

fully and well. In his address in the City Hall on Tuesday, as president of the "National Bible Society of Scotland," his Grace alluded to the desire which has been manifested in certain quarters for a "united Christendom," to be brought about by a union of the English, the Roman Catholic, and the Greek Churches. The Duke showed very conclusively that "union with one set of men very often means wider separation from another set of men," and that the tendency, if not the aim, of the movement so strenuously advocated by Dr. PUSEY, was to detach the Anglican Church from all other Protestant bodies; and thus, while promoting union in one direction, to increase division and widen divergence in another. He farther argued that a "united Christendom" meant only a "great system of priesthood—one system of priesthood over the whole of Christendom;" and wound up this branch of his subject by declaring his belief "that not only is the antagonism of individual opinion a necessary instrument in the maintenance of Christian truth, but that a certain amount of antagonism between different Churches, originating in different opinions, starting in different circumstances, and impelled by different energies, is an essential element in the maintenance of Christian truth."

These are, in our judgment, sagacious and weighty words. Neither were they, as regards the exact time and locality of their delivery, without some character of boldness. Only the evening previously, on the same platform, partly before the same audience, and certainly before the same class of audience, all schism had been denounced as sin, and the doctrine of a broad ecclesiastical combination among the leading Scotch non-conformist churches openly and eloquently advocated. Perhaps on the principle that when bad men conspire good men ought to combine, the City Hall audiences may have seen no inconsistency in deprecating union in the one case and applauding it in the other. But if so, it would only indicate the sophistry of an assumed claim to infallibility—a claim unmistakably assumed and betrayed, although little likely to be avowed. If the principle of a great and dominant priesthood is mischievous in the Roman Catholic, it cannot be advantageous in the Protestant system. Indeed, the maintenance of Christian truth through the conflict of opinion is of the very essence of Protestantism; and the trenchant remarks of the Duke of ARGYLL are therefore, we conceive, peculiarly fitted for home application at the present important juncture.

The speeches at the great "Christian Union Meeting" were unexceptionable, in so far as they showed the beauty and the duty of peace-making, and the pleasantness of dwelling together in amity. The whirligig of time brings about strange transformations; and it could not be otherwise than gratifying to hear those

who were once the most bitter and uncompromising foes of Voluntaryism, speaking of the Voluntaries in terms of admiration, respect, and friendship. But the question arises—why should not the Free, United, and Reformed Presbyterian Churches continue to cherish mutual feelings of good-will, and work harmoniously together, each in its own way, for the diffusion of Gospel truth, and the promotion of the practical charities, without seeking, by means of concessions and compromises involving the suspicion of some relinquishment of principle, to band themselves together under a single, overgrown and largely preponderant ecclesiastical polity? As regards all good and pious purposes, how could they work better jointly than they now do separately? Would there be no danger of their giving way—the moment they found themselves one church, and that the biggest by far in the country—to pride, to arrogance, and to other unsanctified, not to say Popish weaknesses? Is it not, indeed, the direct intention of those engaged in promoting this scheme of a huge, amalgamated, and, as regards numbers, truly national Church, to dwarf the venerable Establishment into the effete and antiquated Church of a miserable minority of the population? After predicting the speedy downfall of the "Auld Kirk," Dr. BUCHANAN exclaimed—"It is obvious and undeniable that no such wall of separation divides from one another the churches which are here represented this evening, as divides them all from the existing Church Establishment." Thus it would appear that the talk about Christian amity is only amity for themselves, for their own selfish purposes; and war, also for their own selfish purposes, to all schismatic and heretical outsiders. Dr. BUCHANAN disclosed another object to be attained by the union of the Free, United, and Reformed Presbyterian Churches. Talking of the evil of division in the Church, "these divisions," he said, "make her discipline all but impotent. The offender, where false doctrine, or ignorance of Divine truth, or personal immorality, expose him to censure, quietly withdraws from his own section of the Church, and creeps to another whose door he finds invitingly open and ready to receive him. In such circumstances, excommunication—which is the Church's only weapon of defence in guarding her own purity where reasonings and remonstrances fail—becomes practically impossible." Thus the plausible idea of Christian union transforms itself into a purely human dream of increased ecclesiastical power, sternly inimical to the religious freedom which the people of Scotland at present enjoy and cherish.

But, for our own part, we must say that our alarm in reference to this union movement is not particularly intense. Our feeling of security arises from the fact that, in spite of all the mellifluous smoothing over of dis-