

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHURCH UNION.

Common Doctrines Formulated and Possible Lines for Framing a Polity for the United Church of Canada Set Forth--Assemblies of Churches Will Consider Report.

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 polity 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 matter 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:

The Joint Committee on Church Union, representing the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches met in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, on Wednesday, December 20th, and continued in session during that and the following day.

HARMONY AND GOOD FEELING.

Throughout the whole session the utmost harmony and brotherly feeling prevailed, all the members apparently 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 proceedings, but only the reports 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 or councils of the various Churches for such action as may be deemed advisable.

The judgment of the Joint Committee respecting these reports is summed up in the following resolution, which was moved by the Rev. Principal Scriver and seconded by the 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, rejoice 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 or 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-COM. ON DOCTRINE.

Article I.—Of God.—We believe in the one only living and true God, who is a Spirit, infinite and unchangeable in His being and perfection; the Lord 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. We worship Him, Father, 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 clearer revelations of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were 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 to the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life.

Article III.—Of the Divine Purpose.—We believe that the eternal, wise 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 fulfilment 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 His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet 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 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 but by His grace.

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 salvation 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, for us men, and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, without sin; unto us He has revealed the Father, by His Word and Spirit making known 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 unto Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us; in our hearts, joined to Him by faith, He abides for ever as the indwelling Christ, above us and over us all for us, He rules; wherefore, 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 moves everywhere upon the hearts of men, to restrain them from all 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 their 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 Sonship.—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 adopted as sons of God, with a right to all the privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.

Article XI.—Of Regeneration.—We believe in 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 truths of His word and the ordinances of Divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

Article XII.—Sanctification.—We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in sanctified character, through fellowship with Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of a saving faith, and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God.

And we believe that in this growth in grace, Christians may attain to a full assurance of faith, and to that maturity of faith, working by love which by the Scriptures call the love of God made perfect in us.

Article XIII.—Of the Law of God.—We believe that the law of God revealed in the Ten Commandments, and more clearly disclosed in the words of Christ, is forever established in truth and equity, so that no human work shall abide except it be built on this foundation. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with his God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

Article XIV.—Of the Church.—We acknowledge one holy catholic church the innumerable company of saints in every age and nation, who, being united by the Holy Spirit of Christ, their head, are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and

with one another; further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His church on earth shall exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him with their children, and organized for the confession of His name, for the noble worship of God, for the administration of sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge as a part more or less pure of this universal

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To brighten up any number of dark colored separate skirts, plaids are in the highest favor for shirtwaist purposes; and one sees them in all sorts of materials, from velvet and velveteen to silk and mohair. The one illustrated is of the latter fabric, soft of weave and with a bright, silky finish. One of those soft shades of copper red is cross-barred with hair lines in black, pale blue, green and gold, the lines so fine and small that they offer just an unobtrusive contrast. The broad-shouldered effect that characterizes the new designs is carried out with plaids in the shoulder seams, those released to form the necessary fullness some inches lower down. The back has corresponding pleats carried in a suspender line from shoulder to waist. The front fastens invisibly beneath a tucked plastron, and the sleeve shows the moderately full top, with closely fitted cuff some six or eight inches in depth. The collar is of the mohair, fashioned over a feather-boned foundation, and fastening in the back.

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 of perpetual obligation 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 our Lord and be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world.

(1)—Baptism with water into the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost is the sacrament which implies our relation to the covenant of grace and our consecration to the Christian life, and typifies our union to Christ and regeneration of the Spirit and the washing away of our sins. The proper subjects of baptism are believers, and infants, presented by their parents or guardians, in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents should promise to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and the Church is under solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.

(2)—The Lord's Supper is the Sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him 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 to their comfort, nourishment and growth in grace. All these may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and are living in obedience to His law, and are free from scandal, crime and open sin.

Article XVI.—Of the Ministry.—We believe that Jesus Christ, as the 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 XVII.—Of Church Order and Fellowship.—We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole head of the church that it worship, teaching, discipline and Government should be administered according to His will by officers chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to that 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 XVIII.—Of the Resurrection the Last Judgment of 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 finally impenitent shall suffer eternal death, and the righteous shall abide in blessedness

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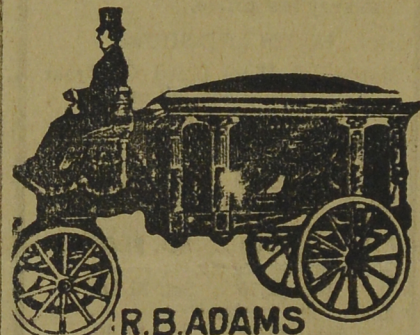
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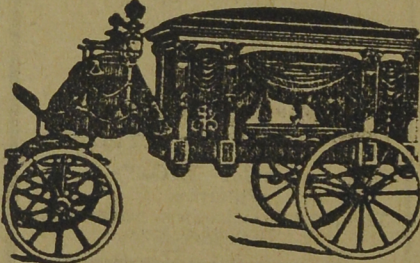
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