

Union. The Unionists were most to my mind; but I had my own congregation to think about.

At first I thought it might be a duty to remain out of the Union if by doing so I could help preserve a united congregation out of the Union if not within; thinking, too, that it might make the working relation between the future churches happier if this policy were pursued by myself and others in like position, and that later on I might quietly pass into the new church if it seemed best.

*Two Types in New Presbyterian Church—
"Theological Extremes."*

I soon began to see difficulties in the way of such a course. When I took stock of the ministers who would most likely be in the new Presbyterian Church, I discovered there were two elements that would not make a happy blend, nor work together to produce an effective church, according to my way of thinking. The theological extremes of our church are out against Union. There are those who think Union is of the Devil, as I heard one man say, and that it is a sign of the last days and of an ungodly liberalism in theology. There are fine souls in this group, but they tend to forget that we have in our church a living Spirit of truth who has yet some light to throw on life and upon the Word. Then there are the radicals, so far as we have them in our church; those whom our fundamentalist friends would call modernists. They are opposed to Union because, for one reason the new creed is too definite, and one will be expected to mean what he says when he professes to be in substantial agreement with it. To quote the words of the President of the Presbyterian Association: "They feel that the doctrinal burden of the proposed basis will be heavier than that of the Westminster Confession. They are quite content to give assent to the ancient creeds or the reformed confessions as symbols of the Catholic faith, as the banner around which the champions of truth and freedom rallied, so long as they are allowed liberty to interpret them in their historic setting."

How are the followers of Dr. Torrey and those liberals going to work and live and think together in a church much smaller than the present Presbyterian one, without harsh conflicts and a persistent mistrust, that will not lead to happiness or strength? They are going to be a combination that do not attract one.

Yet I was not in a hurry to decide. I was looking for light, and thought that circumstances would show the way. I was disappointed when the minority, instead of accepting defeat when the church by her constitutional procedure had finally decided on Union—instead of accepting the division of the property as the proposed Bill of Union provided, so that each party could arrange to go their own way—rather, resorted to legal proceedings to stop action.

The Assembly Committee took the initiative in approaching the Presbyterian Association to try and reach a satisfactory agreement in reference to the name and status of the non-concurring congregations and the divisions of the property. The minority took the ground that discussion was useless—unless counsel for Presbyterian Church would concede their principle, that the Presbyterian Church would not enter the Union as a Church. They gave no help in drafting the Bill, only finding fault with the result. This has been the most regrettable feature of the whole movement and, I feel, showed they were not wisely led, and in my opinion sadly compromised the future Presbyterian Church.

*How Presbyterian Minority Alienated
Sympathy.*

My sympathy was increasingly alienated by this attitude taken; not so much because they were unwilling for sentimental or other reasons to enter Union, as for their unwilling-

ness to agree to differ with the majority and each go their own way with their share of the common property, to each do with it the work of the Kingdom. Then about a year ago it was brought to my attention that many of the opponents of Union in my own congregation were expressing themselves that I ought to declare my position and let them know where I stood. I had felt this before from the Unionist side. It then dawned upon me that my silence was interpreted as waiting to see what the congregation would do and that I would take the advantageous course and follow it. This pressure helped me to crystalize my thinking and I then resolved whatever the congregation might do, I should enter Union. I took the opportunity to tell one or two on both sides what I purposed doing, and then, as some will remember, I announced from the pulpit reasons why I would not then declare myself, but that before a vote was taken I should do so.

The resolve I then made continued to be confirmed and strengthened by events, especially by what happened at the Private Bills Committee as reported by the press. There the official spokesmen of the Presbyterian Association declared the grounds on which the opponents of Union lay claim to being the true Presbyterian Church, and not the Unionists. These grounds are the departure of the basis of Union from the doctrine of the Confession of Faith and their own adherence to it. The claim was made that the Confession of Faith literally interpreted is the Church's subordinate standard.

