

## The Record.

TORONTO SEPTEMBER, 1860.

## NEAR PROSPECT OF UNION.

A meeting of the Joint Committee on Union took place at Toronto, on the 31st July, and 1st August, the result of which, we presume, will be already known to most of our readers. After full and frank conference, all remaining difficulties, which, in truth, related rather to the mode of expression than to any real difference, were removed, and the Committees of both Churches unanimously accepted the subjoined Basis of Union, which, it will be seen, does not materially differ from the Resolutions agreed to by last Synod, the six articles being entirely the same. It was agreed that meetings of both Synods should be called, to take place in the beginning of October, for the purpose of finally accepting the Basis, and making necessary arrangements for the consummation of the Union so long contemplated. We rejoice at the prospect of such a happy termination of these long continued negotiations, and we congratulate the brethren in both Churches, who have carried on the negotiations for several years with so great ability and prudence, on the successful termination of their labors. May the blessing of God crown their efforts. Many and great will be the benefits of Union. Breaches and divisions will be healed, weak congregations will be strengthened, and an impulse given to all the educational and missionary efforts of the Church. We trust, too, that it may be the commencement of the work of Union, and that the process will go on, until all sound Presbyterians shall be brought together in an honorable and scriptural union.

## BASIS OF UNION, AS AGREED UPON BY JOINT COMMITTEES OF BOTH CHURCHES 1st AUGUST, 1860.

Whereas, for the glory of God and the welfare of the Church, it is desirable that a Union should be effected between the "United Presbyterian Church," and the "Presbyterian Church of Canada," on such terms as may be agreeable to the Word of God, and the standards accepted by both Churches: Whereas also it is expedient that a Basis of Union, in terms of the six Articles which follow, be adopted, as a statement of principles in regard to which the Churches are mutually agreed. Whereas, besides, it is desirable to prevent any possible misapprehensions in reference to the fourth of said Articles, it is therefore hereby declared, that no inference from that Article is legitimate, which asserts that the civil magistrate has the right to prescribe the faith of the Church, or to interfere with her ecclesiastical action: And it is further

declared, that in regard to the practical application of said fourth Article, unanimity of sentiment is not required in the united body, and that if any particular case should emerge, it may, and can only, be considered and determined by the Church Courts, in accordance with the general principles and procedure of Presbyterian Churches:

Be it therefore resolved:—

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.

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 or reception 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 or reception of these sections is required by this Church, which would accord to the State any authority to violate that liberty of conscience and right of judgement 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, without let or hindrance; provided that no one is to be allowed, under the pretext of following the dictates of conscience, to interfere with the peace and good order of society.

3. That no interpretation or reception of these sections is required 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 or 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 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.

V. *Of Church Government.*—That the system of polity established in the Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Gov-

ernment, in so far as it declares a plurality of Elders for each congregation, the official equality of Presbyters, without any offices in the Church superior to the 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 herein 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.

## THE STATE OF TURKEY.—MASSACRES OF CHRISTIANS.

The Turkish Empire is at present in a most singular and anomalous condition, politically and morally. On one hand it is evident that in many quarters, and even at Constantinople itself, there is a great advance in regard to religious toleration, and liberality of sentiment. Where a few years ago a copy of the Bible could not be given away, there are now hundreds of copies publicly sold. Where a depot for the sale of the Scriptures could not have been opened without danger, there is now a depository open in one of the most public places, and Bibles sold not merely to professing Christians but to Turks. In some provinces we read lately of thousands rejecting Islamism and embracing Christianity. Intercourse with western nations has produced its effect. The efforts of Lord Stratford and others, who have labored so long for the liberalizing of public sentiment and influencing the policy of the Porte, have not been in vain; and we were not without hope Britain would yet be recompensed for the awful sacrifice, not merely of means but of blood, which she lately made in behalf of Turkey, in seeing the fierce, and fanatic spirit of Mahomedanism giving way to the softening, purifying, and elevating influence of the Gospel. We trust it may be so still, and that there may not be the mortification of feeling that so much treasure has been expended, and so much precious blood shed for the sake of an intolerant and unprogressive system.

There is no doubt, however, that the recent awful massacres which have taken place, some accounts of which will be found in another column, must produce a most prejudicial effect on the prosperity of Turkey, calculated as they are at the same time to shock the feelings of Christians throughout Christendom, and call forth, not only remonstrances, but active interference on the part of all Christian Powers