

# The Union of the Churches

AND THE

## Coming Presbyterian Assembly.

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By Rev. P. B. Fraser, M.A.

A MEMBER OF THE UNION COMMITTEE.

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WITH LETTERS AND CRITICISMS OF  
"THE ARTICLES OF THE FAITH"

FROM

REV. PRINCIPAL RAINY, D.D., REV. PRINCIPAL DYKES, D.D.,  
RIGHT REV. HANDLEY MOULE, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF  
DURHAM, REV. THOMAS WHITELOW, D.D., REV.  
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WARFIELD, D.D., LL.D., REV. PROF. W. M.  
M'PHEETERS, D.D., AND REV. E. B.  
HODGE, D.D.

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*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*—1 Thes. v. 21.

*"Hold fast the form of sound words."*—11 Tim. i, 13.

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## WHAT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STANDS FOR.

“The Presbyterian Church stands, as it has stood during its entire history, for the unconditioned sovereignty of God, for the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and life, for simplicity of worship, representative government, a high standard of Christian living, liberty of conscience, popular education, missionary activity, and true Christian catholicity.”

President Benjamin Harrison said: “The Presbyterian Church has been steadfast for liberty, and it has kept steadfast for education. It has stood as stiff as a steel beam for the faith delivered to our fathers, and it still stands with steadfastness for that essential doctrine—the inspired Word. It is not an illiberal Church. There is no body of Christians in the world that opens its arms wider to all who love the Master. Though it has made no boast or shout, it has yet been an aggressive Church. It has been a missionary Church from the beginning.”—‘Presbyterian Handbook.’

“In a Christian land, where the Scriptures are widely revered, it is cheaper and safer to assault the Presbyterian standards than to assault the Bible. Hence it is that the Presbyterian Church has always sustained the brunt of the fight for the integrity of God’s truth. ‘We gratefully acknowledge,’ said the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in its address to the Presbyterian Alliance, ‘the faithful and unfaltering testimony which your Church has borne throughout her entire history on behalf of the divine inspiration and authority of the Word of God.’ Said the Baptist Association in its greeting to the same body: ‘The Presbyterian Church has been the magnificent defender of the Word of God throughout the ages.’ ‘Your Church,’ said the Methodist Conference to the Presbyterian Alliance of 1896, ‘has furnished the memorable and inspiring spectacle, not simply of a solitary heroic soul here and there, but of generations of faithful souls ready for the sake of Christ and His truth to go cheerfully to prison and to death. This rare honour you rightly esteem as the most precious part of your priceless heritage.’”—‘The Creed of Presbyterians,’ by E. W. Smith, D.D.

**PART I.**

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**The Union Movement and the Coming Assembly, November, 1904.**

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So late as August 27th, 1904, Rev. Dr Gibb writes to the 'Outlook' on the question of Union, and in his letter indicates his strong conviction that nothing that has happened or has been written ought to deter the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand from going forward with his present Union movement. We have been informed time and again that this movement was not to be proceeded with unless there was practical unanimity for going on within the Church. Such was the argument at the beginning; and although it has plainly appeared during the past year that the Church is far from unanimity on the wisdom of the proposal, yet Dr. Gibb has intimated his intention of doing his utmost to induce the Assembly to give his Committee a mandate, in the name of the Church, to go forward to frame a basis of doctrine and polity, to be submitted in due course to the Church. On the merely abstract question of the desirability of giving to the Assembly's Committee authority to continue negotiations with a view to framing a basis of doctrine and polity, the Presbyteries of the Church have been greatly divided. Of the fifteen Presbyteries, eight have voted for the "abstract" proposition as above, while seven have voted for terminating the movement for an incorporating union, and in favour of seeking only fraternal organised co-operation in Christian work. I do not need to rehearse the arguments which have been so ably stated on both sides in all the Presbyteries. I am here concerned only with the net result, and it has been abundantly evident to the impartial observer that the Church is seriously divided on the question. So seriously divided is it, that, if the question at issue were the permission of a mere form involving a departure from use and wont, the superior Court of the Church would hesitate on the introduction of the innovation. The issue at stake, however, involves the very existence of the Church, to say nothing of her present peace and usefulness; and, therefore, unless there had been substantial unanimity, no superior Court of a Presbyterian Church would ever think of giving its sanction to a proposal involving her very existence. Nevertheless, Dr. Gibb, with that jaunty optimism that characterises him, is prepared to go on with his movement, and that being so, it is desirable that there should be the fullest information before the Church on the whole subject.

At the rising of last Assembly Dr. Gibb's new Articles of the Faith were, so he announced, before three Churches as the doctrinal basis unanimously agreed to by the three Committees of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches. And some time later ('Outlook,' December 5, 1903) the Convener of the Congregational Committee, in his report proposed to be submitted to the Congregational Union, wrote as follows: "The Committee have had several meetings, and have also conferred with the Committees of the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Methodist Conference. The annexed draft, entitled 'Articles of the Faith,' which has been assented to by the two Committees, has been carefully considered, and is regarded as the basis on which negotiations for Union may most hopefully be continued." His report went on to recommend "the adoption of the Articles" on certain conditions. The same might have been expected from the Methodist Committee. It was evident at once that the task of those who believed Dr. Gibb's proposals for Union to be disastrous alike to the Presbyterian Church and to the Christian people of New Zealand as a whole, would be enormously increased if favorable consideration, not to say sanction, even "provisionally," should be hastily given to the Articles of the Faith by these Churches, under the belief that they had already been sanctioned, after careful consideration, by a very large Presbyterian Committee, which included the two Theological Professors. The most unwelcome task fell to my lot of pricking this bubble, and demonstrating with a fulness that has not been gainsaid, that this whole representation, so far as the Presbyterian Committee is concerned, was the child of an over-wrought imagination. The Presbyterian Committee, as such, never really considered the Articles, much less sanctioned them. The whole thing dwindled down to the smallest, if significant, dimensions. The Articles of Faith that Dr Gibb had heralded throughout New Zealand as the product of the profound labours of the Committees of three Churches, and as the doctrinal basis of their Union, were discovered on closer investigation to have been the sole product of the wisdom of three Presbyterians; the said Articles, as is apparent from simple inspection, not having undergone any appreciable doctrinal change from the time when they emerged from the Council of Three to the present hour. True it is that the Council of Three were none else than Dr Gibb and the two Presbyterian Theological Professors, who, up to this present, have not vouchsafed any light on what they wish to be understood by these wonderful Articles of Faith.

At all events, the investigation I was led to publish made it abundantly manifest that these precious Articles never had any proper sanction of the Presbyterian Committee. So far from expressing the mind of the Presbyterian Church as a whole, they were only a sort of gunpowder plot on a small scale: Dr Gibb in the role of Guy Fawkes! The net result was



that there were no Articles submitted to either the Congregational or Methodist Churches; and both Churches, with much grace, resolved to abide events.

A little later the "abstract question" of Union began to come before the Presbyteries of our Church. The Americans have a saying: "You can see a great scope of field through a chink in the fence"; and undoubtedly the Articles, when they came to be looked at, were no small chink in Dr Gibb's theological fence. Consequently, when the "abstract question" came at first before Presbyteries, there was a disposition to view the Union movement through this chink in the fence. It is through this chink that I have viewed it, and *will continue to view it, and nothing will reconcile me to it.*

Not that for one moment, however, would I impute or suggest any disloyalty toward our grand old Presbyterian Church on the part of the great body of my brethren, who, many of them, have served her longer and better than I, and yet have voted within the last few months in favour of the abstract proposition—Union. These brethren say in effect, and say justly, that so far as the abstract question is now concerned, and so far as a doctrinal basis is now concerned, and so far as the Church and Assembly are concerned, there is a clean slate. Yes, that slate is clean; and it is to keep it clean that I have laboured ever since another slate, inscribed with Dr Gibb's Articles of Faith, was passed round in that wonderful Assembly report. But no thanks to Dr Gibb, and some others that might be named, that the slate of the Assembly and the Church is clean. He would have had the Assembly "provisionally adopt" his slate as a doctrinal basis, so as to be before the Church at this moment for her signature. Moreover, with perfect frankness he has declared since the Assembly: "What that basis—the future basis—will be either in respect of doctrine or polity remains to be seen. It is not in existence now, and no man has any right to say what it will contain or what it will exclude. It is conceivable that the doctrinal basis may be the very Articles of the Faith which have so deeply perturbed the spirit of your correspondents, Revs. P. B. Fraser and I. Jolly." Further, he wrote: "If my friends persist in assailing these withdrawn Articles, I shall be prepared to defend every syllable of them, and to show their profound harmony with the deepest convictions of Catholic Christendom, and their adequacy to stand as the doctrinal basis of a United Church." Yes, though Dr Gibb has cleaned his slate once more, who, I ask, controls the pencil that is to write afresh? The Articles have never really been "withdrawn"; they are only in a state of suspended animation. It is true, we are promised that the new Creed will not be written up quite so fast as the one "withdrawn"; but the programme is to get there all the same. "My impression is," says Dr Gibb, "that the people, or many of them, require to be educated in this matter. The educational process has begun, and you may rest assured that it will go on until

Union is accomplished, however long it may be." "Go slow" is the watchword now, however, while the Church goes to school to its new "Shortest" Catechism.

In view of the discussions that have taken place, Dr Gibb prudently proposes a change of method—though not of object. Not that I have any right to object to that. He and those who think with him, if they have resolved that it is best for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom to unite with Methodists and Congregationalists on such a doctrinal basis as he has "framed," have a perfect right to do so; only, those of us who think differently have an equal right to decline to follow him at any pace. No doubt more will follow him if he goes at a slower pace than at his reckless speed of last Assembly. It is enough for many of us, however, to know the terminus ad quem in order to decline to embark with Dr Gibb for pilot. That he promises not to shock our nerves by going at top-speed, as heretofore, forms no inducement. Nor will the well-meant soothing syrups offered by his kindly fellow-travellers be any more helpful to that end. True, some of them, whom we honour greatly, who have no intention of following Dr Gibb in his revolutionary creed-making, think that "the Church," in honour bound, having gone so far, is bound to go farther, till she comes to what they are pleased to call a "stone-wall." When the blind lead the blind, however, unfortunately there is not always a stone-wall to come up to, but only a ditch to receive them. And this in my application of it implies not more than error of judgment; but is not the result the same? May not the ditch even be a precipice? and the end the same—disaster to our beloved Presbyterian Church, and much wounding of brethren? After ten years' negotiations and much heart-burning among brethren, the Free Church of Scotland had to abandon her efforts for Union with the United Presbyterian Church, because she had come to a "stone-wall." The opposition was felt to be insuperable at the time. "What a pity!" exclaims Dr Walker, the historian of the Church—"what a pity it was that they did not say so at once! How many heart-burnings might thus have been avoided!"

Learning from the discussions in the Presbyteries the divided mind of the Church, Dr Gibb proposes a truly masterful solution of his difficulty—a solution of a difficulty as clever as any the Premier has ever adopted. Eight of the Presbyteries, believing in the clean slate, have voted for going on with negotiations for Union; seven have voted to stop these negotiations, and they request the Assembly to seek to bring about fraternal co-operation with all the churches. Dr Gibb's masterpiece is to adopt both courses! The following is his motion, carried by the Wellington Presbytery:—

This Presbytery, for the reasons set forth in the resolution almost unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of 1902, approves the proposed union of the evangelical communions, and urges the Assembly to continue the negotiations with the Methodist and Congregational Churches, with a view to the framing of a basis in doctrine and polity, in due course to be submitted

to the subordinate courts of the Church; but recognising that the elaboration of such a basis is a work requiring much care, and, therefore, likely to occupy some time in preparation, the Presbytery recommends the Assembly to instruct the Committee to give immediate attention to the question of overlapping and home mission work as carried on by the three Churches, and to arrange for a conference at which these and other questions of vital import to the evangelical communions shall be duly considered, and a uniform policy adopted.

Now, the latter half of this motion was moved at the last Assembly by Rev. G. B. Inglis, and seconded by Rev. J. K. Elliott, as follows:—"That it be remitted to the Union Committee to consider, along with the Committees of the Methodist and Congregational Churches and any other Churches, whether in the meantime a *Representative Council* could not be set up which would consider and devise methods for the practical co-operation in Christian work and progress of the various Churches in New Zealand, until such time as God in His providence may open up the way for a closer union, and report to next Assembly." This motion, I may say, is on the lines of the original overture I moved in the Clutha Presbytery, which was carried unanimously there, and in the Synod of Otago and Southland, and consequently it has been alleged that I myself am responsible for the Union movement I now seek to terminate. If one is responsible for a counter-action which defeats, and was intended to defeat, one's own action, then, no doubt, I am the real author of Dr Gibb's Union movement and all that it contains. But reasoning of that sort is not convincing, and bears its own refutation on its bosom. Now, how did Dr Gibb treat that motion last year? What did he say? "With regard to co-operation, no man had had more experience of it than he had, and his own conviction as to its movements was that they had little value. The real value lay in Union. To carry the principle of co-operation might be to kill this Union movement." This was, indeed, a surprising assertion, that co-operation among the Churches is of little value—and likely to kill Union! Churches that cannot agree to co-operate ought forthwith to unite! "Co-operation of little value!" Better acquaintance with each other likely to kill Union! No doubt, if it is not co-operation, but creed revision conducted by Dr Gibb and his associates that is desired, then co-operation is not of immediate value to that end. Probably it would "kill" Dr Gibb's "Union" movement; but I do not think that such an event would be so dire a calamity to the Presbyterian Church or the other Churches concerned as Dr Gibb appears to imagine. Any way, it may be reasonably asked: What need is there for any more specimens of doctrinal Articles from the hands of Dr Gibb's Committee? *Ex uno disce omnia!* The spectacle is certainly not edifying to the Church nor convincing to a sceptical world. And neither edifying nor convincing would it be to a Lord Chancellor! *Verbum satis sapienti.*



FORE-WORD BY AN AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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“All Churches have felt the need of public, authorized, and authentic Confessions of Faith as a declaration of truth, a protest against error, a bond of union, and a means of instruction and growth. And in the midst of the incessant conflicts of modern denominations, especially in our own land, and of the insurgent pressure of all forms of error and infidelity, to call upon us to strike down our symbols is like calling on an army to strike down its flag in the face of the foe. No one can over-estimate the influence of such a document, for example, as the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism. It has made our Church members strong in definite thought upon the weightiest themes. It has given them a consistent body of divinity in the midst of the fluctuations of opinion. It has been a spiritual and catholic bond of union . . . between two of the most intelligent and powerful bodies of Christians in our country—the Congregational and Presbyterian—differing, indeed, on sundry unessential points of Church order, but radically one in the common professed faith. It has done more to shape and train this land for its high evangelical mission than anything else except the inspired Word of God, which is the only Divine rule of faith and practice.”—Prof. Henry Boynton Smith, D.D., LL.D.



## PART II.

**The Articles of the Faith and the Future Theological College.**

"It is conceivable," says Dr Gibb, "that the doctrinal basis may be the very Articles that have so deeply perturbed the spirit of your correspondents, Revs. P. B. Fraser and I. Jolly. If my friends persist in assailing these withdrawn Articles, I shall be prepared to defend every syllable of them, and to show their profound harmony with the deepest convictions of Catholic Christendom, and their entire adequacy to stand as the doctrinal basis of a United Church." With these statements before them, the Church at large cannot but be interested in these remarkable Articles, and be greatly the better of knowing something about their significance.

I do not, in view of the criticisms that follow, need to enlarge on what I said in my address before the Presbytery of Clutha, which I delivered before I had the advantage of reading any of the replies to be presently referred to.

