

CHURCH UNION NEWS NEARER

HARMONY EXISTS AMONG THREE DENOMINATIONS— HISTORIC REPORT PRESENTED BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

The following is the official report of the proceedings of the joint committee on church union, prepared and published under authority by the secretaries. The reports of the various sub-committees as adopted by the joint committee supply the tentative basis of union which is to be submitted to the assemblies of the three churches concerned at their next meetings next summer. The substantial unity and essential harmony existing among the three denominations is a marked feature of the findings of the committee.

The common doctrines held by the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists are here formulated; the possible lines for framing a policy for the united church, the arrangements of pastoral service without a time limit, settlement and transfers of pastors, training for the ministry, and the relations of a minister to the doctrines of the church, are set forth, and the manner of administration is left in the hands of a sub-committee to prepare a detailed report for the next annual meeting of the general committee.

The delicate question of the relation of a minister to the doctrines of the United Church is decided. The candidate for ordination must believe himself a child of God, truly called to the ministry, must hold the Holy Scriptures as containing sufficiently all doctrines necessary to salvation, and be resolved to teach nothing not in conformity with them, and—this was the nice point to determine—must believe the doctrine of the United Church, as he understands it, to be agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, his own personal faith being in essential agreement with it, and his adherence being pledged to it. The official report follows:

Harmony and Good Feeling.
Throughout the whole session the utmost harmony and brotherly feeling prevailed, all of the members appearing being animated by one purpose, namely, to reach conclusions that would be for the glory of their common Lord, and the more rapid extension of His Kingdom throughout the world.

In this statement it is not necessary to give details of the various sub-committees as adopted by the joint committee. It is to be understood that these reports are not final. They only indicate the lines along which the committee has been proceeding to ascertain if a basis of union can be reached that will be satisfactory to all the churches. They will be sent forward to the governing bodies of the three churches for their consideration, and will be deemed advisable.

The judgment of the joint committee respecting these reports is summed up in the following resolution, which was moved by Rev. Principal Shaw, and unanimously adopted:
That this joint committee, having received the reports of the various sub-committees on doctrine, polity, the ministry, administration and law, and also the reports of the various denominational committees, existing to find the substantial unity existing among the negotiating churches and feels encouraged in continuing further negotiations for union.

On motion it was ordered that the minutes of this meeting be printed, embodying the reports of the sub-committees, and that the same be transmitted to the Supreme Courts, the highest bodies of the churches through their committees.

It was further ordered that the secretaries give the widest publicity through the press to the findings of this committee as expressed in the adopted reports of the various sub-committees. In compliance with these instructions the reports as adopted are here appended.

Report of Sub-Committee on Doctrine.
Article I.—Of God.—We believe in the one only living and true God, who is a Spirit and the Father of our spirits; infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being and perfection; the Father Almighty, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom and plenteous in mercy, full of love and compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth; the Father, who sends His Son and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, one in substance and equal in power and glory.

Article II.—Of Revelation.—We believe that God is revealed in part in nature, in history and in the heart of man; that He has made gracious and clear revelations of Himself to men of every age and nation, who have been moved by the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We gratefully receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament given by inspiration to be the faithful record of God's gracious revelations and the sure witness to Christ, as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life.

Article III.—Of the Divine Purpose.—We believe that the central, wise, holy and loving purpose of God embraces all events, so that while the freedom of man is not taken away, nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfillment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory.

Article IV.—Of Creation and Providence.—We believe that God is the Creator, upholder and governor of all things; that He is above all works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, free for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and forever responsible to His Maker and Lord.

Article V.—Of the Sin of Man.—We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and we confess that, by reason of this disobedience, we and all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved by his own works.

Article VI.—Of the Grace of God.—We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient grace to all men. We believe also that God, from the beginning, in His own good pleasure, gave to His Son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service and salvation.

Article VII.—Of the Lord Jesus Christ.—We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the eternal Son of God, who, being the perfect will of God, for us He fulfilled all righteousness and satisfied eternal justice, offering Himself a perfect sacrifice upon the cross to take away the sin of the world; for us He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where He ever intercedes for us; in our hearts joined to Him by faith, He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all for us. He rules therefore, unto Him we render love, obedience and adoration as our Prophet, Priest and King forever.

