

We may add that we are glad to understand that Sir George Sinclair's letter on Union, which has been repeatedly printed in Scotland, is in course of being reprinted here, and will soon be offered for sale at such a price as ought to secure for it a wide circulation.]

MR. EDITOR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th inst., in which you request me to forward for insertion in the *Record*, the minute of the recent meeting of our Union Committee. In complying with this request, I shall crave the liberty of prefacing my notice of that meeting, and its results, with such explanatory statements as may be necessary to enable your readers generally, to form a correct idea of the question at issue between the United Presbyterian Synod and our own Church, and of the causes which have succeeded for the present in arresting all negotiation on the subject of a union between the two bodies. In other circumstances I would have satisfied myself with simply transmitting to you the deliverance of the Committee, which you asked for, and would have permitted that deliverance to go forth to the public eye without note or comment; but it is manifest, I think, that this would now be inadvisable; inasmuch as we have been publicly accused, through the columns of the *Canadian United Presbyterian Magazine*, with a violation of Christian charity in the course we have pursued in this matter, and with cherishing a disposition to interpose barriers in the way of union on a Scriptural basis. These, sir, are not very pleasant accusations to lie under; and it will be allowed by most persons, that charges of this sort should be made, when made at all, with extreme caution. It is certain that they can serve but rarely to promote any good end, even when they happen to be based upon tolerably adequate grounds; and it is no less certain, that they seldom fail to operate mischievously when they originate, as they seem to do in the present instance, merely in a little unnecessary warmth of feeling, proceeding, as that in its turn may do, from a misconception of the views and sentiments of the party accused.

Let us see what are the exact bearings of the case as it now stands, and the sum of the difficulties which have thus far prevented a joint-meeting of the Committees.

Our brethren of the United Presbyterian Church did themselves the honour, at their last Synodical meeting of issuing a public testimony expressive of their earnest desire for union, on certain grounds, with other Presbyterian Churches, and with our own in particular. The resolutions which they drew up on this subject, and transmitted to our Synod, were conceived in an excellent spirit, and they were no doubt considered by their framers, as exhibiting a fair basis for the union which they desired to see achieved.

Unfortunately, however, this overture has thus far been barren of practical effect; and, from present appearances, it is not likely ever to lead to the harmless experiment of bringing the committees on union together, and giving them an opportunity of comparing views on the points upon which they are supposed to be at issue. This failure of a movement so well intentioned in its origin and aim is doubtless to be regretted; but there is nothing whatever in the circumstances of the case, to furnish parties on either side with any feasible temptation to the display of temper, or the use of recriminating language. A correspondent of the *Magazine* above referred to, fancies indeed, that he can perceive the ultimate cause of the whole difficulty in the workings of an uncharitable spirit among the members of our

Synod; and finding, as he imagines, a firm footing on this hypothesis, he is plainly under the impression, that it is his bounden duty to rebuke us sharply for our waywardness, which, accordingly, he does no fail to do. It would serve no good purpose to attempt anything like a formal reply to the effusions of this anonymous brother; but it may be of use to remark, that if obstacles have arisen, of such a description, as to render them, in the opinion of our United Presbyterian friends, a sufficient reason for their declining any present attempt at negotiation with us, they must, in this case, consent to bear what, upon enquiry may appear to be their fair proportion of blame.

In my opinion, their first error, if they really wished us to appoint a Committee and leave it unsaddled by any conditions, lay in their setting the example of announcing the conditions by which their own Committee were to be controlled; their second error, as disclosed more particularly by the course which their Committee have pursued, consisted, as it would seem, in the somewhat extravagant estimate they had formed, as to the amount of concession necessary on our part, in order to justify them in even consenting to meet with us, for the purpose of mutual consultation. The terms laid down in their Synodical resolutions, and proposed for our acceptance, constitute professedly a draft of the platform on which, as a Church, they have taken their stand; and our instant acquiescence in the terms of these resolutions, our unhesitating adoption of this platform, appears to have constituted the first instalment in that line of concession which our brethren deemed requisite, not to a union merely, but simply to clear the way to a joint-meeting of the Committees. Even thus far, however, they might have found us disposed to be perfectly pliant to their wishes; but their refusal to meet with us is apt to breed the suspicion, that this measure of compliance would not have sufficed, and that the demands upon us *in limine* were really intended to be of a more extensive sort than the obvious rendering of their resolutions would seem to indicate. The fourth of these resolutions, and the cardinal one, reads thus:—

"That considering how much unhappy and mischievous division among Evangelical Presbyterians has been occasioned by the question respecting the power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion, or, in plainer terms, by the question of ecclesiastical establishments, the Synod takes the present opportunity of stating that the principle of this Church, in regard to that question, has always been, that it shall be a matter of forbearance; and the Synod has great pleasure in reflecting that while this principle seems just and sound in itself, it has this special excellence, that it presents a basis on which persons differing widely in their views respecting establishments, may nevertheless conscientiously and honourably unite, provided none of them regard these views of such vital and momentous importance as to demand that they be made a term of Christian or ministerial communion."

I presume, Mr. Editor, that we would have no difficulty as a Church in giving in our adherence to the principle here stated, and joining heart and hand with our brethren on the basis it presents, provided we were not asked to suppress our united testimony to other principles in reference to the power or duties of the Civil Magistrate, besides those immediately connected with the question of ecclesiastical establishments. The principle of forbearance on that latter question is, for all practical ends, as fully recognizable in our own Church as it can be among