

## Miscellaneous

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

## SYNOD OF NOVA SCOTIA ADHERING TO THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS.

This reverent Court met on Wednesday last (8th July), at 12 o'clock, in St. John's Church in this city; and after an excellent and appropriate sermon by the late Moderator (the Rev. John Stewart, of New Glasgow), from Isaiah lxvii. 10, 13, was duly constituted.

The roll being called, the following members answered to their names:

*Presbytery of Halifax.*—Revs. George Struthers, A. Sinclair, Ralph Robb, and Robert Romans, and Mr. Archibald McCulloch, Ruling Elder.

*Presbytery of Pictou.*—Revs. John Stewart, Hugh Ross, Alexander Campbell, and Alexander Sutherland.

*Presbytery of Cape Breton.*—Rev. Murdoch Stewart.

The Rev. John McTavish, Ballachulish, of the Free Church of Scotland, and Rev. Robert Irvine, of St. John's, New Brunswick, being present, were also invited to take their seats as members of Synod, and give the Court the benefit of their advice and assistance.

It was intimated that the Rev. Matthew Wilson, from the Presbytery of Cape Breton, was in town, but was prevented by indisposition from attending.

The Rev. Alexander Romans was then elected Moderator for the ensuing year.

The Rev. Mr. Robb explained that he had been unable to engross the minutes for the last three years, the book containing the records having been carried off by one of the minority at the disruption of the Synod; whereupon it was moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed to, that a book be provided, and the unengrossed minutes engrossed therein; the expense to be defrayed by the Synod.

The reports on the basis of union, agreed upon by the Joint Committees of the Synod and of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia (secession), which was sent down last year to Presbyteries for consideration, were then called for, when the report from the Presbytery of Halifax was produced, approving of the said basis of union generally, but recommending, for the sake of perspicuity, a verbal amendment on one clause, and also that, before taking further steps towards consummating the union with the other body, the Synod take means for coming to an understanding with them on the subject of ministerial communion with other churches, &c. No deliverance was reported from the Presbyteries of Pictou and Cape Breton. After considerable discussion, it was resolved, on motion of Rev. Mr. McTavish, that the doctrinal basis of union, as amended by the Presbytery of Halifax, be transmitted to Presbyteries, with injunctions to report thereon to next meeting of Synod; also, that the Rev. John McTavish and the Rev. Alexander Sutherland be a deputation to present the said resolution to the Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia, appointed to meet at New Glasgow on Tuesday next, and to explain that such alteration and re-transmission does not arise from any abatement of zeal for the proposed union, but from a desire so to perfect the measure as to obviate, as far as possible, all ground of future misunderstanding.

The following is the basis of union agreed upon by the Committees of the two Synods, transmitted by those Synods for the opinion of Presbyteries:

"The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, and the Synod of Nova Scotia, adhering to the Westminster Standards, recognizing each other as Churches of Christ, and deploring the differences which have hitherto existed between them, and desirous of forming a union, agree to the following statement of principles as a basis.

"I. That whatever designation may be adopted by the united church, it shall be, in all respects, free and completely independent of foreign jurisdiction and interference, but may hold friendly intercourse with sister churches whose soundness in the faith and whose ecclesiastical polity accord with the sentiments of the united body.

"II. That the great object of the union shall be the advancement of the Redeemer's Glory by

a more visible expression of the unity and love of the members of Christ's body, the cultivation of a more fervent piety, devoted zeal and practical godliness, and subordinate thereto the setting forth of a more united testimony against all Popish, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian, and other heresies, as these have been exhibited in past ages, or are now manifested under the garb of the religion of Jesus, and the providing by the combined exertions of the united body of a duly qualified ministry for an efficient dispensation of Gospel ordinances within our bounds, and for the enlargement and permanence of the church, and the preparation of a platform of discipline for the sake of obtaining uniformity in the proceedings of ecclesiastical courts.

"III. That the standards of the United Church shall be the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the catechisms larger and shorter;—the following explanations being subjoined, in reference to the statement in the Confession regarding the power of the civil magistrate *circa sacra*, as limited by the act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27th August, 1647, and excepted to by the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia.

"1st. That the United Body disclaim as unscriptural, all right on the part of the Civil Magistrate to regulate or review the procedure of the Courts of Christ's Church, maintaining that the Church is a free institute under law to Jesus, and to be ruled entirely by his authority, and furnished by him with ample power to meet, deliberate, and consult in his name, whenever, and as often as, the rights or interests or government of his house may require.

"2d. That while recognizing ministerial authority as an ordinance of God for good to man, and holding in the language of the Associate Presbytery that 'it is peculiarly incumbent on every civil state wherein Christianity is introduced, to study and bring to pass that civil government among them, run in agreeableness to the mind of God, be subservient to the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ and to the interest of true religion,' a principle clearly founded on the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ over the church and over the nations, this United Body disclaim and abhor the idea of attempting to promote Christianity by forcible methods as alike contrary to the law of Christ, the spirit of His Gospel, the rights of conscience, and the liberties of man.

