

The Record.

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THE CONSUMMATION OF THE UNION.

Our present number will scarcely have reached the more distant of our readers, before the consummation of the long-contemplated Union between our own Church and the United Presbyterian Church. We doubt not the occasion will be an interesting one, and we may warrantably look for very important and beneficial results. In social life, parties sometimes are united, anticipating a bright and brilliant future, when perhaps their mutual acquaintance has only been for a few months or days. It has not been so in our case. The union has not been hastily arranged, under the influence of a romantic or sentimental feeling, which might before long pass away. It has been long thought of; nearly half the period allotted to a generation has passed away since the negotiations were first opened. The preliminaries have been most carefully considered; every inch of the ground has been well examined, and there has been a most careful and scrupulous anxiety to maintain the principles of the Church unimpaired. We believe disinterested parties at a distance will admit that this care has not been exercised in vain, but that in truth we have advanced to our present position, without giving up or compromising any of the great principles which it has been the glory of the Church hitherto to maintain.

We can truly declare, too, that the step which is so soon to be taken commands the approval of the vast proportion of our people. For a number of years there have been before the Synod memorials in favour of union. But we do not remember a single memorial being presented to the Synod in opposition to union. The truth is, very many of our office-bearers and people had made more rapid progress in the matter than the Church courts, and regarded our movements as unnecessarily tardy. We do by no means try to persuade ourselves or others, that there is perfect unanimity in every congregation on the subject, and that there are none who disapprove of the step. It could not reasonably be expected that in so large a constituency there would be perfect unanimity. We know there are some, whose christian character cannot but command our respect, who do not see their way clear in the matter. But it is undeniable that the vast proportion of the people not only approve of the union, but are cordial, yea enthusiastic.

We thank God that it is so, and we trust that any of our people who may yet see difficulties, and whose minds may to some extent be occupied with doubts and apprehensions, may have their doubts removed, and be enabled to go along with their brethren in the important step which is being taken. It would be cause of unspeakable gratitude to God, were the union to be complete, without a remnant on either side.

The change which the union will effect will be in many respects important, in regard to the outward circumstances of the Church. Our numbers will be greatly increased. Our means for the education of candidates for the ministry will be greater. Our missionary power will be augmented. Let us earnestly hope and pray that our zeal, our spirituality, our devotedness, may be also increased, and that we may find in ourselves, through the influence of the Spirit of God, raised to a higher measure of spiritual life and power. It would be a most blessed thing if, in connexion with the union, we were privileged to witness the indications of spiritual revival throughout our congregations.

From our present interesting position we look back to the past with gratitude to the great Head of the Church. He has condescended to favour us with many special tokens of His favour. True, the memories of the past awaken deep feelings in our hearts. We recall our early struggles, our difficulties, and conflicts. We think of not a few who were mainly instrumental, by God's blessing, in overcoming these difficulties and in firmly planting the standard of our Church on Canadian soil, who are now no longer with us in the flesh. But we look forward with hope and confidence to the future. He who has been mindful of us in time past, will, we doubt not, bless us still. We would trust in Him. May he pour out upon us of His Spirit, and bless our united Church with the graces of His Spirit, and with the fruits of holiness and peace.

'REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST.'

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We regret that the writer of this Tract should have gone over to the side of the Anti-pædo-Baptists;—but we are rather pleased that he has given his "reasons;" and we think we have examined these sufficiently to assure others that the cause of Infant baptism is in no serious danger from either the logic or the theology of the pamphlet. The pamphlet, however, is very well written; and the amiable author—who is quite in earnest—has had so good a place

in our esteem, that we are in no danger of handling our dissecting knife uncharitably, while as critics we lay bare his impotent premises, or lame conclusions. There is not an argument here whose fallacy has not been exposed a hundred times; and if our good friend would just turn up the Institutes of John Calvin, B. IV. ch. 16,—whom we believe he reveres,—he will see that his imagined strongholds were overturned three centuries ago, with a power of reasoning, which will make him almost wonder as he reads his pamphlet again, that he should have supposed them to be of such strength. One thing Mr. Alexander is right in—and he commits himself to it manfully in the earlier part of his discourse—that the Abrahamic Covenant and the law of circumcision is a main fortress of the cause he opposes—and which not feeling himself able to maintain as a defender formerly of Infant Baptism, he tells his hearers he now surrenders the whole cause with it. But, for the very reason that he has failed to unsettle this part of our argument, we only feel the greater confidence in the whole. He asserts that the covenant with Abraham was not the covenant of grace.—Well, we can both admit and deny this. The covenant of grace was made before Abraham, or even Adam, existed. The question is, does this covenant with Abraham include a development of the covenant of grace—and did circumcision, as a seal appended to it, seal the spiritual as well as temporal blessing? Now this question is settled in one verse of Paul, Rom. iv. 11, which, however, our friend at Brantford does not look at; in fact reasons as if no such verse were in scripture at all. He goes off into an argument very easily answered, that the Abrahamic covenant included all Israel according to the flesh, and that every member of a Jewish family was in right of birth a member of the Jewish Church—hence the privileges of the theocracy merely as a temporal institution, must be what were sealed by circumcision; and he wonders that any one would identify such a church privilege—if it is to be called one—with a privilege of Christ's institution, and of the Gospel church. But there stands this stubborn assertion of Paul, which we do not wonder that a Baptist looks at with his closed eye, and a new proselyte, in his haste, argues as if he had forgotten,—that circumcision was a seal "of the righteousness of faith." Aye, and worse for you still, he adds—"that he might be the father of all them that believe, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." Now, here are children—unconscious children—admitted to the seal of grace; admitted as subjects of a sacrament which is explained by Paul (Col. 2) to