But there is one difficulty in connection with Union of any sort that has not, I think, received sufficient consideration from many brethren whom I greatly respect, and who have voted to go on with Union. Indeed, I have not seen it so much as referred to. And this is the question of Union as it affects, or would affect, the Church's Theological Hall for training and teaching students for the ministry. Here is the crux of the whole doctrinal question, for here the doctrinal difficulties are focussed. Nothing seems so popular to the ordinary mind than a short creed, as vague as possible, on which a great multitude of ordinary people can unite. And the popular preacher who harangues about every "jot and tittle" of a "cast-iron creed" of a dead century is the hero of the hour; while the man who stands out for maintaining our standards in their integrity is looked upon as a sort of Spanish Inquisitor, who would burn babies and old women for heresy, and who knows more of metaphysics than of the "simple" gospel. There is, however, a liberalism in theology as shallow and cheap as any in politics, and as popular with the "masses," who want short cuts as to the earthly, so to the heavenly paradise. And the proposal to fling away the Westminster Confession and substitute for it a short and easy creed, *understandable in the infant school and by the man in the street*, is received with the same wave of popular enthusiasm as the "masses" receive the latest political nostrum for their immediate social salvation.

The proposal to fling away the Westminster Confession is received with enthusiasm, because the "masses" forget for the moment what they owe to it, and what is its present use.

It is not too much to say that the world's freedom, ecclesiastical and civil, owes more to the Westminster Confession than to any other human document. Such is the testimony of history. It was composed during the golden age of English literature and patriotism, when words were deeds—the age of Milton, Hampden, and Cromwell—by an able assembly of scholars as ever made the Bible a study. One hundred and twenty divines, eleven lords, twenty commoners, from all the counties of England and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with seven Commissioners from Scotland, sat round that table. “Their labours extended over five and a-half years, during which time they held nearly twelve hundred sessions. They met in 1643, at a period in the world's history when the human intellect, for reasons known to scholars, appears to have reached the zenith of its powers”—the era of Shakespeare and Milton and Francis Bacon—the era that produced the English Bible, and laid the foundations of British and American freedom, of those nations that are the bulwarks of freedom for the world. It is still the Confession of Faith of millions of the foremost peoples in the world. It has lately been through “revision” in the American Presbyterian Church, with its 8,000 ministers and nearly 30,000 elders, and stands in its integrity, in the twentieth century, the Confession of that Church.

Does that mean, however, that every minister is bound to “every jot and tittle of a cast-iron creed”? No; he is only “bound”—that is, he gives a voluntary and loyal assent—the love of his “mind”—to “the system of doctrine contained in the Confession.” “The use of the words ‘system of doctrine’ in the terms of subscription precludes the idea of the necessary acceptance of every statement in the Standard by the subscribers, but involves the acceptance of so much as is vital to the system as a whole.” And that is exactly the position in our own Church. And if the Christian reader wishes to study for himself a clear and temperate statement of the “system of doctrine,” he will find it in the admirable Articles of the English Presbyterian Church (see Appendix) so sadly mutilated by Dr Gibb's Committee. Where is there in these Articles the “dead hand” of the seventeenth century? I think it would be well worthy of consideration by our Assembly whether these same Articles should not be remitted to Presbyteries and Sessions for adoption as a “brief” and popular statement of what is meant by the “system of doctrine” in the Standards of our Church. Neatly printed and widely circulated, while they would be an effective answer to shallow attacks on the Standards of the Church, they would also be helpful to office-bearers who subscribe to the “system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith.”

That, therefore, is all that is required by adherence to the system of doctrine of our Confession. That does not mean that a man may not believe all the jots and tittles to be. In the great mountain ranges of our Confession, well grounded

the unchangeable and infallible Word of God. He may feed both his heart and mind by that manual of theology and ethics, unsurpassed in any language in the world, the incomparable (and seldom read) Larger Catechism, the product of five years' labors of statesmen, divines, and scholars of the robustest mould. But let it be emphasised that our Church does not, and never did, ask from any of her members acceptance of any of her Standards, not even of her doctrine as a system. Her only condition of Church membership is a credible profession of faith in Christ. Calvinist and Arminian believers—whether Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, or Salvationist—she welcomes with equal heartiness to all the rights and benefits of her membership. Only of office-bearers, her ministers, and her theological professors, does she require subscription to her elaborate and mountainous Creed.

And why? Here is the crux of every Union movement, as I have said, at the door of the Theological College. Plainly, if theology is to be taught, it must be taught in system, with reasonable completeness and coherence. What, then, is the system to be taught in the Church's Theological College? A short creed, vague and ambiguous, for such a purpose, as a test of subscription for theological professors, is worse than useless. It is to put a premium on the most odious qualities of the human mind. The Church, in instituting a theological chair, has just as much right beforehand to say what is the system of theology to be taught as the Government in saying what shall be taught in the public schools. The conditions are known beforehand, and voluntarily accepted. As Dr Walker, historian of the Free Church, says: "A professorship in a Free Church College is not a Crown appointment, implying the conferring of a civil right, it is an appointment by a private corporation to do a certain kind of work. That work, moreover, is in its nature of paramount importance. If a mistake is made in connection with it, it is not merely one congregation which will suffer, but a whole community, and the mischief done may affect an entire generation." Again, the Free Church Assembly, by resolution, formally "admonished (its theological) professors to remember that they are not set for the propagating of their own opinions, but for the maintenance of the doctrine and truth committed to the Church"—that is, the doctrine committed to the Church appointing them and paying them, whose creed is stated with fulness and without ambiguity in her standards. A theological chair is not a philosophical fellowship, but exists for effective teaching of specific doctrines known beforehand, and agreed upon as founded on the Word of God. We cannot institute a dozen separate Theological colleges where different doctrines or philosophical opinions are dispensed to ingenuous youth. We can have only one college, and therefore only one system of doctrine can be taught. If you have five professors, and each has a system of his own, and neither system that of the Church, what sort



of a Theological Hall and Church will you have?—"a Church without a religion," as the Lord Chancellor says, and you College a theological menagerie.

Such, then, is the chief reason for a Creed of reasonableness, which lays down clearly the system of doctrine to be taught in the Theological College. Otherwise the theological professors to be appointed in the future may set up, each one of them, a system of his own. Therefore the Creed is first and foremost for theological professors. Once that is settled, it follows that the same Creed will suit the ministers who themselves have been students of these professors. They cannot object to the same Creed which the professors have signed. On the contrary, they will delight to give the love of both heart and mind to that same system of doctrine which they have studied with their professors and believe to be agreeable to the Word of God. Moreover, as the Creed is the doctrinal Law of the Church, and as professors are governed by that Law, clearly it is only right that ministers who are to administer that Law should themselves, like judges sworn to administer the civil law, give a loyal declaration of willingness to judge the teaching of the professors, as they judge the teaching of each other, by the common doctrinal standard which all have accepted as the Law of the Church and as in accordance with the Word of God. There remain only the elders. It is the glory of our Presbyterian polity that our Church makes no difference in her doctrinal requirements between ministers and elders. Our Church has no ministerial caste. Elders have equal power with ministers in all her higher Courts, and rule in overwhelming numbers in her sessions. Since elders have an absolute equality both in power and numbers in the Supreme Court of the Church, it is essential, if they are to exercise that power intelligently and justly in any doctrinal question or trial which involves the deposition of a professor or of a minister, that they too must subscribe to the same Creed as the professors and ministers. They must be men believing the same system of doctrine in which just law is to be administered. Once we make any distinction in the respective Creeds that are subscribed by professors, ministers, or elders, and there is an end of Presbyterian polity whose glory has been the equality of her ministers and elders in her highest Courts. As she has no "clerical" caste, she has no "laymen." She has preaching, or teaching, elders and ruling elders, and both are equal in power; therefore both ought to sign the same Creed. These together are the office-bearers, the guardians of her faith, called of God, and chosen by her members to fill their respective offices. Surely then, it is reasonable that those voluntarily accepting of these offices should justify their "call," and indicate their fitness for the duties of their office by subscribing to the Creed of the Church. Otherwise there can be neither order nor peace within the Church nor any progress nor permanence in her life in the community. Further, let it be greatly emphasised that



Church's Creed is upheld and subscribed to, and administered, and obeyed, and loyally defended, and loved, not because there is a mere contract to uphold and administer and obey it entered into by men, but because all have severally declared that they believe the Creed to be in accordance with the Word of God—the only rule of faith and life; because they have declared that the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed a government within his Church; and because they have accepted that particular Creed as the revelation of His will in His Word. While a Church, that is, any particular Church, like ours, viewed externally and in the eye of the civil law, is a "voluntary association," like any other society of men, it is more than that. The whole authority of her Law is derived from the Lord Jesus, the Head of His Church, speaking in His Word. Hence her office-bearers are under solemn obligation to administer His Law, and professors and ministers and elders to obey it. How can that be done if the Law of the Church is expressed in ambiguous and evasive terms? When the criticisms that follow of Dr Gibb's Articles are well considered the Church at large will be able to appreciate the soundness of Dr Gibb's claim that his Articles, or any others like them, are "entirely adequate to form the doctrinal basis of a United Church."

I am no theological or Confessional Chauvinist (though Chauvin, by the way, is the same name as Calvin!) as brethren know from all my action in negotiations for the accomplished union of the two Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand. I have not, and never had, the remotest wish to raise unkindly suspicions about any of my brethren; but when the famous Articles of Dr Gibb's remarkable Committees were heralded as the product of the labours of the Committees of three Churches, I was somewhat staggered. When it was proposed that these same Committees were to be given carte blanche "to go on to prepare a basis of doctrine and polity, to be submitted to the Presbyteries and Sessions in due course," I thought it was not a time to be silent, not in view of the considerations regarding the real use of a Creed, which I have stated above. The members of our Church have never complained of the Church's Creed, for the simple reason that they are not required to subscribe to any written Creed, nor profess any but the simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither have the elders or managers, for they are required to subscribe only to "the system of doctrine." Therefore the "short-sighted" desiderated is required only for our future theological professors and our future ministers instructed under their

I thought it proper to strip Dr Gibb's new Articles of the glorious sanction which they had acquired, and took the responsibility of giving a criticism of them in the overture I presented in the Clutha Presbytery. At the same time, considering that our Church is no bigger than a City Presbytery of the Colonies, yet scattered over an area equal almost to that of

Great Britain, and that ours is an isolated colony, with only one religious paper, and that largely, if not entirely, at Dr Gibb's disposal for the propagation of his views, I thought it would be of great service to the Church at large if I should send a copy of my overture containing the proposed Articles of the Faith to some leading divines of Britain and America, asking them to favour me with an informing criticism of the Articles, which I could make available for the Church at large. This I did. At the same time, I did the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand the credit to say that nobody had any fear of such Articles being accepted by our Church. Nevertheless, in view of eventualities, I thought an informing criticism would be greatly helpful to the Church in any future deliberations on the question of Creed revision or construction. The mention of the names of all I wrote—a very large number—would show I wrote only divines of the highest repute, respected all over the Presbyterian world, and far beyond it. I have been greatly cheered and benefited by the replies so kindly sent me. I cannot refrain from publishing Rev. Dr Alex. Whyte's so kind and characteristic reply, a sample, as it is, of the uniform kindness of several I do not refer to, whose authors, for different reasons, did not care to give the criticism I sought. But those I publish speak for themselves. The criticisms, if read in the light of the considerations advanced above as to the real use of a Creed in connection with theological teaching, will, I am sure, prove instructive even to members of our Church not versed in theological lore. They will probably agree that the five years' labors of the Westminster divines, who were prepared to seal their Creed with their blood, have not been in vain, and that Dr Gibb's remarkable Committees have something yet to learn in the logic of Creed construction. We are, it is true, anxious to lead the van in New Zealand ecclesiastically, as well as we are supposed to do politically, extracting as we do sunbeams from cucumbers. We have indeed, not yet invented a new astronomy with the moon for centre of our system, and moonshine for the light thereof; but if Dr Gibb and the Premier could only arrange a "referendum" on it, there is no saying what the ballot box and the oracular voice of "the people" might reveal—a new theological heavens and a new political earth, perhaps!

I should like to prefix to the replies below a statement which, no doubt, is superfluous. In no way are the honored brethren whose communications I am privileged to print to be associated with any views I have expressed, either as to matter or manner, in my controversy with Dr Gibb and his Committee. Needless to say, all faults of matter or manner are my own. I sought no expression of opinion on anything of personal, parochial, provincial, or even colonial dimensions. Christian truth is not a personal question nor limited by

geographical boundaries; and I thought, and think, that grave questions going to the core of the Christian faith might be suitably referred to acknowledged masters in Israel.

The letter of the Rev. Principal Dykes, convener of the Committee which prepared the English Presbyterian Articles, was in reply to a communication asking what relation the Presbyterian Church of England held to the Westminster Confession, and whether the proposed new Articles could fairly be regarded as based on the English Articles. The reply of the venerable leader of the United Free Church Principal Rainy, D.D., speaks for itself. The kind and brotherly reply, characteristic of the Bishop of Durham—a Bishop of the Church Universal—will be read with great interest.

Then there follow four replies from the great American Church. Professor M'Pheeters, D.D., a well-known theological professor of the Southern Presbyterian Church, takes a keen interest in the progress of the Reformed Faith in this far-off colony. Rev. Professor Hodge, Ph.D., of Princeton, writes with equal interest and greater fulness. Rev. Dr Hodge, of Philadelphia, like Professor M'Pheeters, contents himself with a brief expression of opinion. The other from America is the reply of the Rev. Dr Warfield, Professor of Theology at Princeton, a theologian and Christian scholar unsurpassed by any other in Britain or America. When the right of Creeds to exist is being questioned, and constant attacks are being made on systematic theology by persons mostly ignorant of it, and by others who find in creeds an impregnable barrier to sentimentalism and disintegration of Divine truth, no better book could be circulated by the thousand in this colony at the present time than his little book, of less than 100 pages, entitled 'The Right of Systematic Theology,' which might have been entitled 'The Right of or Necessity for Creeds.' It was republished in Britain (T. and T. Clark), with an introduction by Professor James Orr, D.D., and a commendatory note by the leading theologians of every Church in Scotland:—"Professor Warfield, of Princeton, is well known on both sides of the Atlantic"; William Garden Blackie, D.D., LL.D.; A. H. Charteris, D.D.; George C. M. Douglas, D.D.; Robert Flint, D.D.; William H. Goold, D.D.; John Laidlaw, D.D.; Alexander Mair, D.D.; Robert Rainy, D.D.; Alexander Stuart, D.D.; James Stalker, D.D.; Norman L. Walker, D.D.; J. Wardrop, D.D.

A book with such an exceptional recommendation is worth reading, and no man should speak lightly of Creeds until he has read it. The criticism of the Articles by a theologian of Dr Warfield's standing will therefore be read with great interest.



The concluding criticism I publish is one from the pen of the Rev. Dr Whitelaw,\* of Kilmarnock, one of the most distinguished divines of the United Free Church of Scotland. It is most able and most informing.

