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In looking back upon the past history of the church, we find different periods marked by different tendencies and characteristics. Just as the geologist finds the great periods of the past distinguished by different strata, and by formations marked by peculiar features, so the student of church history finds different ages of the church characterised by different features and tendencies. Some periods have been marked as periods of declension, and others of revival. Some have been marked as periods of bold speculation and of abounding error, while others have been distinguished as times of firm and uncompromising adherence to the truth. Some periods have been marked by a tendency to separation and division, while others have been marked by a tendency to union. We have reason to be thankful that we appear to have entered on a period of this last character, a period when there is among christians a tendency, not to ignore important points of difference, but to dwell on the more important points of agreement, and to seek the union of those who agree on almost all great and important doctrines. In our own land, as in the Lower Provinces and in Australia, we can not only speculate and theorize on the benefits and blessings of union; we actually experience these beneficial results. For this we have good reason to be thankful. We have good reason to be thankful too, that we see the cause of union advancing, especially in Scotland and England. No doubt our own union has not been without some effect in preparing the way for the present state of things, and leading the minds of christian men to the contemplation of the subject.

In our last number we briefly stated the steps which had been taken both in the Free Church, and in the United Presbyterian Church. We are glad to see there has been prompt action on the part of the Committees appointed by the respective churches. They have held one joint meeting, which was mainly of a devotional character. Sub-committees have been appointed for the purpose of ascertaining the actual standards and formulas of the respective churches. It is hoped that other Presbyterian Bodies may also take steps to connect themselves with the present union movement. We shall watch with much interest the progress of matters. No doubt there are points of difficulty and of delicacy, which may require lengthened consideration. Even after a satisfactory basis may be agreed on, so far as matters of doctrine and of principle are concerned,