

"4. Ministers, probationers and students of every Presbyterian Church, holding the standards aforesaid, shall be deemed eligible for admission into charges within the bounds of this Church, on satisfactory evidence being produced as to their character and qualifications, and on their signing these articles of union.

Memorandum.

The Committee of the Synod of Eastern Australia beg respectfully to leave in the hands of the Committee of the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland the above draft of articles, to form so far a basis of union between the two Synods, and the said Committee of the Synod of Eastern Australia beg hereby to express their readiness *quoad ultra*, on the basis of union, to meet and confer with any committee that may be appointed by the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland.

(Signed) M. MACKAY, *Concener*.

Sydney, November 6, 1856.
Copy of Minute of Synod of Australia ament Union.

St Andrew's Church, Nov. 7, 1856.

Which day the Synod met, and was constituted with prayer. *Iner alia*.—The Synod, having received the report of the committee appointed to confer with the committee of the Synod of Eastern Australia ament union, resolved—That the committee be re-appointed, and be instructed to submit the following terms as a basis of union between the Synod of Eastern Australia and the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, and that it be an instruction of this committee to intimate to the Synod of Eastern Australia that this Synod will not admit of any material alteration of these terms. committee to consist of the Moderator and Clerk, Rev. Messrs Loughton, Ross, Dougall and M Gibbon; elders, Dr. Macfarlane and Dr. Douglas.

"1. The two Synods at present designated the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, and the Synod of Eastern Australia, shall be united under the designation of the 'Presbyterian Church of New South Wales.'

"2. That the basis of union shall be, subscription to the Westminster standards in their integrity—viz. 'The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Directory of Public Worship, the form of Presbyterian Government agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and the Second Book of Discipline.

"3. That the United Synod may hold communion with all Churches maintaining the same standards in their integrity.

"4. That all ministers, and probationers and students, belonging to Churches holding these standards in their integrity, shall be eligible as candidates for admission into the United Synod."

Copy of Minute of Committee of Synod of Eastern Australia, with reference to the foregoing.

This committee beg most respectfully to state that the portion of a basis of union communicated to them by the committee of the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland has failed to be (as at present expressed) satisfactory to the Synod of Eastern Australia; and, while in the said portion of a proposed basis there is nothing of itself objectionable, the Synod of Eastern Australia desiderates further expression of principles to be necessary; and, while this committee regrets very sincerely the differences at present existing, they have strong hopes that, by friendly conference between the committees, these differences might be mitigated or removed; and this committee respectfully requests the appointment of a standing committee of the Synod of Australia, in order that friendly conference may be held on these points, and be continued as long as ne-

cessity may exist for such conference being held. This committee, as well as the Synod which they represent, would exceedingly lament that all conference on the important subject of union should be interrupted, and all prospects of its accomplishment forfeited to either party.

(Signed) M. MACKAY, *Concener*.

Sydney, 8th November, 1856.

Accordingly a standing committee of the Synod of Australia were appointed, with the same instructions as the previously appointed committee, which have only once met for conference the committee of the Synod of Eastern Australia, but no actual progress was made further than submitting explanations and full statements of difficulties.

"4 Whether such proposals are still pending?—They are still pending, and must be so until the next meeting of Synod in October next, 1857, in terms of the above appointment of a standing committee.

The Presbytery of Sydney are unanimously of opinion that, if a union of the various Presbyterian bodies in this colony could be effected on a basis similar to that laid down by the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland—a basis which compromises no principle of Presbyterianism—it would greatly strengthen the position and extend the efficiency of the Church.

MATHEW ADAM, Moderator of Presbytery.

JAMES MILSE, Clerk of Presbytery.

To the Secretary of the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland.

Accompanying this communication, there was a letter dated "Paddington, 10th February, 1857, and subscribed by the Moderator of the Synod of Australia. The following is a copy of the letter:

Paddington, 10th February, 1857.

