

or that profession of faith has been softened down for fear of giving offence, a Union may be consummated, but it will certainly be unsatisfactory. That Christian charity which is not strong enough to bear the honest avowal of difference on subordinate truths before Union, will not likely wear a broad mantle afterwards to cover the multitude of such supposed sins. It is a happy circumstance that the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church in Canada are at one on the great cardinal doctrines of the Gospel. They are here, I believe, one in faith, as they are one in their subordinate standards. Both take the word of God as the supreme rule of faith, and both with equal honesty adhere to the Confession of Faith as expressive of the sense in which they understand the Scriptures. It is only, as it seems, on the single point of the province of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion that any diversity of sentiment exists. I have often thought it a strange thing that two Christians should differ so keenly, and two Churches stand apart so widely, not on the ground of duties belonging to themselves, but on the ground of what a third party should do in matters of religion. It might be supposed, if they can agree as to their own religious obligations and duties, for which they must give an account of themselves to God, surely they will not separate from each other on account of their respective sentiments regarding the powers and doings of another, for which he is, above all, responsible to God. Yet so it is, that Christians agreed on all other points have allowed the contention on the power of the Civil Magistrate in religion to grow so sharp between them that they have departed asunder from each other. And, it appears, this is the difficult point of adjustment in the proposed Basis of Union of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches.

It is not at all my object in this communication, to enter on the formal discussion of this question at issue in the contemplated Union. This would be unseemly in my brief limits, and it is unnecessary, since many able treatises by master-minds, on both sides, are accessible to earnest inquirers after the truth. My aim here, however, is chiefly to urge the importance of a distinct mutual avowal of opinions entertained on the subject; and the duty of making the difference of view elicited a matter of Christian forbearance. With reference to the former of these points—a full, candid, unreserved expression of sentiment in both Churches on this question—it is difficult to attach too high importance to it. Brethren owe it to themselves and to each other to make full explanations, that their respective views be not misunderstood, or mistaken thoughts in their hearts cherished toward one another. It is gratifying to know that a mutual interchange of sentiment, both in meetings of Committee and of Synod, has been attended with happy effects, in disabusing some minds of mistakes regarding the opinions of others. It appears plain that more requires yet to be done in this direction. The decided and strong view held in both denominations, respecting the fourth Article of the Basis, is