

give, and to assure them that their contributions will be managed by the Synod in a manner that may be thought best for the accomplishment of the object contemplated.

W. DONALD, D. D.

*St. John, N. B., 25th August, 1870.*

### THE SEVEN COLONIAL CHURCH UNIONS.

BETWEEN the years 1859 and 1865, seven unions of Presbyterian churches took place in as many Colonies, and in five out of the seven the Church of Scotland branch in the Colony was one of the contracting and uniting parties. There is a very fair and a well-written article on the subject in the October number of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for 1867, which gives all the information necessary to understand the difficulties in the way and the bases adopted, and we now make an abstract of it for the benefit of our readers. The article begins with the general remark, that all the bases adopted and acted on in the Colonies show more or less forbearance on two points; namely, "the Voluntary question," and on what is or is not to be called "Erastianism." "They have been so constructed that men holding antagonistic views have been able to sign them." This being so, it strikes us that it would be more honest to say nothing about either "question" than to spend so much labour and ingenuity in drawing up clauses that may be interpreted as meaning "yes," or "no," according to the previous views of the interpreter. Of the seven unions, the writer again and again singles out the Nova Scotian in 1860, between the U. P. and the Free Church, as the one he likes least; and he expresses regret that in Nova Scotia and in Canada, union did not proceed in a different order, namely, between the Kirk and Free Church first. We give the seven unions in their order:—

I. The Australian Colony of Victoria took the lead in the matter. In 1859, the four Presbyterian Churches there, including 13 ministers of the Kirk, 19 of the F. C., 4 of the U. P., and 4 who had formerly called themselves the Presbyterian Church of Australia, 40 in all, united, and their history for the eleven years since has been one of harmony, extension, and good work of all kinds. The basis of union is a very short document, and, on the two points referred to above, perfect freedom of opinion is given. The three Articles are: (1.) That the Westminster Confession, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterian Church Government, the Directory, and the 2nd Book of Discipline, be the Standards and Formularies of the Church. (2.) That as there is a difference of opinion in regard to the doctrines contained in those Standards relative to the power and duty of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion, officers and members in subscribing them are not to be held as countenancing any persecuting or intolerant principles, or as professing any views in reference to the power and duty of the Civil Magistrate inconsistent with the liberty of personal conscience or the right of private judgment. (3.) That the Synod asserts a separate and independent character and position as a church, &c. &c.

II. The Nova Scotian union in 1860, between 36 F. C. and 42 U. P. congregations, (and which has since embraced the Free Church Synod of New Brunswick), into what was called the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces. The proceedings at this union, and the basis drawn up, the writer quizzes freely. The basis he styles "a peculiar production." "Its preamble, and first and second heads, are cumbrous to an unusual degree, while its third head seems, to all practical ends, a carefully prepared fence against what, for want of a better name, we must call the Establishment principle." But as most of our readers know pretty well about our sister church in these Provinces, we need say no more about this union.

III. The Canadian in 1861, between 130 F. C. and 70 U. P ministers and