

an agent can be sent over during the present summer, assistance can be obtained for the erection of buildings and carrying on the Mission efficiently.

The Committee would recommend the Synod to avail themselves of the liberal offer, and send the Rev. William King to Ireland, Scotland and England, for the purpose of raising funds to be applied in the erection of permanent buildings and other purposes connected with the efficient carrying on of the Mission.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNION.

The Committee on Union beg leave to report that they met with the Committee of United Presbyterian Church at Toronto, on the eighteenth day of August last, and continued their deliberations during that and the following day.

There were present on behalf of the United Presbyterian Church Dr. Wm. Taylor, (convenor,) Dr. Jennings, Messrs. Thurston, Kennedy, Aitken, Skinner and Gibson, ministers.

On behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Canada there appeared Messrs. Ure, (convenor,) Scott, Fraser, Gregg, Ross and Laing, ministers; Messrs. Jeffrey and Heron, elders.

The Rev. W. Aitken was called to the chair. The convenors said on the table their instructions from their respective Synods.

The Committee proceeded to frame a "Basis of Union," and came to agreement on the following articles:—

I. *Of Holy Scripture.*—That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being the inspired Word of God, are the supreme and infallible rule of faith and life.

II. *Of the Subordinate Standards.*—That the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, are received by this Church as her subordinate standards, and as exhibiting the sense in which the Holy Scripture is to be understood.

But whereas certain sections of the said Confession of Faith, which treat of the power or duty of the Civil Magistrate, have been objected to, as teaching principles adverse both to the right of private judgment in religious matters, and to the prerogatives which Christ has vested in His Church, it is to be understood:

1. That no interpretation of these sections is held by this Church, which would interfere with the fullest forbearance as to any difference of opinion which may prevail on the question of the endowment of the Church by the State.

2. That no interpretation of these sections can be received by this Church which would accord to the State any authority to violate that liberty of conscience and right of private judgment which are asserted in chap. xx. sec. 2 of the Confession; and in accordance with the statements of which, this Church holds, that every person ought to be at full liberty to search the Scriptures for himself, and to follow out what he conscientiously believes to be the teaching of Scripture, without let or hindrance.

3. That no interpretation of these sections can be received by this Church, which would admit of any interference on the part of the state with the spiritual independence of the Church, as set forth in chap. xxx. of the Confession.

III. *Of the Headship of Christ over the Church.*—That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of His Church; that he has made her free from all external and secular authority in the administration of her affairs, and that she is bound to assert and defend this liberty to the utmost, and ought not to enter into any such engagements with

any party as would be prejudicial thereto.

IV. *Of the Headship of Christ over the Nations, and the Duty of the Civil Magistrate.*—That the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, is invested with universal sovereignty, and is therefore King of nations; and that all men, in every capacity and relation, are bound to obey His will as revealed in His word; and particularly, that the Civil Magistrate (including under that term, all who are in any way concerned in the Legislative or Administrative action of the State,) is bound to regulate his official procedure, as well as his personal conduct, by the revealed will of Christ, to bow to the authority of Christ as King of nations, and conduct his whole administration according to the dictates of the word of God, while he does not interfere with the religious liberty of individuals, and has respect to their conscientious convictions.

V. *Of Church Government.*—That the system of polity exhibited in the "Westminster Form of Government," in so far as it lays down the principles of a plurality of Elders for each congregation; the official equality of Presbyters who minister in word and doctrine, without any officers in the Church superior to said Presbyters; and the unity of the Church, in a due subordination of a smaller part to a larger, and of a larger to the whole, is the Government of this Church, and is, in the features of it therein set forth, believed by this Church to be founded on, and agreeable to the word of God.

VI. *Of Worship.*—That the ordinances of worship shall be administered in this Church, as they have heretofore been, by the respective bodies of which it is composed, in a general accordance with the directions contained in the Westminster Directory of Worship.

