

That deed not only homologates the Confession, twenty-third chapter and all, but declares that the Synod "do not understand the passages relating to the duty of the civil magistrate as teaching an Erastian control of the church by the civil magistrate." Now the Synod has most certainly a right to entertain and promulgate its own ideas of Erastianism, and to pronounce the third section of said chapter uncontaminated with that foul heresy, *according to the Free Church conception and definition thereof*; but I cannot imagine how it will be possible, I do not say for any Voluntary, but for any Forbearance-man, to unite with the Free Church, while that deed stands unrepealed. It is often said that there are Voluntaries in the Free Church already. I rejoice to hear of the abundance of Voluntaries, but am grieved to think that any of them should be in such a position; for highly as I appreciate voluntarism, there is something else for which I have a still more sacred regard.

But the obnoxious deed, I may be told, is not like the laws of the Medes and Persians. Of course not; but what probability is there of its being speedily cancelled or modified? Let two things be recollected. First, it is not yet a year old. Public bodies, at least such as respect themselves, do not erect standards of this kind, and presently knock them down like nine-pins. Secondly, the deed was gone into at the very meeting of Synod at which the subject of union was under consideration. Far be it from me to say that the deed was, *deditâ operâ*, constructed as a barrier to union; but neither am I prepared to give the Synod credit for so much inconsideration and stupidity as to suppose that they did not perceive, that while the enactment stands on their statute-book, no union with us can take place; and I shall think it much if a decade of years bring about the indispensable alteration.

It would be out of place, especially holding these views, to offer any suggestion as to such a deed respecting the Confession, as would seem necessary in order to a union. It may be mentioned, however, that there are two examples already in existence. The first is that of our own Church, which receives the Confession, with a clause exceptive of whatever teaches, or may be supposed to teach, persecuting or intolerant principles in religion; the other, and perhaps the better, is that of the Old School Presbyterian Church in the States, which has expunged the aforesaid ill-savoured third section bodily, and substituted for it one, to which in the main, I believe, we should not object.* Indeed, if without presumption I might, I would throw out the hint that a proposal for union might be made on the basis of the Confession as thus *Americanised*.

We sometimes hear, to the credit of the *People*, and the disparagement of the Ministers, that when the former meet on the subject of union, as at Brooklin, *they* find no difficulties in their way. Now, without stopping to weigh in a very exact balance, the comparative merits of these two classes of persons, neither of whom are altogether what they should be, it is easy to account for the absence of stumbling blocks in the path of the "people." They just practically make matter of forbearance the whole question of ecclesiastical establishments and all its collateral topics. Our

* The above statement is rather strong. The section, however, is mostly changed, and in the direction of Non-Erastianism and Voluntarism.—ED.