

In the United Presbyterian Synod, those who spoke on the Union Question were one and all of them evidently earnestly desirous of Union, and were most conciliatory in their speeches. There was not even a reference to the principles held by either Voluntary or State-churchman, and there was not the least complaint uttered against the Presbyterian Synod for repudiating the Note on the Fourth Article which had been adopted by our Synod, as a protection to the Voluntaries that might be in the United Church. In the several motions which were at last submitted to the Synod, the movers seemed to vie with each other in constructing their motions so as to be the least objectionable to the Presbyterian Synod, and the motion by Dr. Ormiston, which was carried unanimously, was certainly as clear and unobjectionable as the Presbyterian Synod could possibly expect,—namely, these words to be added to the Fourth Article instead of the Note, “It being understood that in the application of the doctrine of this article mutual forbearance shall be exercised.” Though we were pleased, greatly pleased, with Dr. Ormiston’s motion, we would have preferred the motion by Mr. Kennedy, which was that the following words be added to the Fourth Article, “It being understood that perfect unanimity of sentiment is not required with regard to the *interpretation* or application of the doctrines referred to in this article.” We do think that forbearance should be extended to the interpretation of the doctrine of this Fourth Article as well as to the application of it. Our reasons for this are, that nearly all the leading Reformers both of the first and second Reformation periods, interpreted Christ’s Headship over the nations as most inimical to religious liberty, and which, in a truly free country, can never be carried into practice. In their writings we find such statements as the following:—“Magistracy flows from Christ as Mediator.” “Magistracy is the subject of promise to the Church, and is given immediately to the Church—not to the world.” “Christ bought the world.” “Magistrates are properly Christ’s ministers of justice on earth.” “Magistracy is not a carnal, worldly, profane thing, that belongs to the world, but to the Church.” “As the Father has committed all judgment and authority and the execution of judgment unto Christ, Magistrates are appointed by him to judge for him, and are said in scripture to judge for the Lord.” “If the Magistrate has no qualification but the consent of the people, he is at best but an intruder.” “To kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates, the conservation and purgation of religion in the land doth chiefly appertain.” In the Geneva and Scotch Confessions of Faith it is asserted that “the defence of Christ’s Church appertaineth to the Christian Magistrate, against all idolaters and heretics, such as papists &c.” Such were some of the sentiments held by the early Scotch reformers—Knox, Rutherford, Binning, and other leading men; and to our mind it is clear that they held magistracy as a Christian ordinance, and the Christian Magistrate as Christ’s vicegerent, and one of the great chartered blessings of the church. The compilers of the Westminster Confession of Faith appear evidently to have held nearly similar views, on the doctrine of Christ’s Headship over the nations,