Such is the statement of principles and articles which the Committee drew up, and which they agreed to submit to their respective Synods as a Basis of Union.

There are two notes in relation to article IV. which were presented by the Committee of the United Presbyterian Church, and which at their request were inserted in the minutes of the procedure of the joint Committee. It is to be understood, however, that these notes form no part of the proposed basis. They were submitted, not as additions to the foregoing articles, but with the twofold view of endeavoring to remove misapprehensions as to the position which had heretofore been assumed by the United Presbyterian Church on the subject of Christ's Headship over the nations, and next, to protect the Committee of that Church from any charge of having exceeded their instructions. The following are the notes on the article referred to:—

1. That the first part of it (article IV.) having relation to Christ's Headship over the nations, has always been one of the things most surely believed and most firmly maintained by the United Presbyterian Church, while at the same time she has constantly and carefully guarded against the practical inference drawn from it by some, that Christ, as King of nations, delegates his power to earthly Kings—that they are in any sense his vicergerents, or that magisterial interference in matters purely of a religious nature is a medium through which Christ exercises the authority with which, as King of nations, he is invested.

2. That the second part of this article having reference to the duty of the Civil Magistrate, is to be understood as simply expressing what the Committee of the United Presbyterian Church believe to be the general sentiments held by that Church on the subject, for no declaration of sentiment regarding it has been required by her as a term of communion, and

their instructions forbid their acknowledging it now in that character.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

ROBERT URE, Convenor.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Your Committee have no special information to communicate to the Synod relative to the state of religion in the Church, so that the Report may be regarded merely as a means of calling the Synod's attention to the subject rather than as a channel of information. There was embodied in last year's report the substance of answers from corresponding members to certain queries on points connected with the state of religion, and on the prominence given to religious exercises at the ordinary meetings of Presbyteries—the holding of special conferences or meetings for prayer by Presbyteries in regard to the state of religion—the extent to which the holding of Presbyterial visitations and missionary meetings is practised—the amount of attention given to the instruction of the young—the manner in which the duties of the eldership are generally performed—on which points the information then presented showed, that all the ordinary meetings of Presbyteries were opened with a season of devotional exercises, and in the case of two Presbyteries sermons were preached at their ordinary meetings—that special conferences on the state of religion had been held by four Presbyteries, and a special prayer meeting relative to the subject by one Presbytery—that periodical visitations to the congregations within the bounds were made by one Presbytery, and annual missionary meetings held by all the Presbyteries of the Church but one—that a considerable amount of attention was given to the instruction of the young by Sabbath Schools, Bible Classes, and annual seasons of Catechising, but that the visiting of families by the elders, and the practice of parental catechising, were much neglected. The Committee did not this year think it necessary to repeat the queries, but have simply endeavored to ascertain how far the recommendations of the Synod of last year have been acted on. And here they have to report that two additional Presbyteries, viz. those of Ottawa and London, have adopted the practice of making periodical visitations to the congregations under their care. The correspondent from the Presbytery of Ottawa says, that about the half of the congregations within the bounds have been so visited during the past year, and that the remainder, it is intended will be visited during the current year. Respecting the nature of the visitations, he remarks, that the Presbytery not only ascertains the state of the congregations in respect to temporalities, but makes diligent inquiry into the state of religion. In the Presbytery of London, eighteen congregations have been visited during the year; and the corresponding number states, in relation to their work, that the result on the whole has been satisfactory, and that in some instances, decided good has accrued. The practice also of having sermons preached in connection with the ordinary meetings of Presbyteries is adopted by two other Presbyteries, viz. those of Toronto and Montreal, making now four Presbyteries is all, in which the custom is observed.

The important practice of Catechising the young, seems to be receiving increased attention. From one Presbytery, it is stated that "Ministers invariably attend to catechising, not only in Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes, but also while visiting families"—and from another Presbytery, the writer says: "It is believed that at any rate, attention is being more