

Articles Contributed.

The Union Question.

Mr. Editor,—As a friend, and a warm, if not influential, advocate of the Union of Presbyterians throughout the Dominion of Canada—from the Atlantic to the Pacific—I have read with no little disappointment and regret the letter on this question, signed “D,” which appeared in the RECORD for November. That letter made me acquainted for the first time—and I have no doubt that many more of the readers of the RECORD will say the same—with the fact that there is, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Pictou, a general and active opposition to the proposed, or, more correctly, the decided union of the Presbyterian Churches in Canada—that is, as far as the highest Courts of the four negotiating Churches can decide the matter. The more I think of this opposition, the more grieved and perplexed I am, when I view it in connection with the action of our Synod at its last meeting. Every member of Synod, and every reader of the RECORD, are aware that, after a full and exhaustive discussion of the Union Question in all its bearings—and especially, as far as human foresight could forecast, in all its consequences—the Synod, without a dissenting voice, declared in favour of Union. The vote on that occasion included a representative from every congregation within the bounds not only of the County, but also of the Presbytery of Pictou. Moreover it ought to be remembered that there was not a single member who gave a silent vote; for every representative spoke most distinctly and more or less emphatically in favour of Mr. Grant’s motion. With this unanimous decision of our Synod—or rather, of our whole Church through its official representatives in Synod assembled—with this recent declaration of our whole Church in favour of union, may we not ask, not in anger, but in love for consistency and honesty, what meaneth this opposition? who are the leaders? and on what grounds do they advocate their opposition? We have a right to know them, and to have an explanation of their attitude. Let them throw off the veil of secrecy. Let them come forth

into the light of day. We do not want to exercise our minds in guessing and surmising motives. We have, therefore, a right to demand an explanation, because the Church cannot reverse its decision, or recede from the position taken up by the last Synod, unless good and hitherto unadvanced reasons can be given.

If the opposition—constitutional it cannot be called, for their conduct is at variance with the laws and precedents of the Church of Scotland—if they expect to influence the Church outside of the Presbytery of Pictou, they must produce arguments which appeal to our reason, and to our “*esprit du corps*.” The opposition should remember that they represent only a small though important section of our Church of the Maritime Provinces. The majority, therefore, of our Church, who are favourable to Union, should have an opportunity to consider the reasons and grounds on which the opposition take their stand; and sure am I, if these reasons are valid, the majority will not hesitate for a moment to be guided by them. It is most undesirable that a single hoof should be left behind in entering the union fold. And let me tell the opposition that it is love for the good old Church of Scotland which is the leading motive of the advocates of the Union. She has been, for more than three centuries, such a blessing to Scotland, that we are desirous to have her transplanted, so that her goodly boughs may overshadow and drop fruit in every part of Canada, which is the native or adopted country of us all. Love to our Saviour, to our Church, and to our country, is the mainspring of this Union movement.

“D.” further informs us, that “our ministers, if not apathetic, yet declare themselves powerless to influence the people in the matter” of Union. (1) Apathetic they cannot be, for they have expressed, both by speech and vote, their desire for union at meeting after meeting of Synod. Surely they are not beholden to the shield of the Synod, either for the fact or measure of their interest in this matter. Surely they cannot advocate with such warmth as they do their union views in Synod, and, as soon as they come in contact with their congregations, hold them in abeyance, or express them