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\*I wish to take this opportunity of calling attention to his last book, only recently published, entitled: "Old Testament Critics, An Inquiry into the Character, Effect and Validity of Their Teaching, A Question for the Christian People of To-day" (Kegan, Paul, Trench and Co.). It is probably, for popular use, the most informing of all the recent books on the 'Criticism of the Old Testament,' besides being written by a scholar who knows his subject at first hand. I wish I could send a copy to every minister and home missionary in New Zealand. I would even offer a copy with all respect to at least one of our theological professors, and I would ask my friend Mr Jamieson, the travelling secretary to the Young Men's Bible Class Union, to recommend every class to get two or three copies of this work to study along with the books he has hitherto recommended. If our intelligent Christian laymen read this book, it will prove of the greatest service to them in dealing with the chief danger the Church has to face in the near future, regarding the very foundations of the faith. The 'Princeton Theological Review' (April, 1924) says of it:—"It is unhesitatingly commended to all who seek light on these questions." I had not the advantage of reading it before I delivered my speech in Presbytery against this present Union movement; but if any one questions the soundness of my main contention in that speech, I give for answer: Read Dr Whitelaw's "Old Testament Critics." I would recommend M'Intosh's "Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?"—a book that would make the very stones eloquent. It is another book to be added to my friend Mr Jamieson's list for all Bible-class libraries and all Bible readers. It is one of the noblest ever written on the immortal book. Since I have ventured so far, might I mention the volume of Dr John Smith's, "The Integrity of Scripture"—an ideal layman's book. And lastly, I would earnestly beg every Presbyterian elder to possess himself of an enthusiastic little volume, packed with good things, entitled "The Creed of Presbyterians," by Dr E. W. Smith, and published by the Baker and Taylor Company, New York. Any bookseller will get it.



## PART III.

**SOLI DEO GLORIA.**

While all our hearts and all our songs  
 Join to admire the feast,  
 Each of us cries, with thankful tongues,  
 "Lord, why was I a guest?"

"Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
 And enter while there's room,  
 When thousands make a wretched choice,  
 And rather starve than come?"

'Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
 That sweetly forced us in,  
 Else we had still refused to taste,  
 And perished in our sin.

—WATTS.

REPLIES FROM SOME LEADING DIVINES IN BRITAIN  
 AND AMERICA.

## I.

**Reply of Principal Rainy, D.D.,**

New College, Edinburgh.

8 Rosebery Crescent,

Edinburgh, 17th February, 1904.

Rev. P. B. Fraser.

My Dear Sir,—I received your communication, and I need not say that I read it with great interest. I have thought over it to some extent, all the more from hearing of corresponding movements in Australia.

It seems to me, however, that it would be unbecoming on my part to interfere with advice of mine in a matter which the New Zealand Church is well able to discuss, and will naturally settle for itself in the light of its own responsibilities.

I may venture to say, perhaps, that in all likelihood the difficulties in the way of any incorporating Union will prove to be serious. But a great deal would be done if the stage were reached of real friendly feeling, and readiness for frank consultation and concerted action.

Apart from theological difficulties, each denomination is so habituated to ways of its own, and these ways constitute so much of the strength of each Church, that one asks

whether it would be wise to risk the friction that might arise from fusion. But prolonged co-operation might diminish that difficulty.

Beyond this I do not care at present to express any opinion.

Yours ever truly,  
ROBERT RAINY.

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## II.

### Reply of Rev. Principal, Dykes, D.D.,

Westminster College, Cambridge.

12th February, 1904.

Rev. P. B. Fraser, Otago.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—I duly received yours of the 21st December last, with reprint from the 'Otago Daily Times'

1. In reply to your inquiry, I have to say that the "Twenty-four Articles of the Faith" have not displaced the Westminster Confession as the Subordinate Standard of the Presbyterian Church of England, as you will see from the Formula by which ministers are required to accept it, a copy of which I append. I understand the "Articles" as explaining what is to be included in the "body of Christian doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession." That is by itself a vague expression, but it is taken to be just the doctrine "more briefly expressed" in the Articles. (Much Confessional material embraced in the Westminster document has now been relegated to a secondary place in our "Appendix," which is merely a working agreement for the sake of peace.)

2. The New Zealand draft, to judge by the paper you send me, has borrowed a good deal of the language of our Articles, and I suppose the framers of it had a right to use what they found suitable to their purpose. But they have cut out all its Calvinism, and its Calvinism is an essential part of it as accepted in our Church; nor could the mutilated remainder of it be fairly called or regarded as our "Articles of Faith" any longer, but as a quite different thing.

3. I am neither called on to express any opinion on the wisdom of the policy of uniting various Evangelical Churches in New Zealand on a non-Calvinistic basis, nor am I in a position to do so, because I do not know the local circumstances. That is a very grave question, on which the Presbyterians of New Zealand will have to reach their own conclusions, in view of all the conditions affecting the position and prospects of the Kingdom of God in that part of the world.

4. But if it were desired to find a general statement of the Evangelical Faith common to all the non-Episcopal Churches as a basis for negotiations on such a wide proposal for Union, I should have thought it might have been found

in the "Free Church Catechism," drawn up by a Committee representing different communions, rather than by taking some of our Articles and rejecting or altering others. I presume that Catechism is known on your side of the globe. It can be had from the Memorial Hall, in Farringdon street, London.

Believe me to be,  
 Rev. and Dear Sir,  
 Fraternally yours,  
 J. OSWALD DYKES.

Extract from "Formula for Use at the Ordination or Induction of a Minister" in the Presbyterian Church of England:—

"Q. 2.—Do you sincerely own and believe, as in accordance with Holy Scripture, and will you faithfully teach, the body of Christian doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the other Subordinate Standards of this Church, and now more briefly expressed in 'The XXIV. Articles of the Faith,' approved by the Synod in 1890?"

"3.—Do you acknowledge the Appendix to the Articles of the Faith as expressing the general opinion and belief entertained in this Church on the matters to which it refers; and do you engage to regulate your action as a minister of this Church in accordance with that document?"

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### III.

**Reply from Rev. Alexander Whyte, D.D.,**

St. George's Edinburgh.  
 7 Charlotte Square,  
 February 18, 1904.

My Dear Sir,—I have your letter, but I have neither the talent nor the special study that would justify me to enter on the deep and serious matter you put before me in your letter. I am sorry I can be of no service to you in that respect. I send you as a token of goodwill a little book of mine lately published, which will show you the line of things with which I am wholly occupied.

With best wishes,

A. WHYTE.

**Reply from the Right Reverend Handley Moule, D.D.,**  
Lord Bishop of Durham.

Auckland Castle,  
Bishop Auckland,  
England, April 12, 1904.

My Dear Sir,—I have before me your kind letter of February 19, in which you are good enough to ask my opinion upon a doctrinal basis proposed to be accepted with a view to co-operation, and in hope of ultimate fusion, by various denominations of Christians in New Zealand.

It is, of course, a delicate matter for me, a Bishop of the English Church, to offer comments in such a case.

But you are pleased to invite an expression of my opinion in a way which will acquit me, I trust, of any intention, however faint, to intrude.

Few can be more anxious than I am, in view of the wofully divided state of even Protestant Christendom, to remove in every lawful way every barrier to "godly union and concord," and in particular to minimize rather than accentuate differences of doctrinal expressions where this may be rightly done. Nothing more impaired the power of the great English Revival of the 18th Century than the tendency, on both sides, to inflame rather than temper the expression of opinion on the doctrines of the Grace of God.

But incontestably there is a limit to concessions of this sort, if Revelation is in any degree definite.

In the present case, as I reflect on the quotations in your "Notice of Overture," I cannot but think that those would be well advised who decide to abide by the singularly temperate and carefully weighed Articles of the Presbyterian Church of England, in which I recognise just that anxiety to avoid needless accentuation of differences which I so much welcome.

Particularly, were I personally concerned, I should decline to modify the wording of Articles V., VIII., and XIII. The changes and omissions suggested seem to me for the most part to tend distinctly towards an impairment of reverent submission to the ruling of Holy Scripture on the great points in question. The English Presbyterian Article XXIII. appears to be as careful and absolutely Scriptural a statement as can well be made on this awfully solemn theme. Its omission would be a grave loss. The dread warnings of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His own words, can ill be spared in these days of a deepening materialism.

I humbly pray God's guidance into all truth and peace for those concerned in this grave discussion; and may He hasten the final day when we "shall know even as also we were known."

I am, Dear and Reverend Sir,

Yours in our Lord,  
HANDLEY DUNELM.



**Reply from Rev. W. M. M'Pheeters, D.D.,**

Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern).

Columbia, South Carolina,  
April 8, 1904.

The Rev. P. B. Fraser,  
Lovell's Flat, Otago, N.Z.

Dear Sir and Brother,—You ask me for a "criticism" of the changes which it is proposed to make in the "Articles of the Presbyterian Church of England," as these changes are set forth in an excerpt from the 'Otago Daily Times,' Saturday, December 12th, 1903." As the matter is one in which I cannot be supposed to have any partizan interest, I presume that I may, without impropriety, state how the proposed changes strike me as a Presbyterian and a lover of the Presbyterian Church in all its branches. Briefly, then, I may say:

1. In general, that both the omissions and the substitutions strike me as equally significant and unfortunate, not to say ominous. There is not one of them that does not touch some capital head of doctrine, and with the single exception of the addition to the Article on "Sonship in Christ," either annihilate the doctrine altogether or sadly mutilate it.

2. The proposed changes may be grouped under two heads, viz.: First, such as affect "the common salvation"; and second, such as affect the integrity of the Presbyterian system.

Under the first head, or those affecting the common faith of Evangelical Christendom, I would include the changes proposed to be made in the Articles "Of the Fall," "Of the Justification by Faith," "Of the Last Judgment." Further, the change proposed in the Article on "The Work of Christ" is open to criticism as not only unhappily evasive, but as furnishing a cover for the most fatal error.

The changes proposed to be made in the Article "Of Election and Regeneration" and "Of Christian Perseverance" fall too manifestly under the second head to require any comment.

It seems to me that only those prepared to break not only with the Presbyterian system, but with the common faith of Christendom, and with the clear teachings of the Word of God, can with clear understanding of what they involve vote for so radical changes as those proposed.

Hoping that God may be pleased to avert so sad a calamity from your beloved Church,

I am, yours in the Gospel,

W. M. M'PHEETERS.

## VI.

**Reply from Rev. E. B. Hodge, D.D.,**

Corresponding Secretary to the Board of Education  
of the Presbyterian Church in the United States  
of America.

Philadelphia, April 27, 1904.

To the Rev. P. B. Fraser,  
Lovell's Flat, Otago, N.Z.

My Dear Sir,—Your letter deserved an earlier answer, but I have hesitated to write anything for publication on a matter concerning the Church in New Zealand, so far away from us and our immediate concerns. You probably have enough material from other sources without printing anything from my pen for the public. It is a great satisfaction to learn that you have no fear that the Church at large would sanction consideration of such a Creed as you have submitted for my inspection. I will simply say, with a great deal of emphasis, that it seems to me the height of folly to attempt to bring into a single organization Churches which have differing, and often contradictory, Creeds. Such efforts, however well meant, only prepare the way for fresh divisions. A split is almost certain to occur in the denomination that is brought in by a majority vote, because there will certainly be men who will stand for principle; and, after the general organization is completed, the discordant elements, not being able to live in peace, will ultimately fly apart. A Creed drawn up in such general terms that persons holding contradictory Creeds can subscribe to it is a mere rope of sand. Indeed, in my judgment it is practically a matter of dishonesty when persons are brought together professing common principles who, in fact, differ almost as widely as the poles; some signing the Creed in one sense, and some signing it in another. The thing to be sought for is mutual recognition among Evangelical Christians, loving sympathy, and cordial co-operation. The unity for which Christ prayed is something better than the false show of unity for which so many seem to be clamoring.

I am, truly and cordially yours,

EDWARD B. HODGE

## VII.

**Reply from Rev. B. B. Warfield, D.D., LL.D.,**  
 Professor of Systematic Theology, Princeton Theological  
 Seminary.

Princeton, N.J., U.S.A.,  
 February 19th, 1904.

My Dear Mr Fraser,—Your letter of December 21st reached me so long ago as January 18th, and I have delayed replying to it in the hope that I might find time to write you somewhat fully on the interesting points which your enclosures suggest. I am afraid, however, that I shall not soon be able to obtain the requisite leisure, and I do not feel justified in delaying longer at least acknowledging the receipt of your letter. In doing so, you will, I am sure, permit me to give expression to two feelings which the reading of your enclosures have awakened in me.

The first of these is a feeling of satisfaction with the overture you are preparing, and especially with the criticisms which, in clauses 7 to 11, you pass upon the Articles which have been proposed as a suitable basis of Union between the Presbyterian and some of its sister Churches.

The second of them is a feeling of surprise that a recension of doctrinal Articles, in which so little justice is done to fundamental items of evangelical religion, could come into serious consideration as a suitable basis for a Union, one of the parties to which is to be a Presbyterian Church, with all in the way of inheritance in doctrine and life which that implies. I find myself unable to account for this rather portentous phenomenon except on two suppositions, which are plausible enough, at all events, to justify me in adducing them.

I seem to myself bound to suppose, in the first place, that the somewhat unmeasured zeal for external, or, as it is more fashionable to call it, "organic," Union which seems to be everywhere rampant among the Protestant Churches of English speech, has penetrated to New Zealand also. I do not know what can be the origin of this excessive desire for "organic union," unless it be one result of the propaganda which has been waged in its behalf by the Prelatic Churches. In them it has, indeed, a logical justification; their doctrine of the Church as an external body, determined by external marks, and organised under external forms, outside of which there is no Church of God, requires of them to seek to bring under this single organisation all the fragments which they would fain recognise as destined to form part of the Church of Christ. But surely those who know that God's Church consists fundamentally of His elect children, and, in its external manifestation, of the "congregatio sanctorum," should remember that its unity is more hopefully sought by a common determination among us to become and remain "saints"—



with all that that implies with respect at once to faith and life—than by any crude attempt to build a great house around a divided family. The unity for which our Master prayed in His high-priestly prayer, the unity to which we are exhorted in the Apostolic Epistles, is not an artificial “unity” of external organisation, but an inward unity of thought and feeling and life. It can never be attained by surrendering our testimony to truth already perceived. Christ’s entire people will never unite in destructive errors. There will always be left a remnant who have not bowed the knee to Baal; and the real core of the Church will be with this remnant and not with the multitude who are willing to content themselves with being but partially Christian in order that they may be in a greater company. The effort to secure “unity” by “compromising” is necessarily as futile therefore as it is unfaithful. A story is told of a rustic who, wishing a hive of bees, caught all that visited his flowers and shut them up in a box together, only shortly and quite thoroughly to learn the difference between a hive and an aggregation. It seems too late in the day to continue such experiments in the Church. No aggregation of discordant elements can make a unity in the Church. The attempt to do so is treason to the true idea of Christian unity.

All this is so elementary, as well as fundamental, that I seem to myself bound to suppose further that the true nature of the Articles proposed as a suitable basis for Union between the deliberating Churches is not thoroughly understood by the Presbyterians of New Zealand. Under the spell of zeal for a false “unity”—which is really only a not very thoughtful piece of sentimentalism—it is distressingly easy to deceive ourselves as to the real meaning of a series of smoothly-sounding phrases, without inquiring very closely into what, in the way of omissions especially, they commit us to. Of one thing we may meanwhile, however, be very sure. The intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life of a Church may unhappily very readily fall below its organised testimony to truth. In periods of general decline it is pretty sure to do so; because its official teachers may prove unfaithful and the sheep be left unfed. But never will the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life of a Church permanently stand above its official testimony. This great fact is illustrated by every page of the history of the Church, and in it lies the tremendous importance of making our doctrinal formularies full and wide, clear and strong. Formally speaking, in them is hidden the standing or falling of a Church. The admirable criticisms which your overture offers upon the proposed Articles of Union will no doubt open the eyes of the Presbyterians of New Zealand to their serious defects, and I am persuaded that when their real nature is clearly apprehended, they will no longer seem possible of adoption.

The feature in the proposed Articles which strikes me most forcibly is what appears the studied attempt made in them to make a place in the united Churches for unevangelical



doctrine, and therefore for unevangelical religion. What is the essence of evangelical religion? Is it not first utter dependence on the grace of God? Where the "Soli Deo Gloria" sounds with conviction in the heart, there, and there only, is a truly evangelical doctrine present, a truly evangelical religion possible. The intrusion of the least particle of human performance into the ground of salvation is the intrusion of the evil leaven, and bears with it the promise and potency of all that is unevangelical. To be and remain truly evangelical there must resound in thought and heart and life alike the good confession of Augustine: "O Lord, Thou Thyself, and Thou Thyself alone, art our only power." But the most striking feature in the alterations proposed by the present recension to be made in the Articles of the Presbyterian Church of England is the elimination they propose of everything in those Articles which shuts man up to trust in God as the sole power unto salvation.

