

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.—UNION.

It is well known that, for a length of time, efforts toward union among all the Presbyterians in the colony have been made, with considerable prospects of success. The following report, from the *Melbourne Christian Times*, shows that there is now every probability of the union being speedily consummated, if indeed it have not already taken place.

We have formerly intimated, that we decidedly prefer the Basis proposed in Nova Scotia, to that adopted by the Joint Committee of the two Churches in Canada; and we now declare that, in our humble opinion, the Australian Basis is incomparably the best of the three. The chief amendments which it seems to us to require are such, as those favorable to the Canadian Basis, we should think, might readily admit. First we should strike out the Second Book of Discipline which probably not one minister in ten, nor one private member in a hundred, has ever seen or ever will see, which contains nothing in point of doctrine that is not sufficiently provided for in the Confession, which relates very much to a state of things that has passed away, which contains some rules to which neither of the Churches adheres, and which, we may add, is, with respect to the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, no better than the Confession, and can scarcely be worse. We should prefer also giving such a subordinate place to the Form of Church Government and the Directory for Public Worship as is assigned to them in the Canadian Basis. We do not know any Presbyterian Church in which these documents are strictly followed. Dr. Robert Lee, is defending his innovations and baffling the Established Presbytery of Edinburgh just by falling back on the Directory and Form. After such a Basis as the Australian one has been exhibited, we cannot believe that the Canadian article will be adopted by the Synods. The spirit and tendency of the age reclaim against it.

MEETING OF ESTABLISHED ORIGIN SYNOD.

The annual meeting of the Established Church Synod was held on the 1st December, and continued until the evening of the 3rd December. There was a large number of ministers, elders, and others, in attendance. Concerning union, nothing definite was arrived at at this meeting. The committee, in whose hands it has been for a considerable time, was re-appointed. An anxious desire for it was expressed by all the members, and considerable satisfaction felt when stated by several influential members that their belief was it would soon be effected. It being understood that the Synod of the Free Church was to meet on the 7th December, it was resolved to adjourn until the 8th, with a view to conference with that body on the subject of union, and until then further consideration of it was postponed.

The Court resumed, in terms of adjournment, on December 8th, and proceeded to the consideration of the subject of union with the other Presbyterian bodies. Mr. Hetherington, as convener of the Union Committee, reported that the committee had had a meeting for conference with the Union Committee of the Free Church, on Monday last, when he had proposed that, inasmuch as the Basis formerly agreed on by the two churches had failed to secure the object sought, a new and simple basis of union should be substituted. The basis which he would accordingly propose was as follows:—

“We, the undersigned ministers and elders of the Synod of Victoria, the Free Presbyterian Synod of Victoria, and the United Presbyterian Synod of Victoria, having resolved, after long and prayerful deliberation, to unite together in one Synod, and in one Church—do now, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with solemn prayer for his guidance and blessing, unite in one Synod to be called The Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and resolve and determine that the following be the fundamental principles and articles of this union, and be subscribed by each of the members of the New Synod:—

“1. That the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterian Church Government, the Directory for Public Worship, and the Second Book of Discipline, be the standards and formularies of this Church.