Article VIII.—Of the Holy Spirit.—We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who is everywhere upon the hearts of men, to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of holiness, and of comfort.

Article IX.—Of Faith and Repentance.—We believe that faith in Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive Him, trust in Him, and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel; and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of, and endeavor after a new obedience to God.

Article X.—Of Justification and Sanctification.—We believe that God pardons our sins and accepts us as righteous solely on the ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, received by faith alone, and that believers are justified by His blood, and the ordinance of Divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

Article XI.—Of Regeneration.—We believe that the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by a secret and wonderful operation of His power, using as the ordinary means the Word of God, and the ordinance of Divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

Article XII.—Of Sanctification.—We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in sanctified character, and are made new creatures in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of every age and nation, who have been moved by the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We gratefully receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament given by inspiration to be the faithful record of God's gracious revelations and the sure witness to Christ, as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life.

Article XIII.—Of the Law of God.—We believe that the law of God, revealed in nature, in history and in the heart of man; that He has made gracious and clear revelations of Himself to men of every age and nation, who have been moved by the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We gratefully receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament given by inspiration to be the faithful record of God's gracious revelations and the sure witness to Christ, as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life.

Article XIV.—Of the Church.—We acknowledge one holy catholic church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who have been united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their head, are one body in Him, and have communion with their Lord and with the other. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and are organized for the confession of His name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel, and that the knowledge as a part more or less pure of this universal brotherhood every particular church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as Divine Lord and Saviour.

Article XV.—Of the Sacraments.—We acknowledge baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two sacraments instituted by Christ to be perpetual obligations as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in His precious blood, and as means of grace through the observance of which His church is to confess and glorify His name, and to be distinguished from the rest of the world.

Article XVI.—Of the Ministry.—We believe that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in remembrance of His blood and His sacrifice on the cross, and which they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are living in obedience to His law, and are free from scandal, crime and open sin.

Article XVII.—Of the Ministry.—We believe that Jesus Christ, as Supreme Head of the church, has appointed a ministry of the word therein, and calls men to this ministry; that the church, under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and who shall be thereupon officially set apart to the work of the ministry.

Article XVIII.—Of the Church Order and Fellowship.—We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole head of the church, that its worship, teaching, discipline and government should be administered according to His will by officers appointed for their duties, and duly set apart to their office; and, although the visible church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended as God gives opportunity to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

Article XIX.—Of the Resurrection, the Last Judgment and the Future Life.—We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead; that the final and impendinent state of eternal death, and the righteous shall abide in blessedness for ever with God.

Article XX.—Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.—We believe that it is the duty of all true Christians to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, and to preserve the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family, to uphold the authority of the state, and so to live in all honesty, purity and charity that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and declare unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, that He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently trust that His power is sufficient to overcome all His enemies and ours shall be finally overcome, and the kingdoms of this world shall be made the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

Article XXI.—Of the Church's Mission.
The Report of the sub-committee on Polity.—Your committee submit the following recommendations, which were passed unanimously, as indications of the lines along which they believe it possible to frame a polity for a church to be formed by the union of the three negotiating denominations.

(1) That the governing bodies of the church to be formed by union be four in number; that the names of the three highest be the general assembly, the annual conference and the district council.

(2) That the general assembly be every second year; that its presiding officer shall be the chief executive officer of the United Church; and that during his term of office he be relieved of his pastoral duties.

(3) That the general assembly have full power to legislate with respect to: (a) The number and boundaries of the annual conferences. (b) The qualifications of the ministry. (c) Matters of doctrine, discipline, government and worship. (d) The condition that before any rule or law relative to these matters can become a permanent law it must receive the approval of a majority of either the annual conferences or district councils.

(4) That the general assembly be the Supreme Court of Appeal for questions of law, and also for questions of fact on matters under its immediate administration, and that such matters of law and fact be submitted to a judicial committee for its consideration and report. (Your committee thought that the

questions of the administrative functions of the general assembly should be dealt with by the committee on administration.)