The way for this sad result is prepared by the alteration proposed in the Article of the Fall. For this an Article entitled "of Sin" is substituted. In this new Article the whole doctrine of the Fall is omitted, and with it the entire doctrine of Original Sin, with all its implications. There is left no "race sin" as such; for it is substituted only universal sinning on the part of individuals. This, of course, involves the denial of all the subjective effects of sin; and accordingly no subjective sinfulness is allowed in this Article. Sin here is "guilt" alone. It has estranged us from God, brought us under condemnation, and made us subject to the penalty of death—from which we cannot deliver ourselves. But it has not made us corrupt and depraved, and, because corrupt and depraved, not able to act uncorruptly or undepravedly. We are able, in a word, to do "good works." Pelagius himself, it is safe to say, would have received this Article with acclamation.

The succeeding alterations betray the same unevangelical tendency. We are no longer, it seems, to be permitted to say that the work of Christ "fully satisfied the divine justice" (Article VIII.), or that it was "solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice" that our sins are pardoned and we are accepted as righteous in God's sight (Article XIII.). How then is the divine justice fully satisfied? What more is asked than Christ's blood and righteousness? The text is so altered, in a word, as to leave room for the intrusion of "work-salvation"—a salvation that proceeds on the ground of repentance and faith, works of our own—and not solely on the ground of Christ's substitutive work. It is in the same interests that the whole of Articles XII. and XVI. are stricken out, carrying with them not only the most precious doctrines of the whole revelation of God to the sin-smitten sinner—the Election of Grace and the preservation of God's people—but also the cardinal doctrine of regeneration by the almighty power of God. We call this the cardinal doctrine

with emphasis, because on it as a hinge everything else turns: and here at its sharpest emerges the great evangelical question: Is it really by the power of God and not by my own power that I am saved? After such eliminations it seems scarcely worth while to observe that the open assertion of eternal punishment is also balked at (Article XXIII.). After God has been pushed into the background in the whole process of salvation, need we talk much about His eternal justice at the end of the story?

It does not seem to me possible, my dear Mr Fraser, that the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand is seriously contemplating purchasing external union with sister Churches at the cost of her testimony to that pure evangelicalism which it is her mission to proclaim. She will surely remember, when it comes to action, that it is her part not to sell the truth, but to give it.

I am, very truly yours,

BENJ. B. WARFIELD.

The Rev. P. B. Fraser,  
Otago, New Zealand.

## VIII.

**Reply from Rev. C. C. Hodge, Ph.D.,**

Professor in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, U.S.A.

### **THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN ARTICLES.**

Mr Fraser says in his pamphlet\* that there are three things upon which the Presbyterian people of New Zealand wish to have accurate information—(1) "Have the members of the Assembly's Union Committee unanimously adopted Dr Gibb's new Creed?" (2) "If not unanimously, who are the persons that have assented to that Creed, and are responsible for its now being before three Churches as the Creed of the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church?" (3) "What is this new Creed? What is its attitude to the Presbyterian Creed, to the Reformation doctrines, to the catholic faith of Christendom?" It is on the third of these questions that I shall say a few words. This is the most important question of the three, although the other two are, or should be, of great importance to the Presbyterian people of New Zealand.

The Creed upon the basis of which it is proposed that the Union take place is "The Articles of the Faith Approved

\*"An Inquiry into the Origin and Sanction of Dr Gibb's Articles of Faith."

by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England," May, 1890. This Creed is a somewhat brief and only mildly Calvinistic symbol. What is the amended Creed? We shall consider it under two main heads—(1) Its doctrines of sin and of grace, where grace is taken to denote the work of the Holy Spirit in the application of Redemption. These topics should be treated in connection, because they are so closely related, and because by so treating them we shall see clearly a glaring inconsistency of the proposed Creed. (2) Its doctrine of the objective side of Redemption—i.e., its statements on the Work of Christ and on Justification. We consider Justification under this second head, for, although it is one step in the application of Redemption, and never to be confounded with the Atonement, it nevertheless is an objective step in the Ordo Salutis, and may most conveniently be considered here.

(1) The doctrines of Sin and of Grace in the subjective sense. In Sec. 5 of the English Articles the effects of Adam's sin upon himself, his representative relation to mankind, the fall of the race in Adam, so that they are born guilty, depraved, and unable, are all confessed, although the statement as to the original state of Adam is described as merely one of "innocence and communion with God." Now, in the proposed Creed this section is struck out, and another is substituted for it. This new section 5 confesses that all men have disobeyed God, and so are under condemnation, from which state they cannot deliver themselves. Thus this Article cuts out any race fall in Adam, any guilt or inherent depravity derived in any way whatsoever from our first parent. It thus not only strikes out the doctrine of imputed guilt, but also that of inherent corruption. And consequently it cannot affirm any inability of the sinner, since the condition out of which it is said that "no man is able to deliver himself" is stated to be simply one of condemnation for actual sins. Consequently this section, by implication, affirms that sin is simply an act of choice, contrary to God's will. Now this, it will be observed, is Pelagianism, and contrary to the "catholic faith of Christendom." If there are no subjective effects of sin, there can be no need of supernatural grace, and so it is not strange that Augustine felt that in warring against Pelagianism he was fighting, not some heretical form of the Gospel, but a denial of the Gospel itself. It is a matter of astonishment to us that the Evangelical Arminians should think of consenting to this section on sin. It would cause us utter amazement should the Presbyterians subscribe to a doctrine of sin which cannot be termed Evangelical.

Having excinded the doctrines of the Fall and of Original Sin, the proposed Creed is quite consistent in striking out altogether No. 12 of the English Articles on Election and Regeneration. If men are not dead in sin, obviously they do not need to be made alive by the almighty power of God



the Holy Spirit. If men are not only free, but have plenary ability to turn to God, obviously the sovereignty of God in Election is not only unnecessary, but is necessarily denied by implication. Consequently it is only in obedience to the demands of logic that the proposed Creed thus proceeds to eliminate the very heart and core of the Reformed Faith, and—let us be perfectly frank—the very heart and core of the Gospel of God's grace as it is made known to us in the Scripture. It is not only Paul who represents the Christian as the product of God's almighty power, as a new creation, and who likens the power of God which remakes the Christian a new man to that almighty power which God exercised when He raised Christ from the dead; it is our Lord Himself who tells us that we must be born over again (or perhaps "from above," i.e., in a supernatural manner), or we cannot see the Kingdom of God. The very fact that the logical consequences of the doctrine of sin must lead to the elimination of the very heart of the gospel of Divine Grace is in itself a condemnation of the said doctrine of sin.

But the proposed Creed is not so consistent after all. Its doctrine of sin leaves no place for any doctrine of internal grace at all, and yet this Creed does seem to have retained a doctrine of internal grace. It does seem to hold fast to some operation of the Holy Spirit on men's hearts; for it allows to remain unaltered No. 11 of the English Articles, which is on the Holy Spirit, in which section it is said that the Holy Spirit moves on the hearts of men, enlightens their minds, and persuades and enables them to obey the call of the Gospel. Also in No. 13, on Justification by Faith, the statement remains that "everyone who through the grace of the Holy Spirit repents and believes the Gospel . . . is freely pardoned, etc." Now, if the doctrine of Sin in the proposed Creed is allowed to remain, the logic of the situation would demand that these phrases implying any internal grace should be struck out. Perhaps they were overlooked by the Committee, or perhaps they were driven by their knowledge of Scripture and by their Christian experience not to abandon the whole of the Gospel at the demands of logic.

But let us not suppose that the doctrine of grace in this proposed Creed, when considered by itself, is one which the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand should be willing to adopt. In the English Articles the above expressions on the operation of the Holy Spirit on men's hearts in sections 11 and 13 were perhaps somewhat ambiguous, but in the light of No. 12, on Election and Regeneration, and of No. 16, on Perseverance, they could be interpreted as denoting efficacious and irresistible grace. But since the section on Election and Regeneration, and that on Perseverance, have been struck out from the new Creed in order to allow the Methodist Church to come in under this Creed, it is obvious that in it these expressions in sections 11 and 13 are to be interpreted in a universalistic sense. It will thus be seen to



be simply the Arminian doctrine of "sufficient grace" and of the "*ordo salutis*," except that while Regeneration gave the Arminian theologians trouble, not only in its place as to the "*ordo salutis*," but also as to its nature, this Creed very logically cuts it out altogether. Its doctrine of the "*ordo salutis*," then, is that an influence of the Holy Spirit is given to all men (who, according to the doctrine of sin, we should remember, do not need it). Those who co-operate with this grace, and repent and believe, are justified, adopted as sons, and sanctified. It is obvious, then, that one of two things will follow from this—either this grace must be affirmed actually to save all men, in which case the doctrine will become a doctrine of efficacious grace, but will contradict fact by becoming universalistic, or else it is man who determines ultimately whether he shall be saved or not, and man may resist the purpose of God. It is plain that this latter is what this Creed means to affirm, since it strikes out the doctrines of Election, Regeneration, and Perseverance. But this is unevangelical just in so far as it places the work of salvation in man's hands. And this it does. It makes man able to co-operate with or to resist God's grace; it can become completely evangelical only by becoming thoroughly universalistic. And not only so, but in taking out of God's hands such important events as the entrance of souls into His Kingdom, and in its implication either that God has no purpose with reference to individuals, or else that man can thwart God's purpose, this system of belief comes very near to being inconsistent with Theism.

If this be the doctrine of Grace which this Creed teaches, it is again quite consistent in its omission of the section in the English Articles on Perseverance. For upon the above interpretation of its doctrine as to the nature of Grace, which is the only one possible to put upon the statements of this Creed, it is quite plain that any doctrine of Perseverance is impossible, and Christians cannot be said to be those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." For the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand to adopt this Creed, as embodying its belief as to the nature of Redemption in its subjective side, would be for it to give up that which gives that Church a *raison d'être* as a separate Church. But this will not appeal to those who desire to cease—at least in New Zealand—to exist as a separate Church. We would say, however, that this is too dear a price to pay for union. It would be to sacrifice to an external union the core of the Gospel and the precious heritage of the Presbyterian Church—i.e., the Reformed Faith. We would be surprised if the Methodists should be willing to adopt the proposed doctrine of Sin. We would be surprised should the Presbyterians be willing to adopt the proposed doctrine of Grace. We would be astonished should anyone think of adopting both doctrines in conjunction, for surely it is a strange mixture, this Pelagian doctrine of Sin and Arminian doctrine of Grace.

In the second place, turning to the objective side of Redemption, what is the doctrine of this proposed Creed upon the subject of the work of Christ? The English Articles confess Christ as Mediator, and after mentioning His prophetic and kingly offices, state that by His perfect obedience and death on the Cross He "did fully satisfy Divine Justice," thus confessing what is known as the Satisfaction doctrine of the Atonement, confessed by the Latin, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches. The proposed Creed, for the sake of making a statement sufficiently broad to admit of the three Churches uniting in its adoption, have omitted to state this cardinal doctrine of the Gospel, and have substituted for the words "did fully satisfy Divine Justice" the words "did fully satisfy the demands of the Divine Nature." But in so doing, this Creed has become so broad as to make room for almost any theory of the Atonement. What does the Divine Nature demand in order that sin may be pardoned? Perhaps God only demands that men should be made morally better, or better instructed, or turned back to Him. If so, there is room for all the various Moral Influence theories of the Atonement. Perhaps God only demands that humanity as a lump be leavened by having infused into it a new life. Then Christ would save us by His Incarnation, rather than by His life and death, and all those who hold to mystical theories of the Atonement could come under this Creed. Perhaps God's Nature only demands that in forgiving sin His hatred of it may be shown, and men deterred from sinning, so that His moral government may not be jeopardised. Here, then, the advocates of the governmental theory can find shelter. Or does God's nature perhaps demand that we shall approach Him only with a sacrifice, not of itself sufficient, but which He has determined to accept to render Him propitious. There is room, therefore, for the Remonstrants under this symbol. Perhaps God's Nature only demands repentance, and Christ offers for us a repentance which we cannot offer. But, not to multiply words, it may be said that this statement of this proposed Creed on the Atonement is so wide as to make room for almost anybody. In adopting it, therefore, the Presbyterian Church, while it need not abandon the precious truth that Christ has borne the penalty of our sin, and has satisfied Divine Justice, must nevertheless abandon its duty and privilege of witnessing to this truth before the world. For the sake of a union which, on such a basis, is no true union, the Presbyterian Church is asked to silence its testimony to the world concerning Him who was made to be sin on our behalf in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, is asked to forbear to speak of Jesus as one "whom God has set forth to be a propitiation by faith, through His blood, to declare His righteousness . . . in order that He might be just and the justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus." We cannot think that the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand will show such an unfortunate want of ap-

preciation of one of its most vital and most precious truths. We cannot even think that the Methodist Church of New Zealand, even if many of its ministers may hold the Remonstrant doctrine of the Atonement, would be willing to adopt a statement on the subject which will admit all those who do not believe that there is any obstacle at all on God's part to the forgiveness of sin.

The Article on Justification, as changed, shows the same unhappy breaking down of the Presbyterian Church's confession to truth for the sake of a union of the Churches of New Zealand. In the English Articles the Protestant doctrine of Justification is stated. We are said to be accepted as righteous in the sight of God "solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice." In the new Creed these last words are omitted, with the evident intention of making room for the Arminian doctrine that faith and evangelical obedience enter into the ground of our justification. What, then, would the adoption of this section as revised mean for the Presbyterian Church? It would mean that while the statement is so broad as not to exclude their doctrine, yet that the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand must omit to testify in its Creed to a cardinal doctrine of the Protestant Reformation. It would mean that it must adopt a Creed which is broad enough to admit those who cannot logically utter the words of that hymn which should express the religious sentiment of every Christian: "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe." It would mean that the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand will be in symbolical union with those who, "logical, must hold inadequate and unscriptural views of the nature of Divine Justice and the immutability of God's law. Surely no branch of the Presbyterian Church can afford to do this.

Finally, the utter license of the desire for union is manifest when in No. 23, on the Last Judgment, the doctrine of eternal punishment is struck out, and thus not only the doctrine of the whole Christian Church excised, but the authority of Jesus as a teacher of truth impugned, since the words struck out are the very words of our Lord Himself. Surely, when the words of Jesus are not to be admitted into the Creed of a Christian Church, for fear someone cannot subscribe to it, it is time to call a halt.

We have already dwelt too long upon this Creed. To put it briefly, it is an attempt to find the basis of a union of different Churches on a basis of common evangelical truth, but it has not succeeded in keeping itself evangelical. In Mr Fraser's pamphlet we saw that the question we were asked to answer was "What is this new Creed? What is the attitude to the Presbyterian Creed, to the Reformation doctrines, to the Catholic faith of Christendom?" In reply, we must say that it abandons some doctrines of the Catholic faith of Christendom—i.e., that the race fell in Adam, the Satisfaction doctrine of the Atonement, and eternal punishment. It abandons also some of the Reformation doctrines—i.e.,



Lutheran and Reformed doctrines—i.e., the doctrines of total inability and justification on the ground of Christ's work alone. Finally, it abandons doctrines of the Reformed Faith, and so of the Presbyterian Church—i.e., election, efficacious and irresistible Grace, and Perseverance. And all of these are Scripture doctrines. The doctrinal indifferentism of the present day is most discouraging, for these doctrines are just the precious realities of God's salvation of sinners and of this sin-cursed world. A union of Churches at the cost of saving truth is no true union, and it is our earnest wish and prayer that the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand will not sell its birthright for a mess of pottage.

