

the uprightness, good faith, and simple-hearted desire for the interests of the truth, by which they are actuated as powerfully as ourselves, would have led them cordially to welcome and frankly to respond to—along with a determination to refuse all specific reference in the Basis to those important points on which information was desiderated, is fitted to excite surprise among all to whom the principles involved are dear, either that unsoundness in regard to them obtain among ourselves or at least a most melancholy and alarming indifference to their maintenance.

VII. That in view of all the circumstances of the case as referred to in the above reasons of dissent, the subscribers would regard Union upon the aforesaid Basis as necessarily involving a dangerous compromise of principle.

(Signed,) JOHN BAYNE.
MICHAEL WILLIS.
A. CONSTABLE GEIKIE.
DUNCAN McRUAR.
ROBERT IRVINE.
DANIEL GORDON.
ANDREW WILSON.
JAMES MIDDLEMESS.
MORRIS C. LUTZ.

ANSWERS TO THE REASONS OF DISSENT BY THE REV. DR. BAYNE, AND OTHERS, AGAINST THE DECISION OF SYNOD, ON THE BASIS OF UNION WITH THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The Commission of Synod appointed to answer the Reasons of Dissent by the Rev. Dr. Bayne, and others, from the decision of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, on the basis of Union submitted by the United Presbyterian Church, have agreed to the following answers, viz:—

I.

1. It is allowed that the object of preparing a Basis of Union "was to provide an assurance that substantial harmony on the important subjects which it embraced, obtained among the members of the respective Synods, and to prevent, as far as possible, division on said subjects in a United Synod." But in reply to the dissentients it is affirmed that the Basis adopted by the two Synods does secure these ends, inasmuch as it contains a full and explicit statement of the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations, and of the duty of the Civil Magistrate to regulate his official procedure, as well as his personal conduct by the revealed will of Christ—these being the only subjects on which the views held by members of the United Presbyterian Church have been supposed to differ from those held by the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

2. As to the matter complained of in this reason, viz: That the Basis contains no declaration on the subject of the leading applications of the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations, and no definition of the extent or limits of the province within which the Civil Magistrate is to confess and serve Christ as King, it is replied that it was deemed neither expedient nor necessary to burden the Basis with any such definition or declaration, though in truth, Article IV. of the Basis does contain a statement of the province within which the Civil Magistrate is to confess and serve Christ as King, sufficiently precise and comprehensive in its terms, as to embrace the teaching of Scripture on the subject, as well as the recognised faith of our Church. The instructions of last Synod to the Committee on Union were, not to set forth applications of principles, but to draw up a Basis in harmony with principles, to which the Synod then gave its assent, and which are substantially the same as those contained in the Basis now adopted. It was well understood that the applications in question had been the subject of long and careful deliberation by the

Union Committees of both Bodies, the results of which as reported to the Synod of 1853, were regarded as highly satisfactory, showing that whilst differences of opinion did exist on the minor relations of the questions at issue, there was yet so substantial agreement in regard to their main features and applications between the two Churches, as to afford the assurance that the union, if once effected, would be real and harmonious.

The Commission would on this point reply further: That the Basis was prepared in the light of, and having special reference to the leading application of the principles in question, as reported to both Synods in the year 1838 by their respective Committees on Union, and to which neither Synod took any exception. The Basis ought, therefore to be understood in relation to these applications, comprising, as they do, joint agreement on all points concerning which information is desired by the dissentients:

3. With respect to the allegation contained in the concluding part of reason 1, viz: that unscriptural views as to the application of the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations, and as to the extent of the province within which the Civil Magistrate is to confess and serve Christ as King, are often entertained by those who profess to hold the principles laid down in Article IV. of the Basis, the Commission reply that they conceive it impossible for any one to subscribe said article in the plain meaning of its words, and yet to entertain or act upon unscriptural views on the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations. Differences of opinion may be found to exist in the United Church, as indeed they exist among ourselves, as to the manner in which practical effect is, in certain cases, to be given to these principles; but it is not believed that among those by whom the Article is honestly subscribed, these differences can be of such a nature, as either to be inconsistent with ecclesiastical harmony, or to invalidate the integrity of the testimony borne by the United Church to the truths which the Article sets forth. The Synod cannot, in reason, be held responsible for any perversion of such clear and explicit announcements as the Basis contains, and can only deal with it as they would deal with any perversion of other important doctrines when brought up by the ordinary processes of discipline or review.

