

He adverted to the preliminary meeting of the Committees of Churches in connection with the Church of Scotland held in the same place last evening. Views were there interchanged touching the practicability of Union, the doctrinal basis on which it might be effected, and the manner in which the leading interests of the several Churches might be combined, and the Churches themselves incorporated under the jurisdiction of one General Assembly. At the very outset of the general conference it was thus discovered that preliminary meetings had been held without concert, and indeed without mutual knowledge, and that a most remarkable degree of unanimity had been reached. Indeed, so manifest did this become that every member of the Joint Committee appeared to be penetrated, with the consciousness, that the blessing of the one Lord and Master was then being enjoyed in answer to His own prayer and the prayers of His people throughout the Churches represented, "that they all may be one."

Hence it was that on nearly every point which had been anticipated at these meetings as at all likely to engage earnest attention, such perfect harmony of sentiment prevailed, as rendered the action of the Joint Committee rather that of confirming views already ascertained, than slowly and cautiously discovering the way to a common understanding on matters of difficult adjustment. This will be the more apparent when it is known that within the two Sederunts which occupied the first day, six of the eight findings of the Committee were considered and determined with perfect unanimity, embracing 1st. the doctrinal basis, 2nd. the name of The United Body, 3rd. Fraternal relations with other Presbyterian Churches, 4th General polity, 5th. Application of Temporalities Fund, 6th. Modes of worship. The seventh subject for consideration elicited the only divergence of opinion at all worthy of notice. Not less than four Sederunts were devoted to earnest effort in seeking after some harmonious finding with regard to Collegiate Education. Full expression of opinion was given thereto in the latter part of the the second Sederunt and the conclusion was not reached until the latter part of the fourth. The difficulty arose from the existence of Queen's College, Kingston, now and for many years past holding a Royal Charter, and indeed the oldest institution in Ontario. Other endowed Colleges exist in more or less intimate connection with the several Churches represented in Conference.

Thus Morin College, Quebec, so called from its generous Founder. In Toronto, Knox College as well as the University; in Montreal, McGill College: and in Halifax, Dalhousie College.

All these institutions had their respective

friends in Committee as in the Churches at large, but it was around Queen's College that special interest gathered. At the very outset the friends of this institution appeared to make its adoption by the United Church *sine qua non* to Union. The peremptory tone was, after some friendly discussion so far modified that a more pliant spirit became prevalent. At last common ground was reached, rather, however, as the result of compromise than of any definite conclusion. It was resolved, that the earnest attention of the United Church should be given at the earliest possible moment, to secure the maintenance, in thorough efficiency, of a Presbyterian University, and of such Theological Halls as may be found requisite to provide for the education of the Ministers of the Church in the various Provinces of British North America.

On the other subjects the Committee had under consideration their conclusions were perfectly unanimous and they may be thus summarised.

I. *On the doctrinal Basis*:—It was found that on this ground of principle, there was no obstacle to Union if it was accomplished on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, as the supreme standard of faith and manners with the Confession of faith as the subordinate standard, it being understood, that full liberty of opinion in regard to the power and duty of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion as set forth in said Confession be allowed, and that the Shorter Catechism be enjoined as an authoritative expression of doctrine for the instruction of our people.

II. *The name of the United Body*:—It was without a dissentient voice agreed that the name of the United Body should be "The Presbyterian Church of British North America."

III. Fraternal relations to be held with Presbyterian Churches holding the same doctrine, government, and discipline and that Ministers and Probationers be received into the Church, subject to such regulations as the Church may from time to time adopt.

IV. *General Polity*:—It was with like unanimity agreed that the Laws and forms of Procedure be left to the determination of the United Church and to be compiled from such rules as may have been in force in the respective Churches or in the works of Presbyterian Law and Order; and that in the meantime Courts conduct their business according to the recognized principles and forms of the Presbyterian Church.

V. *"Temporalities Fund" now in the hands of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland*:—The unanimous opinion was that the Vested Rights of present Beneficiaries must be