C. W. HODGE.

Princeton Theological Seminary,  
Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A.,  
March 30th, 1904.

## IX.

### **Reply from Rev. Thomas Whitelaw, M.A., D.D.,**

Author of "Pulpit Commentary on Genesis," "Preacher's Commentary on Acts," "Exegetical Commentary on St. John's Gospel," "Old Testament Critics: An Inquiry into the Character, Effect, and Validity of Their Teaching: A Question for the Christian People of To-day," etc.

Kilmarnock, Scotland,

13 April, 1904.

Dear Mr Fraser,—In complying with your request that I should offer a criticism of the Articles of Faith proposed, or about to be proposed, for a basis of Union between the Evangelical Churches of New Zealand I shall endeavour to state, as far as possible without theological bias, whether and how far (in my judgment) the Articles in question are an adequate presentation of the teachings of Scripture on the several subjects of which they treat, whether and how far (again in my judgment) they are in harmony with the interpretation put upon Scripture by the Westminster standards, and whether and how far (once more in my judgment) they are fitted to serve as a basis of Union for the Evangelical Churches of New Zealand, or indeed of any land.

I deal of course only with those Articles mentioned in your overture, and I assume that your citation of them is correct. I assume also that the other Articles in the New Zealand Creed correspond substantially with the English Presbyterian Church Articles which I have before me.

### THE NEW ZEALAND ARTICLES AND SCRIPTURE.

Do the proposed Articles furnish an adequate representation of the teaching of Scripture?



## I—OF SIN.

Under this head Scripture unquestionably teaches—"that all men, through disobedience to the will of God, in whatsoever way made known"—by the work of the law written on the heart (the heathen), by the Word of the Law, or Decalogue, inscribed on the Two Tables (the Hebrews), or by the Spirit of the Law recorded in the Gospel (Christians)—"are in a state of sin, and so are estranged from God, have come under just condemnation, are subject to the penalty of death and are unable to deliver themselves out of this condition." But Scripture likewise teaches that sin entered into the world by the fall of the first man, through temptation by the devil, that through falling into sin the first man's nature became prone to evil instead of good, that this proneness to evil, or moral degeneration, transmitted itself to his natural descendants, who all have been ushered into existence with an inborn tendency to sin, which in every individual has manifested itself in actual transgression. Scripture also teaches that as members of a fallen race, men are by nature objects of the divine displeasure, under condemnation, and children of wrath, and that the death to which they are subject in consequence of sin and from which they cannot deliver themselves is more than the dissolution of the body, is the perishing of the soul, by which is signified its coming short of everlasting life and its suffering all that is expressed by the phrase "the wrath to come." Whether this teaching is true or not, every fair mind must admit that it is the teaching of Scripture.

## 2.—OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.

Assuming that a previous Article accurately and adequately sets forth the Scripture doctrine of the person of Christ, this Article on the work of Christ, as modified from the E.P. Articles, does not appear to offer either an erroneous or an insufficient exhibition of Scripture teachings on this important subject, provided the words "the demands of the Divine Nature" are understood to mean "the demands of all the attributes of the Divine Nature—e.g., those of justice as well as of mercy"; but if the words are designed to signify anything less or other, and, much more, if they have been framed with the view of opening the door to such interpretations of Scriptures as either deny or place in abeyance or leave out of consideration the substitutional, vicarious, and propitiatory character of Christ's sufferings and death, then, in my judgment, this Article does not furnish either an accurate or an adequate representation of Scripture. Even the last clause in the Article—"bearing our sins," etc.—is not sufficient to save its scriptural character, unless "bearing our sins" means "bearing their penalty," and "offered up Himself a sacrifice" signifies "gave Himself to be made a sin offering, or ex-

piatory sacrifice"—both of which points are left somewhat obscure.

### 3.—OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Here also the proposed alteration of the E.P. Article is unfavourable, as it leaves the remaining clauses which make up the New Zealand Article in a state which cannot be described as other than defective from a scriptural point of view. Without the words "solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice" the New Zealand Article teaches nothing whatever about the objective ground or meritorious cause of a sinner's justification, but merely states "that everyone who through the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit repents and believes the Gospel, confessing and forsaking his sins, and humbly relying upon Christ alone for salvation, is freely pardoned and accepted as righteous in the sight of God." Of course, if the omitted words are held to be included in those which remain—i.e., if "the Gospel" signifies that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, that He was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood," etc., and if "relying upon Christ alone for salvation" signifies relying not upon Christ's love, or Christ's promise merely, but upon Christ's finished work of propitiation, which is perhaps hinted at in the closing words of Article VIII., "through His obedience on our behalf," etc., then the truncated Article might fairly enough be accepted as an adequate presentation of Scripture truth; but if "the Gospel" means less or something else than this, and if "relying on Christ alone for salvation" imports anything different from relying "solely on the perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice of Christ," then the shortened Article does not give an adequate representation of the truth, because these, as it seems to me, are the senses in which the words are understood in Scripture.

### 4.—OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

No serious objection can be taken to this Article, as what it asserts is undoubtedly correct; but as an exposition either of union with Christ or of its consequence, sonship in Christ, it is neither specially luminous nor remarkably full.

### 5.—OF ELECTION AND REGENERATION.

### 6.—OF CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.

The omission of Articles on these subjects, by whatever motive dictated, leaves important departments of Scripture teaching undefined. No Creed which lacks a deliverance upon these points can claim to be an adequate presentation of Scripture doctrine.

### 7.—OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

To drop the words "when the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" is to

discard what is perhaps the strongest and clearest pronouncement of Scripture on the destinies of men hereafter—a pronouncement, too, by Christ Himself, whom the Article declares to be the Supreme Judge at the last day, “before whom all men must appear, who shall separate the righteous from the wicked, make manifest the secrets of the heart, and render to every man according to the deeds he hath done in the body, whether good or evil.” Some strong reason must have existed to move the compilers of the New Zealand Article to shut the mouth of Christ on this momentous theme.

### 8.—OF THE LORD’S DAY.

It is not to be supposed that this Article is regarded by the Assembly’s Committee as stating all that could fairly be deducted from Scripture concerning the Lord’s Day or Christian Sabbath.

It cannot fail to strike the reader of the preceding lines how frequently the qualifying “if” has required to be introduced before a favourable verdict could be returned as to the adequacy of the particular Article to represent the doctrine of Scripture. In a theological Creed, to say the least, this is unfortunate, as it opens the door to “private interpretations,” which may be as various as the persons who make them. However short and simple the Creed of a Church may be, it should be characterised by absolutely clear definition, so as to preclude the possibility of misinterpretation and secure unity of the faith among those for whom it is prepared.

## II.

### THE NEW ZEALAND ARTICLES AND THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION.

How far are the proposed Articles in harmony with this venerable symbol of reformed doctrine?

It is no part of my business under this section to enter on the question whether, or if at all, how far a modification should or must be made on the Westminster standards, if the various Christian demoninations are to be fused into one “zealous and powerful National Church of New Zealand,” but merely—assuming the proposed Articles to set forth the doctrinal basis required to secure the said Church—to indicate the extent of modification on the Westminster standards which these Articles propose—leaving those more immediately concerned to decide whether the modification is such as they can conscientiously accept, or whether it is not too high a price to pay for even Union.

#### 1.—OF SIN.

No one can read the six paragraphs of Chapter VI. of the Westminster Confession on the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof, and compare these with the proposed Article on Sin in the New Zealand Creed, without



perceiving how masterly, comprehensive, well-knit together, solemn, and strong are the former, and how feeble, mild, contracted, and ambiguous is the latter. The Westminster Confession explains what the New Zealand Article omits—viz., how sin entered into the world, viz., through the temptation by Satan and fall of our first parents. Indeed, the New Zealand Article leaves it open for anyone to deny this. The Westminster Confession declares that as a consequence of this sin our first parents lost their original righteousness and became utterly corrupt and defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. The New Zealand Article passes over this except in so far as it may be supposed to be included in what is affirmed about all men. The Westminster Confession asserts that the moral corruption of our first parents transmitted itself to all their ordinary descendants; the New Zealand Article appears to ignore this and to suggest that each individual sinks into a state of sin only through his own act of disobedience to the will of God. The Westminster Confession holds that this inherited evil nature, with which every man comes into the world, in other words, original sin, is the root of all actual transgressions; the New Zealand Article, I should say, while postulating nothing about this, permits original sin to be denied, and the doctrine to be embraced that men are born innocent, and do not become sinful till they actually sin. The Westminster Confession teaches that original, as well as actual sin, exposes men to condemnation; the New Zealand Article holds, or seems to hold, that only after each individual has sinned does he fall under just condemnation.

Whether the theology of the Westminster Confession on this subject be Scripture or not, the least observant reader can perceive that the New Zealand Article constitutes a wide departure from it.

## 2.—OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.

It might reasonably enough be argued that the account furnished in Chapter VIII., s.s. 3-8. of the Westminster Confession of the redemption work of Christ the Mediator is unnecessarily detailed and elaborate; but its singular clearness and impressiveness no one can challenge. Set alongside of it the New Zealand Article looks extremely meagre, and even limp. Beyond stating that the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator was anointed with the Holy Spirit (whether in measure or without measure, whether as the Hebrew Prophets were, or in an exceptional manner, peculiar to Himself, is left undeclared), the New Zealand Article supplies no indication of the qualification Christ possessed for this office through having in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of His appointment to the office through the call of His Father, of the way in which He discharged the office, or of the manner in which He applied the benefits of His redemption work before His incarnation in the O.T. Church.

and applies them since His resurrection in the New—all of which points are handled in the Westminster Confession. The Westminster Confession, of course, may be wrong, or at least open to correction, in all or some of these points, but it may prove instructive to note how widely different a document it is in respect of this theme from the New Zealand Creed.

### 3.—OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Concerning this important Article as it stands in the Westminster Confession and in the New Zealand Creed nothing more need be said than that while the former carefully excludes everything that might be supposed to constitute a ground of pardon and acceptance before God for the sinner, emphasising Christ's "obedience and satisfaction" as the only ground, and explaining how this, the righteousness of Christ, is imputed or reckoned to the sinner who receives Christ and rests on Him and His righteousness by faith, the latter contents itself by simply asserting that "everyone who through the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit repents and believes the Gospel, confessing and forsaking his sins, and humbly relying upon Christ alone for salvation, is freely pardoned and accepted as righteous in the sight of God," omitting the words which appear in the E.P. Articles, and are substantially expressed in the Westminster Confession: "Solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice"—which omission certainly weakens the Article, if it does not expose the Article to suspicion. If the omitted words are understood not to be contained in those which are retained, then the Article is a whole diameter apart from the theology of the Westminster Confession; if they are supposed to be contained in these, why should they have been dropped—more especially as their inclusion would have placed the Article beyond the reach of misunderstanding?

### 4.—OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

### 5.—OF ELECTION AND REGENERATION.

### 6.—OF CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.

With regard to these no further remark is required than what has been made in the preceding section.

### 7.—OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

While the Westminster Confession not only states the fact that there shall be such a day, but explains "the end of God's appointing this day" to be "the manifestation of the glory of His mercy and justice," and the use which should be made of such a doctrine by all men, and especially by the godly, the New Zealand Article confines its statement to the fact—in particular striking out the words of Christ, which appear both in the Westminster Confession and in the E.P. Articles—"then shall the wicked go away into everlasting punishment

but the righteous into life eternal." That the divergence of the two Creeds at this point, if not inexpedient in view of a union (on which no judgment is pronounced meanwhile) is by no means immaterial, the least learned student of Scripture can discern.

### 8.—OF THE LORD'S DAY.

A simple perusal of what the Westminster Confession states in Chapter XXI., 7, 8, will suffice to show that the New Zealand Article could hardly have said less about the Christian Sabbath.

### III.

## THE NEW ZEALAND ARTICLES AND A UNITED NEW ZEALAND CHURCH.

Are the proposed Articles fitted to serve as a basis for the contemplated Union of the Churches in New Zealand?

The reply to this question will depend entirely upon what kind of a Union is contemplated. If it is desired to include in one fold the Pauline and Judaistic Christian, the Augustinian and the Pelagian, the Calvinistic and the Arminian, the Unitarian and the Ritschlian, the Higher Critical and the Traditional, the Rationalist and the Evangelical, the Evolutionist and the Creationist, then I fancy the proposed doctrinal symbol will do fairly well, because it appears to me that all these could honestly enough shelter themselves under such a collection of theological propositions.

1. Under that relating to sin might comfortably repose the professing Christian who believes that man was originally evolved from the lower animals, that the story of the fall was a myth; that Adam stood in no representative relation to his descendants; that original sin is only a figment of the theological imagination; and that men are not born in a state of sin and condemnation, but innocent and well pleasing to God; equally, the person who holds that God's will has never been made known to man in any other way than by the light of nature, and certainly in no exceptional manner by the sacred Scriptures, might subscribe this article, inasmuch as the person accepting it is under no obligation more than to confess that somehow or other God has made known his will to man. It is not certain whether, under sanction of this article, one might not maintain that only death physical was the penalty of sin, and not death spiritual and eternal, or vice versa, that death physical was no part of sin's penalty, but only death spiritual was. Perhaps all this is intended by those responsible for the Article; if so, then I have no hesitation in asserting that it will exactly suit their aim.

2. Under the article about the work of Christ, as altered by substituting for "divine justice" the words "the demands of the divine nature," it requires no large penetration to see that any view of Christ's mediatorial work will be admissible; that of Paul, Augustine, Calvin, Knox, the Scottish Reformers,



and the Westminster divines, that Christ acted as the substitute and surety of sinful men, and by His obedience unto death upon the Cross, rendered complete and final satisfaction to the Law's claims against them, for pure, perfect, and perpetual obedience to the Divine Law, and for the penalty of death, which they had incurred by their inherited and personal guilt; that of the theologian who re-udiates the legal or judicial aspect of Christ's death, and considers that Christ has satisfied the demands of the divine nature, by His spotless obedience to the divine will, by His representing before God what man should have been, or, in other words, by His example of perfect holiness; that of him who understands Christ's bearing our sins to signify His enduring their penalty and His bearing them away by being made a sin offering on their account, so that by the shedding of His blood the penalty attaching to them was, in the eye of the Divine Law, satisfactorily met, and full atonement made for their guilt; and that of those who interpret Christ's bearing our sins as meaning nothing more than that He bore the weight of them as of men's sicknesses and sorrows upon His heart; that He died through coming into collision with men's sins, and that in order to satisfy the demands of the divine nature He maintained His obedience to the divine will, even though it involved the sacrifice of His life upon a Cross.

Again, I repeat, if the purpose of the article is to include these different views, that purpose has been pretty fairly met.

3. Under the Article concerning Justification by Faith, which has been truncated by omitting the words "solely on account of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice," it is no less obvious that theologians of various schools may lovingly embrace each other—he who considers that a man is justified by his good works, by and on account of his repentance and faith, his confession and forsaking of sin, or in other words, by and on account of his evangelical self-righteousness; and he who disclaims each and all of these together as a ground of acceptance before God, and finds this alone in the perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice, or, in other words, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is little room for doubting that under this Article ministers and elders might find shelter who, while not altogether discarding Christ's death as an example of self-sacrificing love, yet assign to it no value whatever as an atonement or expiation.

