

A few possibly on either side may allege as an objection, that previous to the disruption a controversy arose on the question of civil establishment of religion, in which the fathers of the Free Church and the ministers of the Secession, with whom we are supposed to have some connection, were ranged on opposite sides. It is true, a change of opinion gradually came over the minds of the ministers and people of the Secession on this point, attention being latterly favorably drawn to it, although it never became a matter of legislation in their supreme court. The more the matter was weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, the more decided became the conviction that civil establishments of religion were at variance with scripture, and pregnant necessarily with those evils complained of alike on both sides.

But this objection should have but little weight. Not only is it a matter of comparatively little moment in itself, and a subject of forbearance within ourselves, but we are relatively now in different circumstances. Practically we both stand upon the voluntary platform. Neither is connected with the state. We both agree that with the Scottish Establishment fettered, as confessedly she now is, we cannot reunite. Why then may we not agree to waive the remaining differences, as to the propriety of civil establishments of religion in the abstract, until, at least, the period arrive when we shall be called on to entertain the question of connection between church and state? It is enough surely, to act on our principles in relation to this point, when occasion shall call for it. He that believeth that a civil establishment of religion is scriptural and proper under certain conditions, let him continue to do so, so long as he is satisfied he is right, only let him be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that believeth that a civil establishment of religion under any circumstances or conditions, is unscriptural and improper, let him be undisturbed in the exercise of his opinion, but let him be persuaded in his own mind; and whenever it is seriously proposed to connect us with the state, let them separate, each taking what he conceives to be the proper path of duty. Till then, however, let them unite and walk together in unity.

In the heat of controversy many unwarrantable things were spoken and written on both sides. It has been alleged that we were separated from the brethren of the Free Church, by no less a space than the *mare magnum of social infidelity*. This great sea looks dark and dismal, indeed for our prospect of union. If this account be true, we cannot expect that our brethren will commit their safety to its tempestuous waters, and venture across, even to look at us. But where is it? That which I behold does not seem to possess the dimensions, of a pool of anything indeed, that could offer the smallest obstruction to the most intimate intercourse. Whatever it is, we may each standing on his own side, grasp the hand of fellowship over it. The respected father who made this ridiculous statement, will I suppose, allow that Voluntaries may be true christians; if so, then, a nation of Voluntaries may be a nation of true christians; but how a nation of true christians will make an infidel nation, surpasses my comprehension. Voluntaries, as individuals, are admitted to be true christians; but, considered collectively, form an infidel society. In one aspect of him the Voluntary is a true christian, in another he is