II.

The answers to Reason I. are, in effect, a reply to the statements of Reason II., showing, as they do, that the approval of the Basis provides the assurance that the persons approving and subscribing the same in the plain and obvious meaning of its terms, cannot fail to hold sound views on the leading applications of its principles. But if a case should arise of any one holding or propagating erroneous opinions in regard to any principle which the Basis contains, it would then not be inconsistent with said Basis that such unsoundness should be dealt with in the same way as unsoundness in regard to the application of any other of the doctrines or principles of our Confession.

III.

In reply to Reason III. the Commission affirm that, whilst no directly official statement of the views of the United Presbyterian Church of Canada has been reported to our Synod, or otherwise laid before it on the leading applications of the principles explicitly stated in said Basis, yet certain it is that evidence of a satisfactory, if not also of an official kind, has been afforded by the minutes of the Joint Committees on Union, as well as by the public statements of the members of said Committees reported to both Synods in the year 1853. Taken together with the explicit statement of principles contained in said Basis, and approved by the Synod of the United Presbyterian

Church, were deemed so satisfactory to our Synod as, in their judgment, to render unnecessary any statements, more official, of said views. The report given in to both Synods in 1853, included statements in reference to the appointment of days of public humiliation and thanksgiving, the question of Sabbath Laws, and the use of the Bible in Common Schools; and it is manifest that the meaning intended to be attached to Article IV. of the Basis could not in the light of said statements, have been misunderstood by the United Presbyterian Synod. Had, therefore, the members of that Synod, while giving their assent to said Basis, believed at the same time that they could not as a body, act in substantial harmony with us on the practical questions above referred to, "we are bound as Christian Brethren to suppose that the uprightness, good faith, and simple-hearted desire for the interests of the truth, by which they are actuated as powerfully as ourselves, would have led them frankly" to communicate to us this fact. Thus the Commission consider that any demand on our part for additional evidence on these points would be tantamount to an expression of want of confidence in the integrity and good faith of the members of the United Presbyterian Synod.

IV.

To this reason it might be a sufficient answer that the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada was not called upon to deal with, or in any way to consider the pamphlet here referred to. But the Commission reply that whilst the said pamphlet was issued by the United Presbyterian Synod, in the year 1848, no such sanction seems to have been given to the voluminous statements contained in it, as that these may be taken as authoritative expositions of their views on the subjects which they embrace. So far from that, the United Presbyterian Synod did in regard to said publication declare in the year 1850 "that they do not entertain this notion, (viz: that the report of the proceedings of said Committee as published, is to be regarded as binding upon the consciences of members of their Church) inasmuch as the statements of our first Committee on Union with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, is no part of our subordinate standards. (Minutes U. P. Synod, 1855, page 43.) This declaration manifestly deprives said publication of all authority as an exposition of the views and opinions of the United Presbyterian Synod. More especially may this conclusion be regarded as true, when it is considered that said Synod has adopted the articles of the Basis of Union as an authoritative expression of their views and opinions on the questions at issue. Any statements, therefore, inconsistent with said articles, which may be quoted from the publication referred to, ought no longer to be regarded as of any force or authority whatever.

V.

Whatever doubts may exist in the minds of members of Synod, as to the general agreement of the United Presbyterian Synod with us on the questions at issue, the Commission cannot allow to be either natural or inevitable; on the contrary, they deem such doubts quite unwarranted by anything adduced in the Reasons of Dissent, or by anything in the actual position of either Synod in regard to the points comprehended in said Reasons.

VI.

If, as the members of the Commission unanimously conceive, there is in the Basis of Union, and in the Reports of the two Committees the assurance of substantial harmony on the important subjects in question, they are at a loss to perceive how it can be reasonable to demand anything more. After all that has taken place, the Commission are decidedly of opinion and might reasonably say, that any desire for further negotiation would indicate on our