

a way that they know not, and who will serve His own purposes by us whether we unite into one Church or remain asunder.

The writer wishes his Free Church brethren, and especially Dr. Burns, who named him in the Presbyterian Synod, and was very inconsistent in the way he did so, to understand that he holds still the very same principles, and in all respects the same, as he ever did: and although both Dr. Bayne, to whom he was a stranger, and Dr. Burns, who had known him from his youth, and might have judged more charitably, imputed to him erroneous views which they never proved, or even pointed out; yet the latter distinguished minister, whom he has always respected, comes forward and declares in his Synod that if they had known of the resolutions on the Sabbath question, passed by the United Presbyterian Synod in 1851, he was sure that the writer would have given "his out and out concurrence" therein, and been a Minister of his Church to this day. But, if these resolutions accord with Free Church views, why did Dr. Burns, who holds these views, not test the writer by them in 1850, and retain him among them? Why did he and others in an arbitrary manner condemn him for alleged errors which had no existence? Dr. Burns is right as to the writer's views on the Sabbath question, which he had the means of knowing independently of these resolutions; and if he has seen the printed minutes of the United Presbyterian Synod, he will find that the writer not only supported them, but was the mover for their adoption by the Synod. These are facts which ought to guard Dr. Burns against undue precipitancy. We are, however, glad to find that he thinks better of our Church than he once did, and would rejoice to give him the right hand of Christian fellowship.

But after all the diligence and pains of the Joint Committee, the Basis of Union is scarcely satisfactory to either of the Churches. We do not wonder at it, for it is, on some points, an ambiguous exhibition of the views of both Churches, at which probably our successors will be surprised. The reason seems to be, that an effort was made on both sides to conciliate, with a laudable view to accomplish union, by presenting something supposed to be common to the two Churches, which would prevent it from being thought that either had surrendered its peculiarities,—an end which would be gained more effectually by keeping the peculiarities of both out of view. We of the United Presbyterian Church have our peculiar principles, and we hold them sacred, for we think them scriptural; yet we do not make them terms of communion. We believe our Free Church brethren to be conscientious in holding views which to us appear to have no foundation in Scripture. But if they think them scriptural, by all means let them conscientiously adhere to them. It would be better, however, to unite on common ground, for which there is ample scope.