4. Through the absence of any Articles on election, Regeneration, and Perseverance, it will, of course, be possible for the same Church to embrace Calvinists and Arminians, those who believe that salvation is all of grace, and those who consider that it is partly of divine grace and partly of human effort, co-operating with one another, but acting independently; those who hold that a soul which has been truly regenerated, though it may fall away for a time, cannot fall away finally, but through grace will be recovered and renewed to repentance; and those who assert that a man may be a

Christian to-day and not a Christian to-morrow, a renewed man one moment and an unrenewed man the next, in Christ and therefore safe, a forgiven man and an heir of Eternal Life now and after was out of Christ, and therefore under condemnation and in danger of Eternal Death. Without question, if the contemplated union designs to embrace these varieties of doctrine, it will demand a creed wide enough, loose enough, and flexible enough to admit of the disciples of these contradictory views living harmoniously together; but an important question at this point naturally presents itself, whether such a union would not be happier without a creed at all, since with such diversity of sentiment under almost every Article it is doubtful if any sort of theological opinion could in the long run be excluded.

5. What is written about the Last Judgment is so true that one may easily be regarded as hypercritical should he attempt to find fault with it; and yet, by excluding the words of Christ—"When the wicked shall go away." etc.—anyone can see that a door is opened for all ideas current in religious circles with regard to the destinies of men—for those of Roman Catholics, who believe in purgatorial fires; for those of Conditional Immortality men, who believe in the annihilation of the wicked; for those of Second Probation theorists, who believe that the unconverted dead will receive another chance of salvation beyond the grave; and for those of Universalists, who believe that all will ultimately be saved. How a Church will get along whose pulpits may be filled by men of such varied theological hues is not easy to see, and how hearers in the pews are to be kept from becoming bewildered when they listen, say, on five successive Sabbaths to discourses on the Future Life from an Orthodox Preacher on Eternal Punishment, from a Roman Catholic Father on Purgatory, from a Conditional Immortality Divine on the Annihilation of the Wicked, from a Second Probationist on a Second Chance hereafter, and from a Universalist on the Restoration of All to happiness beyond the Grave, it will puzzle the wit of man to say. If the experiment is to be tried in New Zealand, without doubt it will be watched from this side of the world with interest, but I fear not with much hope of its turning out a success.

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS WHITELOW.

## THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND THE CREED OF PRESBYTERIANS.

### "A CLOUD OF WITNESSES."

"Milton, though not a member of the Assembly, pronounced it a 'select assembly,' 'of so much piety and wisdom,' a 'learned and memorable synod,' in which 'piety, learning, and prudence were housed.'

"The famous saint and scholar, Richard Baxter, author of 'The Saints' Everlasting Rest,' had every reason to be impartial. He wrote: 'The divines there congregated were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity; and being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the more freely speak the truth, which I know, even in the face of malice and envy, that as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidences left us, the Christian world, since the days of the Apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines.'

"Philip Schaff, the great Church historian, pronounces the above a 'just tribute' to the Westminster Assembly, and says: 'Whether we look at the extent or ability of its labours, or its influence upon future generations, it stands first among Protestant Councils.'

"The celebrated Dean Stanley, of the English Episcopal Church, declares that of all Protestant Confessions the Westminster Confession 'exhibits far more depth of theological insight than any other.'

"The late Dr Curry, the eminent editor of the *Methodist Advocate* of New York, in an editorial on Creeds, calls 'the Westminster Confession the ablest, clearest, and most comprehensive system of Christian doctrine ever framed—a wonderful monument of the intellectual greatness of its framers.'"  
'The Creed of Presbyterians.'



## PART IV.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

These criticisms now before the Church will furnish food for reflection, and no doubt will be duly pondered before the approaching Assembly.

It has been repeatedly affirmed by Dr Gibb and others that the Articles have been "withdrawn." But who has withdrawn them, and in what sense and how far have they been withdrawn? Withdrawn they have been, it is true, from official cognisance of the Assembly and of the subordinate Courts of the Church, which have been appealed to, to give a mandate to Dr Gibb's Committee to go on to form a basis of doctrine and polity; as if, in point of fact, Dr Gibb, and ostensibly his Committee, had not already done so! Let me quote the words, not of the "withdrawn" report too previously circulated by Dr Gibb at last Assembly, but the words of the report actually submitted by Dr Gibb to the Assembly and adopted by it. Here are the words:—

"In compliance with this instruction your Committee, in co-operation with the Committees of other Churches, have held several meetings, at which the question of a suitable creed has been under consideration, and a number of Articles of the Faith have been framed. But, being persuaded that if any real advance is to be made in this matter, the advance must be slow, and the mind of the whole Church ascertained at each step, your Committee deems it inexpedient to submit these articles to the Assembly. They ask the Assembly to remit to Presbyteries and Sessions the question if they are agreeable to the Assembly negotiating with the Methodist and Congregational Churches with a view to Union, upon a basis of doctrine and polity to be considered and in due time to be sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions."

It is clear as noon-day that the Articles have not in any real sense been withdrawn. Dr Gibb has affirmed, on the contrary, that they have been adopted by his and other Committees, and above, he says, that, so far as his own Committee is concerned, they are meanwhile held "in retentis." Let anyone read his letter reprinted in the appendix of this pamphlet entitled "Presbyterian and Methodist Unanimity," and it will be futile to affirm that these Articles have been withdrawn. According to Dr Gibb's report adopted by the Assembly, it is "inexpedient" to submit the Articles at this stage. That is all. When Dr Gibb thinks it expedient to submit them, or any other Articles like them, he will do so, when the Church is sufficiently "educated" to receive them.

Perhaps I ought to refer at this stage to the remarks made by Professor Watt, D.D., in reference to the position of these Articles in his speech to the Dunedin Presbytery in favour of proceeding with the Union negotiations. I think it due to him that I should quote his words in full:—

I humbly submit that undue importance has been attached to the Articles of Belief which a small sub-committee of the General Assembly drew up with a view to their submission to the sister Churches for general approval. That these Articles were meant to be the doctrinal basis on which the negotiating Churches were to unite is a preposterous delusion. These Articles were simply

meant for feelers, something thrown out, at first generally, by way of experiment, to discover whether there was sufficient sympathy and harmony of belief between the Churches to warrant our travelling further in the direction of an incorporating Union. All that the Committee, after putting itself in communication with the other Churches, expected to be able to report was that the way was clear for proceeding further, and that the situation was one of hopefulness. If the Committee reported favourably, then the Assembly would at once for itself proceed to formulate Articles of belief such as it would be prepared to accept, taking perhaps the Articles of the Committee, and cutting and carving them, accepting, rejecting, or amending them in its wisdom and at its discretion. Then was the time for our worthy friend Mr P. B. Fraser to strike in and give us the benefit of his counsel; and I may state that, personally, I would heartily welcome any suggestion from whatever quarter, even though it contradicted my own previously-formed and expressed opinion, that would bring our basis of Union here into harmony with the mind of God revealed in His Word. And I think I may venture to say the same of my fellow-committeemen.

In reply to Dr Watt, honoured by the Church as Professor and as Moderator of last Assembly, I humbly submit that his explanation only makes matters worse. In the first place, the Professor was silent till so late as May 4, six months after the Articles had been before the Church. It was somewhat late in the day to declare that it was a "preposterous delusion" to affirm "that these articles were meant to be a doctrinal basis on which the negotiating Churches were to unite." That the Articles are "preposterous" I would readily admit; but that there is no "delusion" as to what was Dr Gibb's intention or about his declarations is clear as noon-day. Dr Gibb and Dr Watt stand in irreconcilable opposition on this vital point. Let anyone read Dr Gibb's report circulated at the Assembly and his letter already referred to, both attached hereto, and the "preposterous delusion" will be seen to be Dr Watt's own. Then, the Professor says, the Articles were "simply meant for feelers"; that is the astounding thing to me and many more, that such "feelers" should, in the first instance, have been "thrown out," not by members of other Churches, but by the Convener of the Presbyterian Committee and the two Theological Professors of a Presbyterian Church. That they proved to be more than "feelers" became abundantly manifest, from Dr Gibb's heralding them through the colony, before they had ever come before his Assembly, as a "doctrinal basis" on which the three Committees had already agreed to unite. Let it be remembered that Dr Gibb spoke as follows on his way to the Assembly of these very Articles: "He was of opinion that the Wesleyan proposals would be approved by the General Assembly of Presbyterians" ("Daily Times," Nov. 7, 1903). (Here the "feelers thrown out" are already "Wesleyan" proposals!). Let the report of the Convener of the Congregational Committee already referred to (at page 4) be borne in mind. Further, let the fact that the Articles in question, from the time they emerged from Dr Gibb's sub-committee (of himself and the two Professors) up to the present hour, have never undergone any appreciable doctrinal change, and then the accuracy with which the "feelers were thrown out" will appear as wonderful as it is significant. And

I will add, that if these things are duly weighed, I shall be forgiven the persistence with which I have held to the task of expounding the significance of the Articles in question, and of insisting that the Church at large shall duly weigh what is meant by giving carte blanche to Dr Gibb's Committee anew to "begin" negotiations for an incorporating Union, and to proceed to formulate a new doctrinal basis for the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

In view of what lies before the Church in the near future, and of any proposals, under cover of "Union," for Creed revision or construction within the Presbyterian Church, the foregoing criticisms and facts ought to be duly weighed. And it may not be useless if I emphasise as briefly as possible some closing points.

1. First and foremost, as I have pointed out in my Presbytery speech, before representatives from various Churches can sit down together to frame a common Creed, they must state clearly their personal relation to Holy Scripture. It will be found that four-fifths of the attacks levelled against the Westminster Confession within Presbyterian Churches are due to its loyalty to Scripture as the Word of God. And it is because men have altered their standpoint of regarding the Scriptures themselves that the Confession is assailed. Would it not be more straightforward if the critics of the Confession should make this clear? Would it not be a work of immense service, as being foundation work, if the critics of the Confession, and the Higher Critics of the Bible, should come together and say precisely what portions of the Holy Scriptures they regard as the Word of God, and as true, trustworthy, and of divine authority? Some portions of Scripture are, we are assured, myth and legend; our Lord mistook the true nature of the Old Testament Scriptures which "testified of Him." What "is certainly not history" He regarded as "history." Regarding the Old Testament Scriptures, "He attached Himself to the notions of His contemporaries"! And His contemporaries, as we know from our contemporaries, were all wrong in their notions. In short, it is a commonplace of the times that great portions of Scripture are certainly only man's word about God, and that only an undetermined, diminishing, and ever-varying portion is God's Word about man; reverie and Revelation are inextricably mixed. Until critics are agreed on what is reverie and what is Revelation, how is it possible for a Creed, founded on Scripture, to be constructed so as honestly to be confessed by all parties? "The Westminster divines took the following vow, which was read afresh every Monday morning that its solemn influence might be constantly felt: 'I do seriously promise and vow, in the presence of Almighty God, that in this Assembly whereof I am a member, I will maintain nothing in point of doctrine but what I believe to be most agreeable to the Word of God.' One of the cardinal regulations of the Assembly was in these words: "What any man undertakes to prove as necessary, he shall make good out of



Scripture.' " By Scripture, they meant the whole of the Old and New Testaments. These, they called, "the Word of God." Is it not fair to ask the assailants of our Confession what portions of these Scriptures do they regard as the Revelation and Word of God? Who are agreed and how many are agreed among them on the same portions? These are previous questions to all Creed making in the colony or elsewhere. It is only honest to state them.

2. If the Creed must be Scriptural, it also must be intelligible and unambiguous. It must be this, unless a lie is to be put at the very core of the Church's life. Any attempt under ambiguous phrases to enable men to put a different "sense" on the words of the Creed, to palter with the truth in a double "sense," were to make the Church an organised hypocrisy. These terrible words, terrible because true, of Paley's may be set over against any attempt, however well meant, at Creed construction, based on such lines: "It is the wilful deceit that makes the lie; and we wilfully deceive when our expressions are not true in the sense in which we believe the hearer to apprehend them."

3. Then as to the question of long or short. You can make it as short as you like to begin with; but just as surely as men will think and act differently, and think rightly or wrongly, will your Creed grow as the truth becomes defined and error is excluded. As everyone knows, the fact that men will reason, and not always reason correctly nor wisely, regarding the great questions of religion, is the cause of the existence of Creeds. Apart from the fact that the Creed is a declaration of truth and a protest against error, and therefore will grow in fulness and explicitness, just as the errors to be guarded against multiply, the Creed, as we have already pointed out, forms the common Law of the Church. And the question now is, whether you can lay down beforehand how long or how short that law shall be? If all men were reasonable, no doubt the civil and ecclesiastical law would alike be "short." But men are not all either reasonable or good. They want "decisions," and the more they are in earnest will they be determined to have them. If the Church's law is not full and explicit, they will come up to the Assembly for decisions. No doubt, because her Creed is "short," and the Church may be determined to keep it "short," an Assembly on being appealed to may refuse to entertain the question. The Assembly may play the part of Gallio, who cared for none of these things. The Supreme Court of the Church may decline to be a judge in a matter of what it deems only one of "words and names," and, like Gallio, drive the disputants from her judgment seat. But such a Church and such an Assembly will be suffering not from the "dead hand" of the seventeenth century, but from the dead hand and dead head and dead heart of the twentieth. But if the Assembly does adjudicate, then, in the absence of a Creed Law of the Church, the personal will of each Assembly becomes the Law

of the Church. In short, ecclesiastical tyranny would be substituted for ecclesiastical law. Instead of every man being ruled by the well-known and clearly understood Law of the Church's Creed, her members would be ruled by the floating opinions of an ever-changing Assembly, and by the knot of ecclesiastics who might happen to rule the roost for the hour as the Supreme Court of the Church. If Dr Gibb were successful in overthrowing the Westminster Confession and substituting for it a "short" Creed like that proposed, he would establish, unconsciously I may surely say, an ecclesiastical tyranny. In the first case of controversy or of discipline under his new Creed the question would be decided, not by an interpretation and administration of an intelligible and unambiguous Law, but by the sentiments of the hour and "the leader of the house."

It is a perfectly unique testimony to the unparalleled wisdom of the Westminster divines, both as statesmen and scholars, that their creedal Law has stood unaltered in its essential features as the law of millions of the most earnest, enlightened, and progressive peoples of the world; and this not only in the Church, but in the State as well. Everyone knows that the Westminster Confession is the seed-plot of the American Republic, and, by its doctrinal system of Calvinism and by its representative polity, of human freedom everywhere. And just wherever its Calvinism is ceasing to have its hold on the masses are they losing real freedom and drifting downward beneath the tyranny of mere numbers and the dictation of mobs and "unions," whether ecclesiastical or civil. Of the Calvinists, the French historian Taine, himself without religious faith, declares: "These men are the true heroes of England. They founded England, in spite of the corruption of the Stuarts, by the exercise of duty, by the practice of justice, by obstinate toil, by vindication of right, by resistance to oppression, by the conquest of liberty, by the repression of vice. They founded Scotland; they founded the United States; at this day they are, by their descendants, founding Australia and colonising the world."

4. That a full, intelligible, and unambiguous Creed is a bond of union, I need not prove. A Creed of the nature of that proposed, under which so many heterogeneous elements could "unite," would be no true bond of union. It would be a rope of sand, and the union formed by it would be a "colourable union" only. The union would be external only, like that of a social club, where men hold not a common faith, but "opinions" only on which they complacently "agree to differ." Instead of forming an Evangelical Union, it would be the charter of what the Lord Chancellor would call "a Church without a religion."

5. Nor need I do more than refer to a Church's Creed as a means of instruction and growth. Enough has been said on this aspect of it in connection with the Theological College. Here the Creed proposed, as a means of instruction, is an

utter failure. The attempt to use general expressions, so that men of different "shades" of opinion may unite under them, however well meant, is utterly destructive of the power of the Creed to "instruct." This is the very thing that it declines to do. Instead of giving out light, it gives out smoke on the deepest problems of religion. And it would on that account be really impossible for anyone adopting it to say what religion he had embraced. No doubt, it could be claimed as Christian; but Dowieites are "Christians," et hoc omne genus.

