

wrong, on many grounds, which it is not necessary to enter upon here. But I repeat, that the error of our friends in Canada is not the error of supposing that the Establishment of Scotland, as against the Free Church, is on a right basis; the error is the error of supposing that they are not doing any harm, when, to avoid a serious inconvenience, they retain in name their connection with it. I observe that the deputation very prominently put it forth in Canada, that the difference between us and them was extremely slight,—that there was the Papish Church, and the Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Church, all holding the headship of Christ, but having different ways of applying it, and that we must be charitable. But let it be borne in mind, that those who now remain in the Church had it in their power, had they all united, to gain the acceptance of our principles; and so they stand convicted before Canada and Scotland of having torn asunder the Church for a very trifling matter. (Hear, hear.) I find also an allusion in the Report of the deputation to the activity of our friends in Montreal in circulating information on the principles of the Free Church; and I am glad to get such unbiased testimony in favour of our friends. It is said that they have distributed tracts like snow flakes all over the country. As the friends of the Establishment have taken one leaf out of our book, I would suggest the wisdom of their taking another; and that as our friends in Canada have been circulating so freely the Protest of the Free Church, I would suggest to our friends of the Establishment the propriety of their distributing, like snow flakes, the answer to the Protest. (Loud cries of "Hear, hear," and laughter.) I think it would have a decidedly good effect. I may just mention, as a matter of fact, that I was ministering at Montreal when the deputation from the Establishment were there, and where they held a meeting for expounding the principles of their Church. It was not possible for me to attend that meeting, as I had occasion to leave the city for Kingston; but I requested Mr. Bayne, of Galt, along with an elder from the congregation, to attend it, and decide whether there was such an impression made, or such interest excited, as at all to justify us in summoning a meeting of the inhabitants in order to counteract it. When I returned to Montreal, I found that there was no occasion for holding a meeting. (Laughter.) I confess that I regretted this, for I would rather have liked a brush with them—(renewed laughter)—but such was the decision of our friends, and no meeting was therefore held. Mr. Arnot concluded by detailing a number of facts, showing the great religious destitution which existed in Canada.

CHRIST'S HEADSHIP OVER THE NATIONS.

The following letter will be read with interest, as opening up still farther the state of feeling in Scotland on this important question:

To the Editor of the Witness.

NOVEMBER 1, 1845.

DEAR SIR,—I read with much pleasure a letter in your paper of Wednesday last, subscribed by "A Minister of the United Secession Church." I think the most of people are now beginning to see that the Voluntary controversy was by no means well managed, and that the Voluntaries were frequently opposing one thing, and the friends of the Establishment principle were defending another; and I believe that both parties are very much at one on the great truths involved in the dispute. Your correspondent, however, need not, I think, have been so surprised at the definition which Dr. D'Aubigne had received of Scottish Voluntarism; for he must be aware that the arguments and mode of defence adopted by the advocates of this system, were frequently such as led by a direct and very short process to this conclusion. But I am glad to find that the conclusion is repudiated; and, this being the case, the arguments will soon be forgotten. If the ministers of the United Secession really adhere to the principles contained in the propositions quoted by your correspondent from their Testimony, then the United Secession, and the Original Seceders, and the Free Church, and I think I may add also, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, may, as far as Voluntarism is concerned, be united and incorporated to-morrow.

There is a wonderful harmony in the Testimo-

nia of all these bodies in regard to the great truths respecting the independence of the Church, and the moral subjection of nations to the Mediator. It may be of use to place in juxtaposition a few extracts from the authoritative documents of the respective bodies. To give completeness to the view, I shall insert the propositions which your correspondent has quoted.

"1. Religion, abstractedly viewed, is essential to the well-being of society, and to the efficient exercise of civil government; and is therefore the concern of legislators and civil rulers, as well as of others in their several situations.

"2. The Christian religion, as might be expected from its Divine origin, and intended universality, is the best calculated for promoting the interests of civil society, and therefore deserves the countenance of the civil powers. Where it is introduced, it ought to have the controul which belongs to it over the formation of laws, the administration of justice, the swearing of oaths, and other matters of civil jurisdiction.

"3. But the countenance to be given to it must not be inconsistent with its own spirit and enactments. It must not be introduced or propagated with force. It disclaims and prohibits all persecution."—*Testimony of the United Secession Church.*

"1. Natural religion, an acknowledgment of which lies at the foundation of all confidence and duty in human society, must form an important object of care and attention to nations and their rulers. They are bound to acknowledge the supremacy of God, and to take such measures as are competent to them that He be publicly honoured among them.

"2. It is the duty of nations and their rulers, who are favoured with revealed religion, to recognize and give public countenance to the profession of it, and, by their laws and administration, to provide, in every way competent to them and consistent with its nature and peculiar laws, and the just rights and liberties of rational agents, that its salutary influence have free course, and be diffused through all orders and departments of society.