"3d. Finally, while recognizing the responsibilities of the civil magistrate to God, and praying for the time when kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers to the church, the Synod feels that the question as to the mode in which the civil magistrate may discharge his responsibilities, is one in which, in their circumstances, they are not called upon to come to any deliverance."

Mr. Robb, Convener of Committee on Contributions in aid of the Missions of the Free Church, gave in a Report stating that only six congregations had reported their collections to him, as follows:—From Missionary Society, St. John's Church, Halifax, £39 1s 7½d; collected at weekly prayer meeting in do, £8 15s 0½d; from Lunenburg, £25 16s 1½d; Sydney Mines, £12; Cornwallis, £10; Grand River and Loch Lomond, £3 10s; Earlton, per Rev. A. Sutherland, £5 14s. Total, £101 16s 9½d.

The Synod having heard the Report, was much gratified by the diligence of several ministers, and with the liberality of their congregations; regret that other ministers have not afforded their people an opportunity of contributing, and enjoin all ministers to bring the subject before their people, and report their diligence to next meeting of Synod. The Committee was re-appointed, Mr. Robb, Convener.

It is proper to add that, besides the contributions reported through the Committee, several other congregations had made collections, and remitted the proceeds to the Missions of the Free Church.

The Rev. John Stewart, Convener of the Synod's Home Mission Committee, reported that nothing had been collected for that Mission during the past year, but that a contribution, amounting to £12, had been made for a mission within the bounds of the Presbytery of Pictou. The Synod re-appointed the Committee, with the addition of Messrs. Sutherland and Campbell, and resolved that for the ensuing year, each Presbytery shall be authorized to expend its own Home Mission

fund as it shall deem requisite, it being kept in view that the collections are made for the Home Missions of the whole Church, and that it is the duty of each Presbytery, in the expenditure thereof, to act with a view to the interests of the whole body; and they are enjoined to report their proceedings herein to next meeting of Synod.

The Synod next entered on the consideration of the incorporation of this Synod and the Presbytery of New Brunswick into one Ecclesiastical Court. Heard Rev. Mr. Irvine, of St. John, who gave an affecting account of the state of destitution in the Province of New Brunswick, and stated his views of the desirableness of the measure proposed. The Synod agreed to record the high satisfaction with which they had listened to Mr. Irvine, and request him to bring the subject before the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and the Synod hopes that Presbytery will be prepared to join them at next meeting.

The Synod had also under consideration the means of training young men for the ministry. After mature deliberation, it was unanimously resolved that the Synod considers it essential in the training of a native ministry that there should be at least two Academies for teaching the languages and mathematics, in order to prepare young men for the philosophical and theological classes of a College, and that these should be situated, one at Halifax, and the other at St. John's, New Brunswick; that the College department, embracing a course of lectures on philosophy and theology, should be connected with the Academical Institution situated at Halifax; that these Institutions shall be of a high literary character, and placed on such a footing as to invite young men of literary tastes, irrespective of denominational or definite professional views; and the Synod having learned, with much satisfaction and gratitude, that the Colonial Committee of the Free Church have already had this important subject under their kind consideration, and agreed to lend official aid, resolve to transmit to them forthwith a copy of the foregoing resolution; and, with a view of carrying it into effect, appoint as a committee the Moderator (Convener), Messrs. Robb, Wilson, John Stewart, Irvine, and Sinclair; and request Mr. Irvine to bring the subject of this resolution before the Presbytery of New Brunswick.

The reports from Presbyteries, relative to the extent of spiritual destitution within their bounds, were called for.

Rev. Murdoch Stewart presented a report from the Presbytery of Cape Breton, stating, *inter alia*, that there were, within the bounds of that Presbytery, 1115 families, or about 3,500 souls, so far distant from any place of worship that they had not an opportunity of hearing the word of God more than once a year, and, in many cases, not once in three years. Mr. Stewart gave other affecting details of the existing destitution, and the eagerness of the people to hear the word, and expressed his hope that, in the event of a Gaelic speaking minister forming part of any future deputation from the Free Church, he would be authorized to spend some time in Cape Breton. After some conversation, which tended to elucidate and strengthen the facts embodied in the report, the following resolution was, on motion of Mr. Irvine, unanimously adopted:

"The Synod having heard, with deep regret, the affecting details of spiritual destitution read by the Rev. Murdoch Stewart, resolve to transmit a copy of said report to the Colonial Committee, with a respectful request that they send out a Gaelic minister to travel at least twelve months among these destitute settlements, with a view to organize them into congregations, and for raising funds therein in aid of a permanent Home Mission on the island."

In the course of his remarks, introductory to the above motion, Mr. Irvine gave some interesting statements relative to the extent of spiritual destitution in New Brunswick, especially among the Gaelic speaking population.

No reports having been presented from the Presbyteries of Halifax or Pictou,

The Synod renewed their injunctions relative to these reports, requiring that they be brought up from all the Presbyteries at next meeting of Synod.

Mr. McTavish stated the mode in which such statistical returns were obtained by the Canadian Synod, and recommended the appointment of a