

THE

Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter.

VOL. XXVIII.

OCTOBER, 1890.

No. 10.

ORIGINAL.

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF CHURCH UNION.*

BY REV. J. S. THOMPSON, OF UTICA, O.

John 17 : 21.

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

The question of church union is one that meets us at every point, and it is well for us to look at the question fairly, and seek to be ready to meet it as it comes before us. It is one of the questions that is up and will not be put down till it is heard. Union is in the very air that we breathe, and there is no use in thinking that we can ignore it. We hear it talked on every hand; by those that have made it a study, and who think that they have reached a plan which will meet the question; and by those who have given very little thought to the matter, but who have caught the craze, and who think that union will be the panacea for all the evils that exist in the church or in the world, and so they talk union without knowing what it means, or what the result of the thing that they urge would be. It is talked by some who would be willing to give up almost anything and everything that a union might be consummated, and they are willing to leave the future to work out the result; and it is talked by others who have no other idea than that all others shall come to them. Bases of union are being proposed, some of them embracing almost everything, and others embracing almost nothing. One proposes that we shall have a federation of churches, modeled after our federation of States; while another says No, that will never do, we must have a complete union or nothing at all. Revision is urged on the ground that it will tend to promote union, and it is just as ardently argued against on the ground that it will be a barrier in the way of union. There are enthusiasts who think they see in every movement of

*Published by request of the congregation.

purifies their eyes until they are made capable of seeing God. At the time that the truth should be made known to men in all its fullness it was also commanded to be announced throughout the earth and during all time. God gave Moses only one people and a specified time. All ages and all nations belong to Jesus Christ. His elect are everywhere and his church, diffused throughout all the earth, will never cease to bring them forth. "Go ye therefore into all nations and disciple them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and lo, I am with you always."

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

OUR DUTY TO THE FREEDMEN.

BY REV. G. M. ELLIOTT.

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."—*Judges 5: 23.*

It is probable that in the time of Deborah, Meroz was a place of some importance. But now its place is unknown and its very name has perished. A curse was pronounced upon it such as has been pronounced on many other places, and also upon peoples that failed to improve their opportunities to serve the Lord. Are we excusable in this day, if we remain inactive when the powers of darkness are rallying, and the cries of the distressed, the needy and the helpless are so loud and urgent? God is giving to the church of to-day a rare opportunity to rally for those that have been long in ignorance and spiritual darkness. He answered the prayers of those that so earnestly pleaded with him thirty years ago, that the slaves might be set free. By terrible things in righteousness he answered the prayers of his people. His answer has placed upon the church still greater obligations. He answered by giving freedom to millions of souls degraded to the lowest depths by long bondage and deprivations of a pure gospel. He asks his people now to manifest their appreciation of his answer to prayer by rallying against the host, the strong host of evils that are the outgrowth of slavery. Verily there is a duty here.

The evils that threaten the negro race in its present condition are awful, and they are manifold. Neither church nor State can safely ignore them. Something must be done. We are at a crisis. The crisis of missions is upon us. Shall these people receive a Christian education and become a power in our country in hastening to make our nation the first that shall crown Jesus Christ "Lord of all," or shall they be left alone—neglected, left to themselves and to the priestcraft of Rome, and eventually become an element that will work the destruction of our government?

It seems as if our church is now resting on oars. There seems

to be an impression that our work is now done. We were the main factors in emancipating the slave, and now we may rest. He can now take care of himself. This is a serious error. The negro needs the attention and help of the church more to-day than ever. He is liberated from physical bondage, but is left in a condition that is in many respects worse than anything that has heretofore characterized him. Any thinking person who knows what the negro's mental, moral, and religious training was in the days of slavery will at once see the force of the statement. It was a training (some would say an influence, but there was a training process in it), that appealed to the baser elements of human nature rather than to the nobler qualities. Certainly the institution of slavery debased rather than elevated. Now these millions are free. They bring with them into freedom all the ills of centuries of degradation and barbarism and oppression. Only a few have received the light. The lump is not yet leavened. Here are masses awaiting our attention. What will we do? One in our church, now fallen asleep, has said: "It has come to be a truism of both history and philosophy, that no savage people ever elevated themselves by development from within, and that where such elevation has taken place, it has been in all cases by operation of some influence brought to bear upon them from without." We do not mean to say that the freedmen are savages; it is the principle that we are using. They cannot elevate themselves. The influence must come from without, not from within. They must be helped if they are ever to be raised out of their present degradation. Cities and towns are more fortunate, but the country districts are in a lamentable condition. What will our own church do in this matter? Shall we say, let the past suffice? God is calling us to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. If we are indifferent we shall not be guiltless. Rome is busy discharging her duty in this matter, if indeed we may so speak. Read the following from a Catholic report: "24 dioceses show that there are 138,213 Catholic negroes out of a population of 5,000,000. Twenty churches are conducted by thirty-one priests for negroes exclusively. There are 99 schools, which are attended by 6,093 pupils. During the past year 4,093 negro children were received into the Catholic church. Eight years ago there were but two churches for colored Catholics in this country; one in Baltimore, and one in St. Louis."

Let Protestants ponder over these figures. Let them ask if they can allow Romanism to gobble up these ignorant masses and use them to accomplish her designs in this country. They plead, "no caste." This is at present having great weight with the colored people. Caste prejudice in the Protestant church is causing many of our denominations to lose their hold on the negro. This is a fact to which many can testify. May God open the eyes, and the hearts, and the purses of his church with regard to the claims of this needy people!