*"Liberty of Conscience" Allowed—
and Denied?*

A word of explanation is necessary here. For the past half century there have been consciences that have been restless, both elders' and ministers' under an acceptance of all parts of the Confession indiscriminately, and notably that part of it that has to do with foreordination. The present method of subscription, were one not allowed some freedom, puts a hardship upon one, e.g., there are a good many pre-millennialists in our church and that among the most conservative of our people. They have been using the privilege of departing from the doctrine of the Confession, which is a post-millennial document. But at present they may do so, with a good conscience, for the reason I am going to state shortly. One of the most spiritual of the graduates of my own college in the early nineties refused ordination because he could not accept the Confession's statement in reference to foreordination. His loyalty to his own Church made him decline ordination from any other Church and he lived out his active ministerial life as an Evangelist, with a glorious record, and remained unordained to the end of his days. Somewhere about the beginning of this century the General Assembly having this matter in view, expressed its mind on the subject, and left with ministers and elders an understanding that on doctrine not central in the Confession, liberty of conscience is allowed, and many ministers and elders who are in substantial agreement with the fundamental doctrines of the Confession, occupy their places because this relief has been granted.

But those who are opposing Union reverse all this, as they claim the church has no right to alter her Standards. If not, she has not the right to grant the relief I have mentioned, and to be true to their own declaration, the future Presbyterian Church will be one adhering to the Confession in its every jot and tittle, without any relief for the conscience from any section.

*"Essentials and Unessentials of the
Confession."*

Parallel to this statement before the Private Bills Committee, there is the printed statement of claims issued against the Union Committee, a document which I have read.

It clearly states the differences between the Confession of Faith and the Basis of Union that are a departure from Presbyterian doctrine, and which invalidates the Church's claim to carry her property into the Union. Most of the differences quoted are from the sections of the Confession dealing with the decrees of God and pre-destination. One or two of the sections may be quoted in full:

"By the decree of God for the manifestation of His Glory, some men and Angels are pre-destinated unto everlasting life and others fore-ordained unto everlasting death."

"These angels and men thus pre-destinated and fore-ordained are particularly and unchangeably designed and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

I quote further from this Bill of Claim: "While all men are sinners, yet Christ died only for those who shall be saved, i.e., the elect. Those not appointed unto life God passes by."

What is that but putting among the essentials of the Confession, what of recent years we had been relegating to the unessentials or the part we would like to forget, and taking away the relief we enjoyed? It is a promise that the future Presbyterian Church gives no relief—unless this has all been said to gain a legal victory, and then to be disregarded, which would be worse still.

A Motion, Amendment—and Implications.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly, the following resolution was submitted by the Union Committee: "This Church has the right and power, subject to no civil authority, to legislate and adjudicate finally in all matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline in the Church; to frame, adopt and modify its subordinate standards of faith and the right to unite with any other Christian Church without loss of its identity, on terms which it finds to be consistent with its own principles, doctrines and religious standards."

An amendment was presented by Principal Fraser to thank the Parliamentary Committee, and withdrawing Bill until civil courts had passed on its constitutionality. This amendment made no reference to the rights claimed in the motion, and when the first resolution of the motion was voted upon the opponents of Union voted against it. Two or three opponents could not face up to such a drastic step and declined to vote.

Such a vote implies the utter impossibility of a Union in this world or for all time so long as one individual is opposed. Is it any use waiting for another vote when no vote would have power to make any difference?

Read negatively the vote of the minority would read: "The church has not the right and power, etc. . . ." The result is that the Presbyterian Church must continue for all time with every sentence of the Confession of Faith as her statement of creed—the Spirit of Truth notwithstanding. This is to my mind hoisting the signal: "We have all the light; we never change"—a dangerous proceeding which suggests a grieving of the Spirit.

This involves that the Presbyterian Churches of the future, if they are true to their own declaration, must recall the relief the church in the past has given. Surely this means that the good and worthy pre-millennialists among them must cease to preach the doctrine in which they believe or be untrue to their ordination vows. The Confession of Faith—rightly or wrongly—is post-millennial.

There are some earnest Presbyterians who disagree with the baptismal doctrine of the Confession. Indeed I know one who has done great service in the campaign against Union in this congregation, who was herself baptised last winter by immersion by a Baptist minister of this city, because she was not satisfied with the doctrine and practice of her own church and the Confession. My own