

that piece of business, evinced the most perfect cordiality and friendliness, on our part, towards the Presbyterian Church of Canada. So far well.—But Mr. Ure alleges, that we were chargeable with the error of “setting the example of announcing the conditions by which our own Committee were to be controlled.” I have heard the same thing said before. Now, with great deference, it seems to me that if we laid down conditions, it was in appearance rather than in reality. What he refers to is, of course, our using the words,—“The principle of this church in regard to that question (Establishments) has always been, that it shall be matter of forbearance.” *Litera scripta manet*; and it is of little use in such a case, to talk of what the Synod intended. At all events, that is what no individual has any authority to do. But may I be permitted to state the views with which I, for one, concurred in the adoption of the above sentence, and which I supposed, and still suppose, to have been those of my brethren. They were these:—The Free Church is understood to hold the Establishment principle; most of us hold the Voluntary principle; and very many imagine that it is embodied in our authorized creed—in the subordinate standards of our church. There is consequently a very general impression, that there can be no sound and cordial union between the Free Church and ourselves, unless we can either induce them to become voluntaries, or they can induce us to become compulsories; or unless, mutually making concessions, they and we agree to meet in a half-way house between the two positions, we are considered as, at present, respectively occupying. Now, the members of the other Synod, and well-informed persons generally no doubt, know that this is incorrect. Nevertheless, for popular purposes—and surely unless we carry the people along with us we had better not proceed—it may be proper to state explicitly and distinctly, how the matter stands with us, and thereby shew that, so far as anything like terms of communion is concerned, the difference between our brethren and us, is not so wide and formidable as many imagine: that we, in fact, already occupy what may be considered the neutral ground of forbearance, and that if our brethren, without abandoning the establishment principle, can only find themselves at liberty to declare it no longer a condition of fellowship, they and we may at once, honourably and heartily coalesce. Thus I account for the clause. As matters have turned out, it may perhaps be to be regretted, that our Synod gave any utterance on the subject; but I am grievously mistaken, if in doing so, they did not regard themselves as smoothing the way for union, instead of erecting a barrier.

Mr. Ure says:—“The principle of forbearance on that latter question (ecclesiastical establishments) is, for all practical ends, as fully recognised in our own Church as it can be among the United Presbyterians themselves.” The expression “for all practical ends” might be differently interpreted. I shall not be guilty of anything so offensive as to insinuate, that it may mean merely that known or suspected voluntaries are tolerated in the Free Church, provided they can bring themselves to subscribe articles embodying the establishment principle; but hoping that the meaning is that there is nothing in the articles to which the Free Church requires subscription, implying approval of the principle of establishments, then, I cannot but think it matter of congratulation that the unfortunate, though well meant, declaration of our Synod has had the