(5) That the annual conferences be subordinate to the general assembly; that they meet annually; that they have power to determine the bounds of the district councils; that they elect a judicial committee subject to the privilege of appeal on questions of law to the general assembly.

(6) That the district councils be subordinate to the annual conferences; that they receive reports from and have oversight of individual churches or charges and mission stations.

(7) That the local affairs of the individual churches, circuit or congregation be managed by local boards, sessions or committees, subject to the general legislation, principles and discipline of the United Church, and that such boards, sessions or committees be constituted and elected or appointed as at present, or elected at the option of such church, charge, circuit or congregation; and, further, that the formulation of a plan for the organization of new churches be left to the general assembly of the United Church, which plan may at any time be adopted by any church, charge, circuit or congregation.

(8) That the present practices of the three negotiating denominations with respect to membership, church ordinances, Sunday schools and young people's societies be sanctioned for these churches when united, and that all modifications be left to the general assembly of the United Church.

Submitted by instruction of the committee.

JOHN J. MACLAREN,
JAMES W. PEDLEY,
WALTER C. MERRILL,
SAMUEL LYLE,
Secretaries.

Report of Sub-Committee on Ministry.
Pastoral Office, Including Term of Service.—Recognizing the desirability of preserving the essence of both the settled parsonage and the itinerancy, this committee is of the opinion that a happy compromise is possible, and that the best features of both systems may be retained. We, therefore, recommend as follows:

(1) Pastoral service shall be without a time-limit.

(2) Ministers on their own application, and a pastoral charge, through its governing body, in writing, may, at the end of any one year, seek a change of pastoral relation by application to the settlement committee.

(3) Ministers who extend an invitation to any properly qualified minister or ministers, but the right of appointment shall rest with the settlement committee.

(4) There shall be settlement committees appointed for the various sections of the church annually, whose duty it shall be to consider all applications from ministers or charges for settlements within the section over which they have jurisdiction. There is no question, as has been stated, of obtaining the Ameer's permission, for the line will not go beyond the administrative frontier, but in order to avoid misconception, as the railway will approach the border very closely, the government of India will doubtless explain to His Highness the nature of the scheme.

(5) A valuable alternative route. The Kabul river line will prove a valuable alternative route to the Khyber, and, although short, will overcome the most difficult part of the route between Peshawar and Kabul. Another important consideration is that it is outside Afridi territory. It avoids the gradients of the Khyber route, over which it possesses great advantages from an engineering point of view. Not only will the railway form an important extension of the Indian system, but it will be useful in the event of any assistance from India being required by the Ameer. The Kabul river line will leave the existing railway some point between Peshawar and the terminus of Jamrud. Its actual length depends on the route finally adopted, for which there are certainly two alternative routes, but from the nature of the country the extension from Peshawar to the terminus of Jamrud will be longer than the direct route, whether to the frontier or in an eventual extension to Kabul, if the Ameer desired a railway to his capital.

Within British Limits Only. In present circumstances, however, there can be no question of any railway towards Kabul going into Afghan territory, which has not been surveyed, and the maintenance of a railway in that case, which has its railhead at Chaman on the frontier. The route surveyed by General MacDonald for the Kabul river line is a valuable alternative route to the Khyber route, which has its railhead at Chaman on the frontier. The route surveyed by General MacDonald for the Kabul river line is a valuable alternative route to the Khyber route, which has its railhead at Chaman on the frontier.

(6) That the duty of inquiry into the personal character, doctrinal beliefs and general fitness of candidates for the ministry shall be laid upon the district councils.

(7) Further, that candidates for ordination shall be asked the following questions: (a) Do you believe yourself to be how you are called? (b) Do you believe yourself to be truly called to the office of the Christian ministry, and that your motives are zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire for the salvation of men? (c) Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrines required for eternal salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ? And are you resolved that you will obey the injunctions of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing which is not agreeable thereto? (d) Do you believe the statement of doctrine of the United Church, as

you understand it, to be agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and do you personally believe in the essential agreement therewith; and as a minister in this church do you pledge adherence thereto?

