

THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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PRESBYTERIAN UNION.

Any one who has had much intercourse with the ministers and adherents of the Parent Church in Scotland cannot fail to have observed that of late years the current of public opinion has set strongly in favour of union. There is evidently a sincere desire to forget and forgive the past, and to lose sight of the little differences that separate good men from each other, and hinder them from working harmoniously together. But, although we have known that this state of things existed, it is only of late that leading men have commenced to speak and to write on the subject. In this number will be found a considerable portion of the address of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in which it will be seen that in his opinion the overtures for union should proceed from the Church of Scotland. We have also inserted in this number an able article on the subject of Presbyterian Union in the Colonies from the Church of Scotland "Record" for June, which will be read with interest by our readers; and we are sorry that we have not room in this number to insert a portion of a pamphlet on the same subject, recently published, with a preface by the Rev. Norman McLeod, D.D. It is strange that, while the leading men in Scotland are coming out in favour of union, there are in this country men, who, while very loudly proclaiming their attachment to the Church of Scotland, are very bitter in denouncing union and its advocates. We surely may hope that, when they carefully consider the course of the Parent Church, they will change their opinion and come over to the side of union. Our readers must have read with great pleasure in our last number the remarks of our own Moderator on this subject in his closing address to the Synod. There is much wisdom and good sense in the observations of the Reverend Doctor, and we differ very little from him. We have always held that union should be brought about by the

advice—certainly with the consent—of the Mother Church. That this consent will be given when the proper time arrives, no one who has read the debates on the Australian Union can doubt. But we are bound to say that in our opinion the right time has not yet come, and we would caution our friends in the country to beware of making any rash movement in this matter. It is better for us to wait patiently until the arrival of a more auspicious season, and in the meantime let us continue to discuss the question in a forbearing and Christian spirit, and to cherish towards our brethren who are not yet united with us the most friendly and frequent intercourse; and by all means let us strenuously work to build up and strengthen our own portion of the Church, assured that, the stronger and the more effective we can make it, the better will be our position, and the greater our power to do good. We call the attention of our readers to an article on union, signed "Presbutero," being the second which has appeared from the same pen. We also call attention to a long article with a long postscript, signed "Auld Kirk," in which our readers will find union and its advocates denounced in pretty round terms. We do not find fault with any man for the free and open expression of his opinions; we claim that right for ourselves, and we will in our columns to those who differ from us. But it appears to us that this writer is fighting with a shadow. No one desires to cram union down the throats of either ministers or people. Unless the desire for union becomes very nearly unanimous, no one should wish to see it accomplished. As to turning our backs upon the Mother Church, we can only repeat that in our opinion the best friends of the Church of Scotland in Canada—those who will do most for her—are the union men. In regard to its being incompetent for our Church Courts to discuss this question, we hold that we are an independent Church, and that we have an