

ters, who would regard such a claim on our part as utterly untenable, whether on legislative or numerical grounds. For my own part, I cherish and respect the Free Church as a pure, evangelical, zealous, and efficient communion, holding in all their fulness and integrity the doctrines and discipline promulgated and acted on by our reforming ancestors in 1560. But I concede the same title the United Secession and Reformed Presbyterians, and consider that they stand on a footing of perfect equality with us, and that, in any negotiations for union, we are rather to be regarded as the younger sister than as the mother of these venerated communions, which are, just as truly as ourselves, the representatives and successors of our common ancestors in the genealogical tree of Presbyterian piety and polity. I venture to indulge in a confident hope that both (or, at all events, the larger) of these respectable denominations would gladly co-operate with us in forming a Free United Church; but I do not think (and it seems to me unreasonable to do so) that they can "fairly be expected to return" to us, or to regard us as the body from which their predecessors departed.

I believe that if my respected and excellent friend's definitions and principles are homologated by the entire body of the Free Church, we may adjourn *sine die* every hope of any ecclesiastical amalgamation between ourselves and any other body of Presbyterians. There is, I am aware, a party within our pale which has a strong leaning towards a junction with the Establishment; and it seems to me to be the duty of all such to come manfully forward, and not only to avow this opinion, but to enumerate the particular points which, if conceded by that Church, and embodied in an Act of the Legislature, would, in their view, justify the Free Church in resuming that connection with the State which it is understood that a very considerable proportion of our ministers consider to be expedient and desirable. My rev. friend, however, has, I think, added greatly to the length, breadth, and thickness of the wall of partition which separates the two churches, by exhibiting the Establishment to the world as a "pure novelty," and laying it down as a preliminary axiom, that "we cannot be parties to any proceeding that shall acknowledge the Established Church as dating from any period before 1843." So humiliating, and I must respectfully but frankly add, uncalled for and unwarrantable a concession would only degrade and weaken that communion in the eyes of its adherents and of the world. It would, I think, be very satisfactory to many of his other admirers and well-wishers, as well as to yourself, if our rev friend, who, I believe, still adheres with unabated, or I believe even increasing, tenacity to the State Church principle, would inform us—(1) Under what circumstances, and through what channel, he anticipates that the Free Church can ever be reinstated in its pristine position, and recover its temporalities? (2.) Whether he contemplates a re-union with the present Establishment? (3.) In the event of neither of these alternatives being practicable, would he prefer the continuance of the present footing, or deem it preferable that there should be no State Church at all? Were these questions propounded to myself, I should reply—(1.) That any Parliamentary or national recognition of our communion, as the State Establishment, would be scouted in all quarters as preposterous and unjust. (2.) That if the ministers and members of the present Establishment were to acquiesce in all the changes in its constitution or polity which we might deem indispensable, and which would render the church more independent and less Erastian, I think these arrangements would be repudiated by all the representatives of the English Establishment, who would regard them as altogether at variance with the principles, in virtue of which alone a church can be entitled to the temporal advantages derived from State connection, and they would be apprehensive that such innovations, if carried out in Scotland, might afterwards be insisted on in reference to the Church of England. The Dissenters on both sides of the Tweed would be not less hostile to any such changes as would tend to emancipate either State Church from trammels or thralldom, because they would deem it unjust and unreasonable that the same communion should monopolise all the benefits of a national provision, and at the same time be allowed to enjoy the same extent of freedom and independence as other bodies possess, who purchase the liberty which they regard as essential to their comfort and respectability, by renouncing all claim to support from the public purse, and shrink from the degradation of subsisting upon taxes extorted by violence and oppression from parties by whom their doctrines are disbelieved, their entire system repudiated and