W. PATRICK,
Chairman.
J. S. ROSS,
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Report of the Sub-Committee on Administration.—Your committee beg to report that, with the exception of the union conference last year, no meeting of this committee has been held until this afternoon, when an informal discussion took place of the methods of administration that obtain in the three negotiating churches. After a somewhat minute consideration of the principles which should govern the management of the various churches, it was decided to report to the general committee that while obstacles to the organic union of these three churches may have to be faced in connection with the questions of administration, this sub-committee believes they are not likely to prove more difficult than many that were successfully dealt with in former union movements, and can all be removed if approached in a spirit of mutual concession and with a due regard to existing interests.

Dr. E. D. McLAREN, Dr. Chown and J. W. Pedley have been appointed to prepare for presentation to the general committee a detailed report of the various agencies of the negotiating churches, and of the methods followed in their administration, and authority is hereby requested to forward their report (after it has been adopted by your committee) to the denominational committees on church union, to be transmitted by them to their supreme courts.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the sub-committee:
J. SOMERVILLE,
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In a short time a pamphlet will be prepared and printed, as was done a year ago, embodying the minutes of the union committee, the names of those composing the various sub-committees, and the reports adopted. Meanwhile what is printed above is recommended to the prayerful consideration of the churches.

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E. D. McLAREN,
T. B. HYDE,
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Toronto, December 23, 1905.

THE DEFENCE OF MINISTRY.
An important decision has been taken for the extension of a strategic railway towards the Afghan frontier for the purpose of which the staff of the Quetta-Bombay railway, the line ninety miles long which was opened a few weeks ago, is understood, been transferred, or is about to be transferred, to Peshawar. The projected railway, there is reason to believe, says Reuter, will follow the route very closely, the government of India will doubtless explain to His Highness the nature of the scheme.

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THE ITALIAN MINISTRY.

Sources from Which the Prime Minister Has Drawn His Support.

The advent of Sydney Sonnino as premier and minister of the interior, in company with Ettore Sacchi, acknowledged leader of the Radical party, and Pantano, a fervent Mazzinian, and still a Republican in theory, is a notable event. Eight years ago, Sacchi and Pantano were the most formidable and successful opponents of Sonnino, then the supporter of Pelloux and his reactionary measures growing out of the disorders that occurred in all the great centres from Milan to Bari. Cicerley laws were introduced in parliament, and then the obstructions, more more determined than Sacchi and Pantano, commenced operations and rendered all discussion impossible. On this, Pelloux obtained the royal decrees which converted the obnoxious bills into law. Again, Sonnino stood by Pelloux, and by deeds and words proclaimed the necessity for the intervention of the crown. He was at that time the best-hated man in Italy; all his real services to the country forgotten or recalled. Real services they were, for when he undertook, between the years of 1892-96, to reorganize the finances of the country, Italy was on the verge of bankruptcy—the government embarrassed by the bank scandals, commercial and industrial depression, offering apparently no resource. Setting his shoulders to the wheel, he succeeded in hitting the state out of the rut; by economy to the bone and meridian, he restored equilibrium between revenue and expenditure, and gained a signal victory. The country, as a whole, breathed freely; honor was saved, foreign nations applauded, and the taxpayers, bleeding from every pore, hated the hand that had saved their country at their individual cost; and when the hour of vengeance fell, they added their voices to the hallooing that assailed the irresponsible minister. "The skies might fall, but never could Sydney Sonnino sit on the ministerial benches." Yet, there he is, prime minister, home minister, acknowledged as a statesman by the country, and feebly opposed by the supporters of Giolitti and Fortis.

Downfall of the Fortis Ministry. The *modus vivendi* with Spain aroused the hostility of all the wine producers, vendors, and consumers of the country. Fortis declared that he would stand or fall with his colleagues. They were censured by the country, and the hostile voters affirmed their confidence in the general policy of the ministry, and Fortis, in an evil hour, allowed himself to be persuaded to attempt the reformation of the cabinet.