Sir—I have the honour herewith to transmit the report of the Presbytery of Sydney, in reply to your letter of the 22d September, 1856. The report of the Presbytery of Maitland will be forwarded direct by the Clerk. Besides these there are in the Synod of Australia other two Presbyteries, Bathurst and Goulburn. In each of these Presbyteries there are as yet but two ministers, and, although your circular was duly transmitted to them, they may deem it unnecessary to send you a formal reply, which, in fact, would be merely the expression of the sentiments of one or two ministers of our Synod in regard to the inquiries of your circular. You will, however, be put in possession of full and accurate information as to the present position and views of the Synod by the reports of the Presbyteries of Sydney and Maitland, in the former of which there are twelve clergymen, and in the latter nine. I beg further to state that, being anxiously desirous there should be no misunderstanding with the parent Church as to the present position of the Synod here, in respect both to the Church at Home and also in regard to the Synod here in connection with the Free Church, the Synod of Australia, at their annual meeting, instructed their Moderator and Clerk to communicate on these matters with the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland; and, although the reports of the Presbyteries of Sydney and Maitland carry out in a great measure the wishes of the Synod, still it is resolved to comply with the instructions of the Synod; and, therefore, you may still expect before the ensuing meeting of the General Assembly a letter giving the latest intelligence in reference to the subjects mentioned in the aforesaid circular, and more especially as to the progress and probable result of the negotiations for union, now going on between the Synod of Australia in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, and the Synod of Eastern Australia in connection with the Free Church.

With undiminished attachment to our revered and beloved Church, and earnest prayers for her

growing prosperity and usefulness, I have the honour to remain your obedient servant,

JAMIE MILSE,

Moderator of the Synod of Australia.
To the Secretary of the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland.

The following is the reply of the Presbytery of Bathurst, dated "6th February, 1857," and subscribed by the Moderator:—

Bathurst, New South Wales,
6th February, 1857.

Sir—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your communication, of date 18th September, 1856, in which you request official information; "Whether all the ministers of this Presbytery continue their former relations to the Church of Scotland; what proposals have been made for a union of the Presbyterian Churches; whether such proposals be still pending, or, if otherwise, upon what grounds they have been declined?"

In reply, I have the honour to state that I placed your letter on the table of the Presbytery, of Bathurst at the meeting of that body held yesterday, and I am instructed to say that all the ministers of the Presbytery continue in their former relation to the Church of Scotland; that proposals for a union of the Presbyterians of Australia have been made, but that, as the negotiations are still pending, it would be premature to state the nature of those proposals, which, doubtless, must undergo considerable modification. And I am further instructed to say that it was resolved two years ago by the Synod of Australia that no union with any other Presbyterian Church should be consummated without reference to the Church of Scotland.

I am to add that a conference between the Union Committees of the respective Synods is to be held in Sydney on the 12th inst., at which conference one of the brethren of this Presbytery will be present. Should any definite result be attained, a further communication will be made to you immediately, which it is hoped you may receive previously to the meeting of the General Assembly in May next.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

ALEXANDER M'EWEN,

Moderator of the Presbytery of Bathurst.

The following is the reply of the Presbytery of Maitland, embodied in an extract from the minutes of that reverend body, of date "27th February, 1857" and subscribed by the Moderator and Clerk:—

Maitland, 27th February, 1857.

Which day the Presbytery of Maitland met, and was duly constituted.—*Inter alia*—

The Moderator laid upon the table of Presbytery a letter which he had received from the Secretary of the Colonial Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, dated 18th Sept., 1856, in which it was stated that information was requested respecting the relations in which the Presbyterian Churches of Australia stand to one another—particularly, whether all the ministers continue their former relation to the Church of Scotland; what proposals have been made for a union of the Presbyterian Churches; whether such proposals be still pending, or, if otherwise, upon what ground they have been declined—and that an early reply was solicited, in order that the information thus proposed to be obtained should be laid before the next General Assembly.

Whereupon the Presbytery, after due deliberation, unananimously agreed to the following as their reply:—

The Presbytery, in the outset, beg to observe that, as the four colonies—viz., New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia,—which have been planted within the continent of Australia, are all of them separate and independent communities, so the Churches which have been established in each of them respectively, are also entirely independent of one another.