of Evangelical Christians in England, who claim the honour of descent from, and are the representatives of, the old Nonconformists. It won't cost more than half a minute to read their address. Dr. C. then read the Resolutions of the Thirteenth General Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and said, the more we meet together, and see eye to eye, we will be quite astonished with the discovery, that if not thoroughly, at least substantially we are at one with each other. They tell us with all frankness and fidelity that they are Voluntaries, and they hope that in good time we,

in the fullest, and highest sense of the term will become Voluntaries also. Now, in the capacity of your Moderator, receiving many of these communications three or four months ago, I thought it not fair to refer them for their answer to the meeting of Assembly in October, and therefore thought it was quite right, in point of civility, that I should acknowledge the receipt of these various communications; and certainly in my replies to these communications I did not blink even this question; and I thought the least return I could make for the fidelity and frankness with which they stated their point of difference, was to reply with equal frankness back again. (Laughter and cheers.) With the permission of the Assembly I will just read two of these answers. This is the reply to the very interesting and most cordial communication from the ministers, office-bearers and members of the Congregational Church, with other friends of religious freedom and Christian truth, in the county of Sussex. It is a very pleasant address, signed by—I have not had time to count the names—(laughter)—but I believe some of the youngsters of my family tried a more wholesale method of arriving at a probable estimate of the amount of support thus given to the Free Church; instead of numbering they measured it, and found it about seventeen yards long. (Loud laughter and cheers.) There is just one expression, full of cordiality at the same time, with a frank and most proper statement of our difference on the subject of the Voluntary principle, the expression I laid hold of was this—"If your new organization be not perfect, the proceedings constitute a glorious advance in the direction of the entire freedom of the Church's spiritual privileges from the fetters of State captivity." The reverend Doctor here read his reply, and added, the phrase, State captivity was explained; they stated that previously to that they meant to put in Erastian control; but Erastian is not a term very well understood in England, and therefore they put in this as more adapted to the understandings of Englishmen. (Laughter.) Part of the Rev. Doctor's reply was in the following terms.—"We could have remained in connexion with the State had it only implied a remuneration for our labours in giving a Christian education to the people of Scotland; but when it was made, as it had been for the first time since the Revolution settlement of 1690, to imply the right of interference on the part of the State with things ecclesiastical, we, rather than forego the inherent and inalienable liberties of Christ's Church, have willingly surrendered all the rights of a national Establishment." He next referred to the reply to the communication from the South Devon Congregational Union, which expressed a hope that the Free Church would be "preserved from the trammels of State alliance, and the encumbrance of State support." Now, it is but just to say, continued the Rev. Doctor, that a majority of these addresses embody the same principle—the Voluntary principle. I know not how far the Assembly of the Free Church may go along with them; but I confess to you I cannot go their length; and I thought it fair and upright to give them a candid expression of my opinion on the subject. (Here Dr. C. read his reply.) I have only to say, in conclusion, that, although this difference may have come above board in the