The scene of the three days that followed explained the phenomenon of a Sonnino-Sacchi-Pantano ministry. Fortis attempted a feeble refutation of the arguments brought forward by the opponents of his cabinet, and at the close of the session, he appears to be the commander-in-chief of these diverse oppositions (cries of yes! yes! from all sides of the house), to expound his and their ideas. My opinion will explain very clearly the attitude of Sonnino did unfold his views, and the house listened to his lucid speech with breathless attention. He reviewed the history of the last five years, reiterated promises of reform, not one fulfilled, and he re-joined the school of delinquencies were brought home to the sinners. He dwelt, as an instance of the insincerity of the Fortis ministry, on the postponement of the railway liquidation, and the consequent anarchy and chaos of all the administrative organs of the state; then dwelt on the government and local administration of the southern provinces, and narrated the scandalous details of the late bye-elections at Amalfi and Gaeta, which were the outrageous interference of the government and its agents had brought the communities to the verge of revolt, ending in the fortunate defeat of the ministerial candidate. Of his criticisms of the general corruption of the administrative condition of elementary instruction, and of education in general, of military disorganization, no resume can give an idea; but his animadversions will be remembered as an acknowledgment of his hand to the helm, as will also his exposition of the great public services of transportation and communication—railways, trams, post, telegraph, telephone, etc.

In ecclesiastical policy he maintained an invariable position: neither persecution, provocation, nor petty warfare; respect for all creeds and opinions; loyal observance of the law of guarantees, and at the same time rigorous and uncompromising maintenance of all the rights of the state, which ought to be fully able to provide for its own aims and intentions in the fields of justice, morality, and culture. The state, in short, must be capable of carrying out its duties, and yet allow dissentients to labor freely to attain them.

Defence of the Government Policy. Only one deputy rose to defend the government. Giolitti's self-defence was weak and continually interrupted and contradicted. The only other speech tending to elucidate the why and wherefore of the presence of radicals in the present ministry was Sacchi's, who gave his reasons for voting against the ministry, while admitting that a cabinet of such conduct is at present impossible. He had no fear for liberty "conquered and defended by a people imbued with a sense of its rights and duties." It is the practical use of liberty that is now necessary, its application to all the vital energies of national life, whereas during the government of Giolitti and Fortis, lethargy and paralysis of all activity have prevailed. He objected to the methods of ministerial reform, and the application of the enormous funds appropriated, to the utter neglect of the tributary reforms promised and possible without disturbing the equilibrium of the budget. Sonnino's suggestion, allowed all the chief men to speak, now clamored for the question, and the minister accepted Flamini's motion that "the house approve the declarations of the government and passes to the order of the day." Silence was maintained while the roll of the deputies was called, with

the result—years 188, nays 221; a clear majority of 33 votes against the government. The ministry resigned, at once and the King accepted their resignation and called upon Sonnino to form a new one.

As the total 221 days belong to all parties—the most numerous Conservatives and Centre amounting to not more than fifty—this necessitated a coalition ministry. The difficulty in forming one lay in the choice of the representatives of the various non-Conservative parties, exclusive, of course, of the Socialists. Hence Sonnino's appeal, first to Sacchi then to Pantano, both of whom had refused several offers to form part of former ministries headed by Zanardelli, Giolitti, or Fortis. Why have they now accepted? Because they have certain that with Sonnino, they will be able to carry out some of the measures which they deem essential to national progress, and that they are so certain that they will be able to execute all that a considerable part of their projects. They stand two Radicals in company with seven more or less Conservative colleagues. Gulicciardini, descendant of the great liberal statesman, foreign minister, will be the first of his predecessors, maintain the Triple Alliance, and cultivate the cordial relations with France which already exist. Sonnino will be the new minister of finance, and now becomes secretary of the treasury, is a staunch supporter of co-operation and popular banks. Paolo Boselli, another ex-minister of finance, as well as of foreign affairs, and a staunch supporter of Sonnino to this last unthankful office, Salandra, who returns to the ministry of finance, is recognized as capable and of high integrity; he was one of the stout opponents of the divorce bill which was carried by Giolitti and Fortis, and of which Sacchi is the zealous supporter. Giolitti, well versed in finance and railway questions, is minister of public works; may his good nature inspire him? Alfred Baccelli, a young man, a statesman, as his father's son, will have charge of the