

## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, June 24, 1897.

### CHURCH UNION.

One of the most pleasant functions at the General Assembly was the greeting from the Methodist Conference. Rev. Dr. Sparling and Rev. Professor Stewart in conveying the message enlarged on the idea of Church Union. Thus, Dr. Sparling said, was not an age of division, but of union. When he and the Moderator were boys together in St. Mary's there were three Presbyterian and five Methodist bodies; now there was but one of each. The Methodist Church had in the Western Conference 10,000 communicants and 250 ministers and probationers in the field. There was no country in the world where the two bodies came more closely together; in the colleges students of the two denominations were taught together. Professor Stewart stated that during the past year he had studied Presbyterian Church polity as never before, he had been very much struck with the fact that the composition of the different Church courts and their duties and prerogatives were almost identical in the two bodies. He had not been so much struck with the similarity in the theology; but he had frequently commended the work of Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge's work in systematic theology.

No fitter representative of the Church could have replied for the Assembly, to these observations, than Dr. Caven, whose efforts on behalf of Church Union have done so much to remove prejudices among the various denominations. He spoke most cordially of what had been done to bring such bodies as the Methodists and the Presbyterians together. He held that the points of accord were infinitely greater than the points of difference between the two bodies. A great work had been entrusted to each of these two denominations in this country. The task of moulding the destinies of this country was largely in the hands of these two Churches. Dr. Caven described the work of the committees of the two bodies on Church Union. It was not expected that union could take place at once, but they should prepare the way for it. He expressed pleasure at the stand taken by these and other churches recently in Toronto for the sanctity of the Lord's day. He trusted that before long everything that separated these great bodies

would be removed. The following resolution, moved by Dr. Caven, seconded by Dr. King, became the finding of General Assembly: "The General Assembly has listened with much pleasure to the addresses of Dr. Sparling and Dr. Stewart, the representatives of the Conference of Manitoba and the Northwest in the Methodist Church of Canada; the General Assembly prays that the blessing of God may abundantly rest upon the Methodist Church; and that through its zealous labors, the kingdom of our blessed Lord may be greatly advanced in this land.

The speech made by Dr. King supporting this deliverance was impressive and few of those who heard it failed to realize the earnestness of the speaker, uttering as he did an expression of conviction based on his long and practical experience in one of the most difficult fields of the Church. He spoke of the fact of the students of the two colleges trying their strength together in the classes, as a great step in advance. When the students had gone to their respective mission fields they had found co-operation very easy. Perhaps he might not live to see it, but he would cherish the hope that in some way these churches may yet become one.

The question is one deserving of more systematic attention than it has yet received from the Church as a whole. A working scheme by which union would be gradually arrived at, does seem feasible and it is well to keep the question to the front as one of great practical importance.

### REV. DR. ROBERTSON'S MISSION.

The fervour of Rev. Dr. Robertson's tribute to Rev. C. W. Gordon's mission work of a few years ago in Great Britain awakens an echo in the breasts of all who have sought to estimate rightly the great influence of that work. It was the inspiration of genius; and the popular imagination of Scotland was fired with respect to church work in the great North West. The memory of Mr. Gordon's visit Dr. Robertson found fragrant, and naturally he places his acknowledgements on record in the General Assembly. If we judge rightly Dr. Robertson's own visit this year was also an epoch-making one fruitful of great results. Arriving from Great Britain, when the Assembly was in session he received a most cordial welcome home, and his fervid address abounded in most stirring passages, and interesting details. At the meetings of the General Assemblies he saw the vast questions dealt with in Scotland, England and Ireland affecting Church and Mission Work the world over, and noted the deepening interest manifested in Canada. He had been cordially received by the Colonial Committee, but had found it easier to get resolutions and sympathy than money, or a hearing in the pulpits. The services, excepting those of the morning he found to be thinly attended. A difficulty encountered from the first was the ignorance of the people of Canada. An impression prevailed, from the splendid churches and large salaries paid to ministers here, also the Foreign Mission work carried on, that the church here was wealthy. Then large sums were given to the poor, persecuted Armenians, the famine and plague in India, towards which £60,000 was given by Glasgow; the Diamond Jubilee Fund and other jubilee enterprises; church extension and other schemes. In the face of all these discouragements he had persevered and visited numbers of congregations. He had secured £700 a year, renewals of subscriptions for three years. In other congregations he had been given very reluctantly, in some cases five minutes, in others ten minutes after the sermon to address the