

union at home. Mr Arnot of Glasgow, Dr Andrew Thompson of Edinburgh, and Dr Cairns of Berwick, have recently stood forward as prominent advocates of the cause. There are difficulties in the way in Scotland which it may not be easy to overcome; yet it is pleasing to see the disposition to go forward whatever obstacles may bar the path. Says Dr CAIRNS:—

"I have long been persuaded that, even in regard to theory, though they do differ in regard to the magistrates power, Free Churchmen and United Presbyterians do not differ so widely as they once thought they did; and the degree to which they have been able to approach in Canada and elsewhere, is a clear proof that they hold much in common as to what is the magistrate's duty, and as to what is not his duty, and might unite, as has been done in these colonies, without the slightest danger of their ecclesiastical action being disturbed by the points about which they would still need to agree to differ. So far as I remember, there has been little, if anything, done by the Free Church Assembly since the Disruption to which I or any other Voluntary could take exception; and as little done by the United Presbyterian Synod open to Free Church challenge. Nor is there the least prospect of this basis of harmonious action being at all disturbed or narrowed in time to come. I hold, then, that union is practicable upon the present formula in both Churches as to the power of the civil magistrate, and that the understood differences might be safely left to private judgment without any public recognition or legislation whatever."

Dr Cairns, who is one of the profoundest thinkers of the age, added the following solemn words with regard to the *obligation* of union:

"It is not a matter to be settled by choice and inclination. Our choice and inclination ought to follow our duty. Unless we can show good cause for our continued separation, independently of mere feeling, it is our duty to amalgamate. I do not agree with those who use the figure of courtship in regard to Christian union. Christian Churches have not the same liberty in regard to feeling or convenience, or as to whether the match be eligible, which is justly held to belong to a prospective marriage union in the case of individuals. In fact the marriage is here already accomplished—accomplished in the foregone union of all Christians to one another in Christ; and the proper analogy is not whether a man shall marry, but whether a married man shall live with his wife, or a married woman with her husband. There may be good rea-

sons—too good reasons for such a separation. But they must be reasons of conscience, not of mere convenience or passing inclination. Churches may not be able to live together because one party imposes upon the other conditions which are sinful, or because they differ about the forms of worship or government, in which alone that union can appear. I know no other reasons than these; and as they need have no place between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, I hold that their self-made divorce, which has never been sued out in the court of heaven, should come to an end, and I pray that this rupture, which among the many schisms of Christ's body, is perhaps the most carable, and therefore the least justifiable, may be speedily healed."

A principle of very great importance is laid down in these sentences. *Inclination* and a weakly ecclesiastical or spiritual pride should not be allowed to intervene for a moment.

Some sanguine friends of Presbyterianism already advocate the organization of the "Presbyterian Church of Great Britain and Ireland," the General Assembly of which would meet by turns in London, Edinburgh, Belfast and some Welsh city! This is grasping the grand idea of the Covenanters and the authors of the Westminster Confession, which could not indeed be accomplished in the seventeenth century, but which may perhaps be witnessed before the tolling out of the nineteenth. It is, we believe, in this direction that God is at present leading the Presbyterian Churches. He is purifying the precious gold in the fire of his reviving love and making the separate particles flow together in congruous and beautiful union.

### THE MONTH OF SORROW.

Death claims all times and seasons as its own. It comes at midnight, at the gloaming and the dawn; and it is not ashamed to confront us in the broad light of noon. We must bury our dead in the flowery lap of June; and the snowy crown of winter must be disturbed that we may find graves. Hence are we warned to be always ready for the call to meet our God; always ready to part with our dearest earthly treasures; always waiting and watching for Him who shall come and shall not tarry. Yet there are