

wards Church Union," were among the opening words of this prominent churchman. One reason was—"they were perfectly sure of their motive, which was to discover and do the will of God, and to bless humanity in a larger way than they could in their separate estate."

Next, he said, they had been loyal to the General Conference of the Methodist Church, which, in their last gathering, dealt with the subject unanimously. Comment on the distinction between the "Entity" and the "Identity" of a Church was followed by a humorous reference to the fact that he had been referred to as "Pope" Chown, and also called a "Pirate."

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IN SERIOUS VEIN, Dr. Chown confessed he had written articles for the press and destroyed them. "Determining what the will of God is from the providence of God, we have gone forward." On the other hand, "they did not forget that Presbyterians had had to fight for their existence," and in this connection he referred to the story of the Covenanters . . . "Perhaps the Scottish people or people of Scottish ancestry"—(he used "Scotch," but he should have known better) — "had a peculiar difficulty of their own. They clothed their denomination with all the glory of Scotland's national life."

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DR. CHOWN WENT ON TO EXPLAIN that the real attitude of the Methodist Church had never been an aggressive one. In briefly reviewing the negotiations—from Principal Patrick's statement onwards—he said "Methodism never desired that the Presbyterian Church should come into union with any loss of power." Then he referred to the eighty per cent. (Presbyterians) who had been found in favour of it. . . . He added that "if the opponents of union would preach their creed every Sunday while the vote was being taken, he thought that would go far to settle the Church Union question."

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CONSIDERING ITS BEARING ON THE COMMUNITY LIFE, we make no apology for giving space here to this Church Union question—and may give more time and space to it. Frankly we believe in greater Christian unity, and, on general principles, have no hesitation in voting for Union. But it is quite consistent with that to say that many people who believe in Union may not believe in it (any more than in peace) "at any price."

In religion, as in politics however, one big trouble often is that each side wishes every one to take the "all or nothing" attitude; and those who have the fortune or misfortune to see on both sides points that appeal and repel, may find themselves in the most uncomfortable of positions and be tempted to exclaim with Mercutio, "A plague on both your houses!"; only duty must lead us in such a case to say "blessing" instead.

Meantime it is certain that this Union question bids fair to separate—so far as individual church attendance at least is concerned—friends and relatives, and even to divide families. At the time of this writing the number of Presbyterian "non-concurring" congregations reported is such as to make the onlooker, not carried away by the arguments of either side, question if the powers that be in the Presbyterian Church have not been over-hasty in bringing the matter to a head throughout the country as a whole,

and whether (apart from the prairies) some system of increasing co-operation for a further period of years might not have been preferable, and reduced feeling and friction to a minimum?

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AMONG PRESBYTERIANS, ADVOCATES ON EACH SIDE have included men prominent in the life of British Columbia. Dr. Clay, of Victoria, may not have been as conspicuous as Dr. R. G. McBeth, of Vancouver, but both are known as strong opponents of Union. Dr. E. D. McLaren, originally for Union, latterly adopted an attitude of "not yet" or "too soon." Principal W. H. Smith, of Westminster Hall, on the other hand, has been one of the most earnest and strenuous workers on the Union side. Indeed, it is not too much to suggest—what will certainly be said anyhow—that Dr. Smith's attitude and expositions have had not a little to do with the result just announced at St. John's Presbyterian Church, Vancouver, of which he was formerly the minister. Mr. A. D. McKenzie, the present minister, was late in definitely declaring himself, but Dr. Smith has been in evidence at different times, and will no doubt get blame or credit according to the strength of feeling held by one side or the other.

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ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, VANCOUVER, has usually been reckoned the outstandingly representative church of that city, and perhaps also of the whole of British Columbia. On the occasion of the voting in 1911 and 1915 or 1916, it had a majority against Union. Out of a vote of 601 at this time it has given a majority of 89 in favour of Union. That is a good majority no doubt—especially considering that the majority was formerly on the other side—but it is none too big to satisfy those who wished to see substantial and preferably overwhelming majorities. Criticisms affecting workers on both sides are inevitable. In this connection readers will observe what "the Wayside Philosopher" has to say in this issue—of course in dealing with the subject in a general way, and without reference to any particular congregation.

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POINTS IN THE CREED or theological beliefs set forth by some opponents to Union, on the one hand, and the possibilities for so-called "political" development by ecclesiastical combinations on the other, equally merit comment. But space says this must be a case of "to be continued."

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GOOD LIGHTING AND CHEERFULNESS ARE ASSOCIATED, and, apart altogether from the question of Union, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Vancouver, has recently been improved outside and in. The congregation as a whole and all who have occasion to use the church building, may well pass votes of thanks to those who collected and to those who gave the extra funds required. In this connection it may be in place to note that ex-Alderman T. H. Kirk has been the enterprising treasurer of this congregation for quite a number of years, and no doubt those who value sustained practical interest in any worthy cause will join in wishing him and his family a pleasant and profitable time in their projected round-the-world trip.

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