"'Defend me, therefore, commonsense,' say I,  
 'From reveries so airy; from the toil  
 Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
 And growing old in drawing nothing up!'"

These criticisms on the proposal for Union now before the Church are earnestly and respectfully commended to the consideration of Presbyterians throughout New Zealand. If it be true that in the midst of the insurgent pressure of all forms of error and infidelity, to call upon us to strike down our symbols, is like calling on an army to strike down its flag in the face of the foe, then it will be certain that the grand banner of our fathers will not lack earnest and loyal defenders. From open and avowed enemies we have nothing to fear. Our symbols have stood the test of over two hundred and fifty years, and have, because of their own loyalty to the Bible, brought down on our fathers and upon their children visibly the blessings of that Book as precious as they are unnumbered.

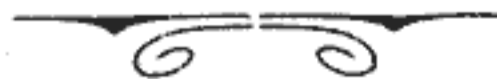
It cannot be that the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, when Presbyterianism was never so strong and abounding in works of faith and labours of love in every country of the world, is to confess that she has no distinctive mission or future before her in New Zealand. Shall we sever ourselves from the past and from connection with the great Churches of our order flourishing throughout the world? Shall we not conclude with Dr Smith, in the glowing little book on our Creed, and several times quoted: "With a past rich in glorious achievement, and a present marked by world-wide extension and triumphing missionary enthusiasm, the future of Presbyterianism is radiant with promise. Who can doubt that through historic development, through centuries of special experience, through stern battles with relentless enemies, as well as through the silent, sweeter nurture of His Love, God has constituted our Presbyterianism one of His elect agencies in the fulfilment of that gracious purpose which includes not ourselves only, but the whole world? May He thrill us with the consciousness of our Divine commission and endowment. May He give us grace, with an humble reliance on His enabling Spirit, to do our part in that great and blessed work, whose aim is the universal enthronement of our common Lord, and whose end is nothing less than the regeneration of humanity."



Now, for my friends' and brethren's sakes,  
Peace be in thee, I'll say,  
And for the house of God our Lord,  
I'll seek thy good alway.

In conclusion, let me say, that if I have written plainly, I have not written a line intentionally to wound the feelings of any of my brethren. But if one introduces controversy, controversy, it must be remembered, has certain laws of its own. And it does not always care for our feelings as its first concern. "It makes all the difference in the world," says Archbishop Whately, "whether we are content to put truth in the first place or in the second." A due balance of truth and charity is a rare achievement; so that the triumph of truth shall also be the triumph of charity. I cannot hope to have succeeded where so many fail.

Lovells Flat, Otago,  
September, 1904.



**A Letter from Rev. W. M. M'Pheeters, D.D.**

Professor in Theological Seminary,  
Columbia, South Carolina.

Columbia, June 23rd, 1904.

Rev. P. B. Fraser,

Lovells Flat, Otago, New Zealand.

Dear Sir and Brother,—

The paper containing your speech on the Revision came into my hands some time ago. It reached me at a time when I was exceedingly busy, so that I did not get the opportunity for some time to read it. I have read it, however, at last, and wish to express to you my appreciation of the ability and earnestness with which you have championed the cause of what I believe to be essential truth. I trust that God has crowned with success your efforts to hold the Church true to the teachings of His Word.

Assuring you of my deep and abiding interest in the struggle that you are making,

I am, yours, in the Gospel

W. M. M'PHEETERS.

## PART V.

### UNION AND CREED REVISION.

The following address was delivered before the Presbytery of Clutha at its meeting at Milton, on March 9, 1904, when the Remit on Union and Overture (Appendix IV.) were under consideration. The Presbytery agreed not to transmit the Overture to the Synod, as, in its opinion, the objects sought in giving publicity to the criticism of the Articles was sufficiently attained. On the motion of Rev. P. B. Fraser, the Presbytery unanimously agreed to a resolution requesting the Assembly to terminate the present Union movement, and to proceed in the direction overtured by the Presbytery in 1902, when the Assembly was requested to establish an annual Conference of representatives of Churches with a view to fraternal co-operation:—

Moderator and Brethren,—I do not need to make any apology for bringing this overture and the subject of it before this Presbytery. Nor will I say more than a sentence in reference to an attack made by Dr Erwin in his speech the other day before the Presbytery of Christchurch in reference to this same matter. To say that his brethren have no better motives for their opposition to this union movement than the vilest known to the human heart, personal animosity, is not a triumph either of truth or of charity, and shows how poorly equipped we all are to engage in controversy, and how difficult it is for us to practise what we preach. I will not do him the unkindness of thinking his statement is seriously intended, and will not waste precious time in further reference to it. I believe that Dr Erwin, on reflection, will withdraw the ungenerous calumny. Meanwhile, my indictment remains unchallenged and unanswered, and it will not be weakened, much less refuted, by a conspiracy of silence. I have received from all over the Church cordial expressions of appreciation of the service I rendered by that indictment to the cause of truth.

#### The Standpoint.

Now, at the outset of our discussion, let me point out that it is the common practice of advocates of new departures to invite you to discharge your minds of prejudices and presuppositions, and the present has been no exception to the rule. But this is an old controversial device, and, as a rule, it is no less than an invitation to you to shut your eyes and open your mouth, and swallow the conclusion of your opponent without a too searching scrutiny of his presuppositions or examination



of his standpoint. As Neander says in the opening paragraph of his 'Life of Christ,' such an invitation is as vain as it is disingenuous. "We cannot entirely free ourselves from presuppositions—and the supposed freedom from them is but the exchange of one set for another." Though we have been invited to divest ourselves of what Dr Erwin calls our prejudices, we at all events shall be sufficiently frank to say that we shall make no pretence of the sort. We have our presuppositions, our standpoint, and Dr Erwin has his, and instead of making a pretence to divest ourselves of them, we ought at the outset on both sides frankly and fully to state what our presuppositions are. This would save us from entering on vain negotiations and controversy with the conclusions of which we can never agree.

### What Is Your Standpoint ?

Here we have a proposal for a Union of Churches, made by brethren in our own Church. Before the Church at large had ever been consulted, negotiations were conducted at incredible speed, almost entirely by one man, and a Creed formed in the manner with which we are now familiar. But if there had been at the outset a frank and open avowal of presuppositions on the part of the authors of this movement, we should never as a Church have been in the unhappy position we are in to-day. Before ever one step was taken, those proposing union should have given—and they have not yet given—a full and frank disclosure of their presuppositions. It is perfectly idle for Dr Erwin to say that you are "simply asked to consider whether, provided a basis of doctrine and polity can be agreed on, you are in favour of an incorporating union with other Churches." These negotiations, we know, must be conducted by parties from our Church, and we equally know that like ourselves, they have presuppositions. But what Dr Erwin would have us believe is, that they have none, or that theirs are the same as ours. And certainly, in addition, the parties negotiating for the other Churches will have presuppositions likewise. Are these, in the main, the same as ours, or radically opposed? To assume that all parties have the same presuppositions or none at all is as absurd as it is disingenuous and hypocritical. Yet this is what we are asked to do. No doubt, if you laid on the table the written Creeds of the respective Churches, most of the fundamental presuppositions would be the same. And this certainly is what you and I mean by saying that these Churches have much in common. But while the Creeds are silent, and the parties begin to speak, you soon discover that the supposed agreement is of quite a different kind. Dr Erwin, for instance, declares of your Confession that, "as a historical document, it is of incalculable value as an exhibition of the sense in which the fathers of our Church understood the Scriptures." The fathers! Now, the fathers all died in faith, having obtained a good report through the faith in which they died. What

about their sons? "I say, too," says Dr Erwin, "without fear of contradiction, that there is a considerable departure of the working faith of the Church from her historical Creed." Not to waste words, this means the sons don't believe the Creed of their fathers. The serious thing is that the sons at every induction and ordination solemnly vow that they do—serious, for the sons. The statement, however, that we are concerned with is, that the "Church" does not believe her Creed. This would be serious indeed for the Church, if by "Church" Dr Erwin meant ordinary, commonplace people like you and me. Of course, by "Church" he only means those of his way of thinking—a slip of expression certain progressive and superior persons fall into, who love to regard all the world as having gone after THEM. Now the Church can speak only through her formularies, and in these she professes to believe and adhere to the "system of doctrine" of the Westminster Confession. She has not yet, in her formularies, made a "considerable departure" from that system. And if she has not, what right has Dr Erwin to say that she has? Therefore, by "Church" I say Dr Erwin can only mean those of his way of thinking.

### **Rival Standpoints.**

It is, we know, a foible of "advanced" critics to call their deliverances the "accepted results of scholars"; the gifted men of the other school, not being "scholars," do not count. Dr Briggs, chief of American "scholars," refers in like manner to those of his own way of thinking, as if they were the entire Church, and surely in no complimentary terms, in his book on Creeds, as follows:—"Religion in Great Britain and America is at present in a very unsatisfactory condition. There is a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the old Theology and the old methods of worship and Church work. At the same time there is distrust and anxiety with reference to new theology and new measures that are proposed by recent theological doctors. The ministers" (what ministers?) "are not preaching the distinctive features of their own denominations, because the people are tired of them, and will not have them. The ministers" (what ministers?) "do not care to preach to empty pews, and, besides, not a few of the ministers sympathise with their people in these matters. The ministers" (what ministers?) "are in a feverish condition." After reference to hot champions of the new and sturdy defenders of the old, and the desire of the majority not to disturb the peace, he adds a sentence of significant weight to our little Church, struggling as it is for a bare existence in many parts of the colony: "There are some few who have real insight into the situation, and therefore hesitate to incur the responsibility for that dreadful theological struggle that is liable to burst forth on the first exciting occasion." That was written a few years ago, and, Dr Briggs would say, it is truer to-day than ever. Then Dr Warfield, the distinguished leader in

America of the other school, wrote only the other month. "The issue is becoming an ever more and more pressing one. Meanwhile, the leaders of the Christian Churches are losing themselves and their cause in weak compromises, and crying 'Peace' when there can be no peace. The time seems rapidly approaching when no man will find it possible longer to serve, here either, two masters. Or, rather, for all discerning spirits, that time is already come." And Dr Erwin himself declares that if the Westminster Confession of your Church were brought into harmony with the working faith of the "Church"—he means those of his way of thinking—it would necessitate an entire restatement of many of its doctrines.

### **What Is Dr Gibb's Standpoint ?**

Now, in view of all these facts, is it not too child-like and bland for the worthy doctor to assure you that, in voting now, "it must be borne in mind that you are not called upon to consider any basis of doctrine or polity for the proposed united Church"—only give Dr Gibb a roving commission to seek one. That is, you are not to have presuppositions, but Dr Gibb and Dr Erwin are! Dr Erwin, it is true, vaguely, and not too courageously, hints at this, by nibbling at points in the Confession, so that, if you did not know better, you would think our brother a terrible fellow. Dr Gibb's presuppositions, however, we are not entirely ignorant about; at least, we know what they are not—not yours, nor mine, nor your fathers'. If you want to know where the army is moving, keep in touch with the head of the column. Dr Gibb is the head of the column—and he, to be sure, has no presuppositions! And you are to reduce yourselves to a state of mental vacuity or imbecility, and vote as if "you were not called upon to consider any basis of doctrine"! "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird"; and yet the Christchurch Presbytery were captured by the sophistry. What you are asked to do, under cover of a vote on the abstract question of Union, is to precipitate in this Presbyterian Church, with its handful of people, its ministers, none of them with the time or requisite qualifications for such a controversy, "that dreadful theological struggle" which Dr Briggs predicts, and which men of any insight will strive to avert from a small Church like ours. To say that the question before you is only the abstract question of Union is to deceive you.

### **Does "Union" Mean Creed Revision from a New Standpoint ?**

The question before you is, first and foremost, a question of Creed. The popular cry of Union is purely a secondary affair, and in the form that Union is now before you, it is little better than an ecclesiastical manœuvre to commit the Church to Creed revision in the hands of Dr Gibb. Now, the fact has to be borne in mind that the differences of standpoint within



the Churches are greater than the differences between the historical Creeds of the respective Churches. Has not "modern criticism won its battle," as Dr George Adam Smith declares, "and is not all that remains to fix the amount of the indemnity?" It is not Union, much less evangelical Union, that is in the air; it is payment that is demanded of the first instalment of the indemnity to modern rationalistic criticism of the Scriptures. To be sure, not for the first time has rationalistic criticism haughtily demanded from the inspired Scriptures its indemnity; but it has never been paid, and never will, save, like Kruger's indemnity, for moral and intellectual damages, out of the damaged morals and intellect of those making the claim. Why should we allow ourselves to be deceived or self-deceived in this matter? "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"—agreed, first and foremost, as to their presuppositions? If our standpoint and presuppositions are the same, our conclusions will be the same, and we will "walk together." If our presuppositions are different, what is the use of entering or negotiations that can only precipitate strife? Are you, brethren, or are you not, going to adopt the evolutionary presupposition that reduces those Old Testament Scriptures, which our Saviour spoke of as true history, to a bundle of fables and "pious" frauds—i.e., frauds about God? Are you to adopt the evolutionary speculation about man which makes him more sinned against than a sinner? Are you, on a side issue, to precipitate strife on these subjects that strike at the very heart of the Christian faith—I mean the Christian faith of your fathers? With these antagonistic radical presuppositions, how can it be for you a question of Union? For Union can never be between the evolutionary presupposition and the creative presupposition of your fathers. The only question is, when, and where, and in what Church the cleavage is to come? Shall we precipitate it here and now? When that cleavage comes, you will have the Smiths on one side and the George Mathesons on the other; some unfortunates, no doubt, will be found in the middle, getting the fire from both sides, in half-way houses of temporary and uncertain rest. The evolutionary presupposition now being applied to the origin of the Scriptures and the origin of man is a presupposition native to the human heart, and, in various forms, is as old as the hills. In so far as it is received in its consequences, it is bringing theological and spiritual paralysis on some of the best blood of the Church—for, having no Gospel, it simply can't be "preached." Regarding this theory, Dr George Matheson, whose name is revered throughout Saxondom as a spiritual seer and scholar of the first rank, says: "My theological sympathies are in favour of breadth, but not of negation. I am as broad as broad can be, but a broad positive. I have no sympathy with the negative movement of Robertson Smith. The Bible is real history, not myth. The critical movement has done a great deal of harm. I have no sympathy with the Higher Criticism. I wrote a book to show that evolution, if

true, is quite compatible with orthodoxy, but I have since come to the conclusion that evolution is not true. I have no more fear of it than I ever had, but I am quite convinced that in, say, 1923, it will be an exploded heresy." And yet it is really in the interests of this evolutionary speculation on the origin of man and of Scripture that, under cover of evangelical union, the indemnity is now demanded. "And consequently"—in the words of one the ring of whose voice you will recognise—"we are told we ought to give up part of our old-fashioned theology to save the rest. We are in a carriage on the steppes of Russia. The horses are being driven furiously, but the wolves are close upon us. There they are! Can you not see their eyes of fire? The danger is pressing. What must we do? It is proposed to throw out a child or two. By the time they have eaten the baby we shall have made a little headway; but should they again overtake us, what then? Why, brave man, *THROW OUT YOUR WIFE*. 'All that a man hath will he give for his life'; give up nearly every truth in the hope of saving one. Throw out inspiration, and let the critics devour it. Throw out election and all the old Calvinism; here will be a dainty feast for the wolves, and the gentlemen who give us the sage advice will be glad to see the doctrines of grace torn limb from limb. Throw out natural depravity, eternal punishment, and the efficacy of prayer. We have lightened the carriage wonderfully. Now for another drop. *SACRIFICE THE GREAT SACRIFICE!* Have done with the Atonement! Brethren, this advice is villainous, and murderous; we will escape these wolves with everything, or we will be lost with everything. It will be the 'truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' We will never attempt to save half the truth by casting any part of it away. The sage advice which has been given us involves treason to God, and disappointment to ourselves. We will stand by all or none. We will have a whole Bible or no Bible. We are told that if we give up something the adversaries will also give up something; but we care not what they will do, for we are not the least afraid of them. They are not the imperial conquerors they think themselves. The truth of God we will retain *AS THE TRUTH OF GOD*, and we shall not retain it because the philosophic mind consents to our doing so. God being with us, we shall not cease from this glorying, but will hold the whole of revealed truth, even to the end." These ringing words of perhaps the greatest preacher of the Gospel since the Apostle of the Gentiles are as true as when before his death C. H. Spurgeon uttered them. And that being so, we will now ask, with Palgrave, "Can time undo what once was true?" The question then before the Church is not the merely abstract question of evangelical Union; neither is it, as Dr Erwin would make out, merely such questions as the breadth of the intention of Atonement, though he himself preaches every Sunday when he preaches regeneration by the will of the Spirit of God, a "limited" "application" of it (John i, 13). The ques-

tion now is, whether there is Atonement, or need of Atonement at all. It is not a question of a long Creed or a short one, broad or narrow, thick or thin, but a question of the Church's attitude to her whole faith; whether her SYSTEM of doctrine is true or false.

