

disunion. Such a phalanx, fitly compacted and knit together by that which every joint supplieth, would (as in our case) be far more powerful, either for attack or resistance, than the temporary and transient co-operation of separate and unconnected squadrons, at some crisis of great emergency. I venture, therefore, earnestly to recommend this course to our beloved brethren in England, although I still more anxiously wish that we in Scotland should, in this respect, set them an example, instead of, at a later period, being exhorted to follow theirs.

You must all be aware how completely the different bodies of unendowed Presbyterians are identified in other respects; they acknowledge the same standards; preach the same doctrines; are governed by the same office-bearers; are equally tenacious of Sabbath observance; and are equally zealous in the cause of foreign missions. Their ministers are all maintained by the spontaneous and ungrudging oblations of their flocks; and all parties are desirous, to their power, and even beyond their power, to contribute to the support of a gospel ministry in those localities where the deep poverty of the inhabitants renders it necessary that they should, in part at least, be supplemented by the abundance of the liberality of their Christian brethren, who are in easier circumstances, at a distance. We, therefore, who are connected with the Free Church, may surely bear with our United Presbyterian brethren who have, during three generations, experienced (as they think) the efficacy, as well as the comfort, of the self-sustaining system. Why should we, who are practical Voluntaries from necessity, refuse to be united with those who are so from conviction (so far as the sustentation of the minister is concerned,) and who object not to our holding the opposite principle, to which they are conscientiously opposed? If, in theory, as a church, and in practice as its ministers, office-bearers, and members, they yield neither to ourselves nor to any other communion in their zeal for the strict and sanctified observance of the Lord's-day, and hold that the civil magistrate is not only entitled, but bound, to protect the entire community in the enjoyment of a weekly day of rest,\* as a boon conferred on all the inhabitants of the earth by an all-wise and all-bountiful God at the period of the world's creation, what more can we require, in that respect, at their hands? If in all the schools and seminaries which are under their jurisdiction the Bible and the doctrines derived from that pure source, and which our common forefathers have embodied in our catechisms and standards, are regarded as indispensable elements for the up-bringing of their children, do we not possess a sufficient guarantee that they will set their faces against a Godless or Scriptureless system of education?

We ought, I think, in fairness to test their views on the latter question, not according to what they consider to be the wisest course for a Government to pursue, over whose acts they are invested with no control or responsibility, but according to the system which they adopt in their own schools, where they have full scope to follow out their own principles and their own convictions; and we cannot doubt that, if any Government scheme should prove in whole or in part objectionable, they will be prepared to concur cordially and zealously with us in rectifying every error, and supplying every deficiency.

The axiom, that it is the duty of the civil magistrate, in his official capacity, to "honour Christ," is, as it seems to me, so vague and indeterminate, as to

be liable to very serious objections. It must, of course, in each separate instance, depend on the consciences of those in authority to act in this matter according to *their own* views, without assuming *ours* as their standard or their guide. In this sense, Christ is at this moment "honoured" in every country throughout Europe. The "civil magistrates" in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and all other Romish countries, conceive that they "honour Christ" by endowing Popery. In England, and several other Protestant countries, Christ is "honoured" by the establishment of Prelacy. Charles II., and his godless ministers, believed that they were "honouring Christ" when they forced Episcopacy upon our forefathers, and consigned our martyrs to exile or to death. If you exhort the "civil magistrate" to honour Christ in Scotland, will he not tell you that he is doing so to the utmost by upholding a Presbyterian establishment? This system is thus universally carried out, and yet there is not even one Established Church in Europe, of which any Free Churchman or United Presbyterian would not repudiate the fellowship, and desire either the radical reformation or the entire abolition. If it is replied, that we contend for a "scriptural" establishment, every civil magistrate would at once exclaim, that *his* edifice is framed entirely on that basis, and that such an one as we are bent upon erecting would be antiscritptural, pernicious, and inadmissible. In fact, our views could not be carried out, unless Free Churches according to our model were established in every Christian country throughout the world,—a consummation which cannot take place until Free Church sentiments predominate in courts, in senates, and in all the high places of the earth. Can we be surprised that our United Presbyterian brethren, when they contemplate the fruits which the adoption of this course has produced, should prefer the non-establishment principle (the power of which we ourselves have experienced and exemplified in an unprecedented degree) to the existence in every land, where the opposite view has been adhered to, of churches which (in our opinion as well as in theirs) are nurseries of error in doctrine, laxity in discipline, misapplication of immense resources, and uncharitable exclusiveness in regard to every other denomination? or that they should be apprehensive of State interference with respect to Sabbath observance, as its practical application must in every case be regulated according to the sentiments of the "civil magistrates" themselves—a great majority of whom entertain very confused or inadequate ideas on the subject, and are more likely to consult the Book of Sports, than to conform to the Book of Discipline? In truth, the vagueness of the phrase, that it is the duty of the civil magistrate, in his official capacity, to "honour Christ," reminds me of a conversation in which, many years ago, my zealous and indefatigable friend, Joseph Hume, expressed his surprise that he should experience so much opposition, and incur so much obloquy, when his only aim was to procure "good government" for the people; when I observed, that as to the praiseworthiness or importance of his design, as thus enunciated, there could not be two opinions; but that a striking and strenuous discordance would be developed when the practical meaning of the words "good government" came to be considered and defined; for although no politician would be so crotchety and paradoxical as to contend in favour of "bad government," and the absolutist, the liberal, the republican, the socialist would all assent to his general principle, very many would aver that the plans which he had devised for the establishment or security of good government would only render our present po-

\* See an admirable treatise on the Sabbath, by the late Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds.