

together with advantage and mutual profit, and, among other subjects, as you may well imagine, we repeatedly came across the unity and the differences between our respective Churches. Once and again we did enter very frankly, and in some detail, into the question of a possible union between the two, Dr King, be it remembered, having thirty years ago, been one of the most decided as well as able of what used to be called the Voluntary party, and I having, at the same period as my older brethren here are aware, been at least as staunch and steadfast an opponent of Voluntaryism. Well, Sir, I found that in respect to the subject of the endowment of the Church by the State,—the subject of the lawfulness and expediency of the State endowing the Christian Church,—my excellent friend continued in 1836 very much, or I should rather say altogether, what I had known him in 1832, 1833, and 1834. Saving in that matter, I found that our views and our ideas were otherwise so much in unison, and, in particular, that the views of Dr. King were so much in substantial harmony with those which had been my own, always respecting the Headship of Christ over the nations, and the duty of the civil power generally in respect to religion, that I came to this conclusion, that, supposing Dr. King a fair type of his Church, and me a fair type of mine, there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in the way of the accomplishing of a union between the two Churches without compromise of principle in any degree on either side. I have used the words Voluntary and Voluntaryism; and I am very anxious to utter a sentence or two respecting these words. I say the words, because as to the things, I believe no man can tell precisely what these things are, so many and different meanings do the words admit of, and so manifold the meanings which they have been made to bear. In one sense of them we are of course Voluntaries; and I think our friends will admit that in that sense we have been Voluntaries to some purpose. In another sense we are strongly opposed to Voluntaryism. Aye, and in this sense, and it is the sense in which we used to understand Voluntaryism during the controversy on the subject thirty years ago, my belief is that the brethren of the U. P. Church are not Voluntaries at this hour.

THE TEACHING OF EVENTS

Sir, I for one happened just thirty years ago, in the middle of that controversy, to write and publish a small volume, now I believe, forgotten—entitled, “Church Establishments Defended, with special reference to the Church of Scotland”—the name Free Church of Scotland was then in God’s decrees. I am thankful of the opportunity that I have to-day of declaring publicly in

this House, that while I have not changed my mind since that time in respect to any of the leading principles respecting Church and State which I endeavoured to make good in that small volume, I am ashamed before the Lord—I have long been ashamed in secret—of a good many things which I have written in that little volume. I do not speak of juvenility. It were not worth your while to be troubled with any reference to juvenility: but I speak partly of certain bitternesses of language which, if I had known myself, Moderator, I would rather put that hand in the fire than write again. I hope the Lord has forgiven me. But further in the second part of the small volume, which was occupied with the expediency of State Endowments of the Church, as I thought, and still humbly think, that in the first part I had made good their lawfulness, I am now satisfied that in the second part I put the whole matter of the expediency much too strongly, unaware then of the immense power of voluntary liberality, especially in a great commercial age and country, and in a state of society such as we now live in. In fact, I put the case as if the Church of Christ could scarce exist in any tolerable measure of prosperity without endowments from the State. This, I am persuaded,—and no thanks to me, after the Free Church financial history of the last twenty years—was a great and serious mistake. But, to return—I have said that I am much inclined now to think that it was the endowment of the Church alone—with which all along at bottom our brethren really had in their eye. I repeat it. They did, unfortunately, use incautious expressions which seemed to go, and, if followed out to their consequences, behoved to go a great deal farther. And now, if any one is disposed to ask me, How comes it that you to-day are disposed to put so mild a construction even on the former sentiments of those brethren? I answer, that if he prefer greatly to have it this way, that our brethren of the U. P. Church have altered their opinions very materially during these late years. I do not care to dispute that with him. I rather incline to think—I speak humbly—but I am rather inclined to think, that all along they and we were not so far asunder, except as to endowments, as we were disposed to think. But, at all events,—and this is the only important point now,—I say, this has during these late years become more and more evident to my mind, that saving and excepting in the one matter of the lawfulness and expediency of the State endowing the Church, our brethren and we hold substantially together with respect to the duty of the civil magistrate, and of nations as such, about religion. For example,—take the grand subject of the Sabbath. I will not dwell on the fact, that perhaps the ablest and fullest and soundest