"3. To promote Christianity by forcible methods, is a violation of its nature, it can be productive of no good effects, either in a spiritual or political view; not in a spiritual view, for force cannot reach the inward man: not in a political view, for it is not the mere exterior form of religion, but the hold which it takes upon the heart, which chiefly strengthens, and really improves, civil society and government. Penal laws against any religious party can only be vindicated on the principle that there is something in the sentiments, spirit, and conduct of that party, hostile to the general interests of society, or threatening the lawful institutions of a particular kingdom."—*Testimony of the Original Seceders.*

"1. Nations are placed in a state of moral subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth, and they are under obligation to acknowledge His mediatorial authority, and submit to His sceptre: framing their laws, appointing their rulers, and regulating their obedience in agreeableness to the moral principles of the gospel and in subserviency to the interests of the kingdom of Christ.

"2. The Christian civil ruler cannot lawfully be vested with a power in and over the Church, as she possesses an intrinsic and independent power from the Lord Jesus, and is not placed in subjection to any other. He (the civil magistrate) may not by his authority interfere with the proceedings of the Church, when these do not injure the public peace. He may not prescribe to the Church a confession of faith, or forms of worship; he may not enforce the profession of religion by the sword, nor assume any manner of power or authority in the Church of Christ."—*Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.*

"On the one hand, our principles respecting the duty of nations and their rulers as bound, in their natural and official character, to own Christ, and to aim at the advancement of his cause, are well and thoroughly known; nor is there any reason to apprehend a change of sentiment on this subject. But, on the other hand, we cannot approve of existing Establishments, in which the countenance of the state is purchased by the subserviency of the Church."—*Pastoral Address of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, met at Edinburgh in the year 1845, to the people under their charge.*

Is not the ground on which all these bodies are already united on points of vital interest to religion and civil society, sufficiently broad to give encouragement to hope that minor points, on which they may be supposed to differ, might be explained to the common satisfaction of all? The end of all war, it is said, is peace. The Voluntary controversy though, as I think, not always well conducted, has, in the providence of God, been overruled for much good, and ought not the combatants now to unite and jointly oppose the great adversaries both of religion and of civil society?—I am, my dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

A MINISTER OF THE ORIGINAL SECESSION CHURCH.

DISRUPTION OF THE SWISS NATIONAL CHURCH.

A disruption has taken place in the Swiss National Church in the Canton de Vaud, which promises to be scarcely inferior in its extent and results to the memorable disruption in our own country in 1843. Our readers are already apprised of the Erastian control which the Vaudois Government has exercised for some time past over the clergy of the National Church. On the 3rd inst. a sentence of suspension was passed by the State authorities against upwards of forty ministers, the chief grounds of complaint against whom are, first, refusing to read State proclamations from the pulpit; and, secondly, certain of their number assisting at the service of the Oratoire at Lausanne. The Council of State justify their proceedings by the law of 1839. They maintain, according to that law,—

"1. The right of the Council of State to enjoin the reading of its proclamations from the pulpit,—a right which has its origin in the Union of Church and State, and which flows from it; the National Reformed Church being guaranteed by the constitution, protected as I paid by the State, governed by its laws, and consequently subordinate to the State.

"2. The Council of State has the right of occupying the pulpit by its agents, for the purpose of reading its proclamations, failing the pastor or other authorized person,—a right inherently belonging to it.

"3. Ministers in the National Church hold their status only in consequence of the consecration they have obtained being in conformity to laws made by the State.

"4. Pastors cannot assist at or discharge duties not recognized by law, or conformable thereto.

"5. Ecclesiastical law forbids pastors of the National Church assisting at religious meetings, unless these are held at canonical hours, and in authorized places of worship.

"The prohibition last mentioned, however, is not meant to extend to meetings in connexion with the pastoral visitations of the members of congregations."

The sentence of suspension brought matters to a crisis. All eyes were turned to the clergy, doubts being entertained whether they would succumb to the sentence passed upon them or resign their charges. A letter from Dr. D'Aubigne, of the 13th instant, brings the gratifying intelligence that ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY pastors have given in their demission, and that "the majority of the others will follow without doubt." The number of ministers, we understand, in the National Church of the Canton de Vaud is 170, so that the pulpits of the province have been all but entirely deserted. The formation of a Free Church which shall embrace French Switzerland and France, is the noble idea which has taken possession of the comprehensive mind of D'Aubigne in these exciting circumstances. May it be realized! is our fervent prayer; and certain we are that the same heartfelt desire will find a home in every true Scottish bosom, as this intelligence is carried on the wings of the press over the length and breadth of the land.—*Witness.*

Rev. Dr. Malan to the Editor of the Witness.

MAYENCE, 20th Nov., 1845.

DEAR SIR,—I suppose you have already heard and spoken of the religious position of the Canton de Vaud in Switzerland; but most likely a few particulars more will be acceptable to you.

For a long time the civil government of that Canton had proved to be unfavourable to the evan-