### **The Value of Single Doctrines.**

To drop from a written Creed, because it may be a barrier to Union between brethren, an Article of Faith which, though true, is not fundamental, is a proposal well worthy the consideration of our brethren in all the Churches; and this we are ready to consider, whenever the time arrives for skilled and reverent and careful hands to pour the old wine over into fresh wineskins. This, however, is a totally distinct position from asking us to drop a fundamental Article, or even a subsidiary Article, because we now allege it to be false. For, as Bishop Westcott says, and every intelligent man knows: "ONE DOCTRINE may influence a system. A characteristic opinion on one point will be seen to re-appear in many unexpected ways through the whole system of doctrine to which it belongs." And if that is true of one doctrine, how much more of the system and substance of it? And if time can't undo what once was true, therefore what time HAS UNDONE of faith and doctrine was never true; for ours is a historical religion of revelation of fact and doctrine, not a religious philosophy. Let us beware, then, of dropping out, piecemeal, the substance of our faith; lest presently we make the appalling discovery that the great river that has slaked and satisfied the thirst of mankind for thousands of years, not only has ceased to flow, but has never been. Then you shall have presented to you the tragic, pathetic, incredible, and impossible consequences of a false presupposition, such as the Apostle presented to his brethren, when they, too, like ourselves, were under dominance of a false presupposition; "then" (if your presupposition be true, said he) "they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished." And he did not, like our polite moderns, who would have a Creed "broad" enough for everybody, hold true and false doctrine simply as regrettable differences of "opinion" or "views" among brethren. He declared that, if the evolutionary presupposition of HIS day was true: "Yea, and we are found (as a consequence) false witnesses of God."

### **The Coming Conflict on the Credibility, Sufficiency, and Sovereignty of Scripture.**

It is not therefore the innocently abstract question of evangelical Union that is before the Church in this present movement; it is whether you are to precipitate within what is practically only a missionary Church still living in tents, without the time or adequate scholarship for such a task, that "dreadful theological struggle" which Dr Briggs predicts is coming on all Churches, and which Dr Warfield assures us is



even now at the doors. "Now we seem to have drawn near to a critical point in the history of revelation, at least as far as the English-speaking races are concerned," wrote Bishop Westcott in the book last from his hand. And if Dr Warfield may speak for America, and Bishop Westcott for England, they are corroborated by the ablest living theologian of Scotland, Professor James Orr, in his recent work on "The Progress of Dogma." "There are not wanting signs," he says, "that we are on the eve of new conflicts"—and, let me remind you, "conflict" is "controversy" become acute—"in which new solvents will be applied to Christian doctrines, and which may prove anxious and testing to many who do not realise that Christian faith in every age must be a battle. That battle," he declares, "will have to be fought, if I mistake not, in the first instance, round the fortress of the worth and authority of the Holy Scriptures." Yes, that is the issue raised by this new movement. The question of a limited Atonement! and sacramentarianism! Brethren, if the Old Testament Scriptures are a book of "cunningly-devised myths" (2 Peter i, 16), our Saviour believed the myths, and could not distinguish the fabulous from the authentic, nor the forgery from the genuine writing. And if that is so, if the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are not true, trustworthy, and of divine authority, your theological disputes about the length and breadth of the Atonement, or about priestly caste, or any Christian doctrine whatsoever, are but the bickerings of bats and owls and crows in the dark loft of a cathedral steeple. The busy world will go its way and leave you. If, then, these mighty issues, these foundation presuppositions, are being raised by this abstract question of union, are there not men of real insight in our midst who will hesitate, as Dr Briggs says, to precipitate that "dreadful theological struggle" precisely at a place and time when it can do the maximum mischief with the least conceivable good? If, however, our brethren are determined to raise these questions, we demand that they raise them on their merits, in a straightforward manner. On our part, we shall not show the weakness of panic by exhibiting a feverish haste. Professor James Orr, in answer to an inquiry as to the position of matters in Scotland, wrote to America only last month: "My impression is that among the great mass of our ministers and people faith in the great evangelical verities stands unshaken, and that the 'new theology' is not GENERALLY in favour." That, I believe, would be an accurate estimate of the position in New Zealand. But if we do not exhibit a feverish panic, neither shall we show a lukewarm indifference to the truth as it is in Jesus, nor for our weak brother for whom He died.

### **The Basis of True Union.**

Now, just because this is a question of Creed revision, and not primarily a question of Union, I have not allowed myself space in the brief time at my disposal to discuss the in-

nocently abstract question of true evangelical Union on the lines of the historical Creeds. If Union ever comes, it will come along the lines of these Creeds. And it is only as Union comes along the lines of these Creeds that it can serve itself heir to the evangelical name and heritage. If cleavage comes, as come it may at any time, it will come along the lines indicated by Professor Orr. But may I not venture briefly to say on what lines, even by way of the historical Creeds, Union never will come. Until the happy time come when all shall know, from the least to the greatest, the world is not likely to do without written Creeds—those skins that hold the wine.

### **Not on Negations of Doctrine.**

Union meanwhile, then, will never come by negations merely, for this is to pour out the wine by stripping your Creed to the lowest terms, so as to include everybody on what is the lowest common ground; for this were to reject Christ as Absolute King and Head of the Church, whose teaching is intelligible and whose Word is law, and place on His throne a limited monarch, or president, elected by popular show of hands. And, be it remembered, that if He prayed for unity, He also prayed that His people might be sanctified through the truth. That being so, they cannot have too much of it. It is by this process of reducing your Creed to its lowest terms, to the level of the man in the street, that all distinctively Christian truth has vanished from your public education. To be sure, we are commanded by the Apostle of the Gentiles to "receive him that is weak in the faith"; and this we shall do; but that is another thing from "receiving" also his "weak" faith. If he has not attained to a like precious faith with us, we are not going, if he is "weak" in his theological upper storey, to make his weakness the measure of the truth to which we have been permitted to attain. And the same Apostle's inspired counsel is: "Whereto we have already attained, by that same rule, let us walk." Has it not been said of certain German divines that they escaped the shipwreck of faith "only in their shirts"? At the rate we are going, and in the direction we are asked to move, I doubt whether our shirts will be left to us, and whether we shall not be found, within a year or two, hid among the trees of the garden, in the primitive theological nakedness of natural religion. But, brethren, we shall not throw away our theological wineskins, lest we, with unskilled hands, spill the precious wine; we shall keep our theological garments, for of them it may be said, as of those garments of God's people in the wilderness, after forty years' wear and tear: "Your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy feet." This is more than can be said of the "working faith," the "working clothes," of our new theological doctors. These never suffer from age at all events; why should they, when Germany can turn out new "fashions" every decade?

### **Nor on External Conformity.**

Neither is it along the lines of a dead uniformity, whether of Creed or polity, that Union will come. It is contrary to the analogy of God's world of nature, among plants, among animals, or among men. There is diversity amidst unity; and unity is found not in a monotone, but in a harmony. Each of the branches of the Church of Christ adds a distinctive note to the harmony, though at times the distinctive note, owing to the individual or denominational egotism, never so out of place as now, and more and more receding, may cause a jar, or even a scandal; but is this because there is too much of the truth that sanctifies, or too little of the charity that edifies?

### **Nor on Compromise of Truth.**

And finally, one thing is certain, never along the lines of compromise, as is now proposed, will Union come. This would be for us not only to make fresh wineskins, but to make new wine. It was this beginning of miracles that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee when He made the wine, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him. And when the new theological doctors can repeat this beginning of miracles, and manifest their glory, no doubt their disciples will believe on them. A distinguished American divine, George Dana Boardman, D.D., has just written a fine book on "The Church and the Unification of Christendom." You will agree with every word of the following paragraph: "Never," he says, "can the Church unify herself by compromise. This," he says in a sentence that will be remembered, "is a mistake of those unfortunates who are afflicted with cardiac hypertrophy or diseased enlargement of the heart. Compromise," he continues, "is often right in matters of policy or method. Compromise is always wrong in matters of principle or duty. Truth abhors compromise as light abhors darkness. Truth advances her kingdom by affirmation, not by evasion; by victory, not by surrender. If there is in all this world a sacred right, it is the right of every human being to have his own moral convictions. If there is in all the world a sacred responsibility, it is the responsibility which every human being has before his God and before his fellows for those convictions. If there is in all the world a sacred obligation, it is the obligation which rests on every human being to be true, at whatever cost, to those convictions. For the man who is willing to surrender his own convictions for the sake of unity is a man whose convictions for the sake of unity, or of anything, are to be distrusted. For he who begins with being false to himself will end with being false to everybody else. Moreover, the unity which is brought about by compromise is not unity at all; it is only a weak, sentimental, flabby uniformity. The boneless, pulpy compromiser, like a composite photograph in which every sign of individuality is merged,



looks remarkably kind, and also remarkably weak. No, unity cannot be secured by compromise."

### **Fraternal Co-operation and a Federal Union.**

These sentiments of Dr Boardman, as admirably expressed as they are sound and Scriptural, will commend themselves to this Presbytery, and to the Synod of Otago and Southland which adopted unanimously the overture I moved in 1902, that the Assembly should take steps for establishing an annual Conference or other Association of Christian Churches—ALL Christian Churches—which would make for practical co-operation of Christian Churches in the present, and which, without the sacrifice of truth to charity or of charity to truth, but with the triumph of both, would, in the providence of God, make for an ultimate fusion of Christian denominations into a zealous and powerful National Church of New Zealand. That line of action commended itself alike to the judgment of Presbytery and Synod, and the principles I have set forth above will, I venture to believe, commend themselves not only to this Presbytery, but to the Church at large. I am persuaded that if they had had due weight at the initial stages of this present Union movement, which is primarily a movement for Creed revision in the interests of the rationalistic tendencies favoured in some quarters, there would never have arisen this present situation. A frank statement by the movers in regard to their "working faith"—that is, their presuppositions as to the system of doctrine of the Westminster Confession, and as to the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures—would at once have revealed such radical differences of standpoint that it would have rendered a common expression of doctrine impossible, save on the principle, or want of principle abhorrent to the truth, of using words, as appears in the new Creed, of an ambiguous, evasive, and consequently misleading, import. This, if it were done deliberately, would be an agreement to deceive. And if ignorantly, we ask, with the Apostle, "Even things without life giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?" If we cannot agree on common presuppositions, we cannot agree on a common expression of the consequences of them. If you have got new wine, why, of course, by all means hasten to put it into new wineskins. Do not put it into the skins of Westminster: for all you have got of Westminster and the "evangelical succession" are the skins—and the fine Westminster aroma! But the wine itself is gone. We hold no brief for the skins of Westminster, but we do relish the Westminster wine. Are we not agreed, therefore, to speak the truth that we have learned in unambiguous terms, as we stand by the Word of God, in the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments? And we care for no inspiration that gives us a

fabulous history of revelation, or a history of anything that is less than true. We have cast anchor, therefore, on the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and there, with God's help, we mean to abide. If that truth be lost, all is lost. Our "Union" and numbers, our learning and wealth and religious philosophies will avail us nothing. And, finally, without hastily forming a mechanical Union, founded on negations and compromise, shall we not, as the best contribution we, at all events, can make to the Universal Church of Christ, strive to make our Presbyterian Zion more than ever worthy of her noble ancestry and inheritance? Has any Church for her size a nobler?

"Therefore I wish that peace may still  
Within her walls remain,  
And ever may her palaces  
Prosperity retain."



## APPENDIX I.

## AN INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN AND SANCTION OF "THE ARTICLES OF THE FAITH."

The following Letters appeared in the 'Otago Daily Times':—

[November 26, 1903.]

## DR GIBB'S REPORT ON UNION.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—I ask permission, through your columns, to say what I was in process of saying when I was interrupted by the Rev. Dr Gibb in the Assembly last week. Dr Gibb, referring in his speech on union to conferences held during the year between the Wesleyan and Presbyterian Committees, made the following statement:—"These Committees had had a number of meetings, and though it was not proposed at this stage to submit the articles of faith drafted, he desired to call the Assembly's attention to the magnificent fact that the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches had been able to see absolutely eye-to-eye in regard to the doctrines believed in by both Churches." Further on in your report of the proceedings we find this:—"Dr Gibb: I said there was unity between the Committees.—Rev. P. B. Fraser: I am prepared to question that unanimity." And later, when I proceeded to question the alleged unanimity, I was interrupted by Dr Gibb on the pretence that I was discussing the articles, which I never intended to do, but to discuss Dr Gibb's assertions about the articles.

Now, what I was prevented from saying when I was interrupted was that I wished to point out that Dr Gibb's "magnificent fact" that the "Methodist and Presbyterian Churches had been able to see absolutely eye-to-eye in regard to the doctrines believed in by both Churches" is not a fact, but contrary to fact, and it is very unfortunate that at this preliminary stage such unwarranted statements should be made by Dr Gibb even in the heat of the moment. Being a member of the Committee, and taking a keen interest in the movement, I am in a position to speak as a competent witness as to what that Committee has done at the meetings I attended, as well as its convener, Dr Gibb. I content myself at this point with contradicting this assertion of Dr Gibb's. The Presbyterian Committee, as a committee, has not itself come to any agreement on the articles in question. Therefore, for Dr Gibb to assert that there is "unity between the Committees" is, to say the least, wildly inaccurate.

So far I have referred only to Dr Gibb's speech. The following more guarded statement is from his report: "In compliance with their instructions, your Committee, in co-operation with the Committees of the other Churches, has held several meetings, at which the question of a suitable creed has been under consideration, and a number of the articles of faith have been framed. But being persuaded that if any real advance is to be made in the matter the advance must be slow, and the mind of the whole Church ascertained at each step, your Committee deems it inexpedient to submit these articles to the Assembly at this stage." This statement obviously is more guarded than Dr Gibb's speech, and if he had kept to the tenor of his report he would not have forced me into the position of having to give so pointed a contradiction to the assertion of his speech. In his report he says merely (1) "a number of articles of faith HAVE BEEN FRAMED"; (2) "the Committee deems it inexpedient to submit these articles to the Assembly at this stage." There is nothing here about the Committee's having "adopted" any article of faith, much less "the articles" referred to in Dr Gibb's speech; there is nothing about any unity in the Committee or about any unity with the Methodist Committee on these articles—on the contrary, the fact is, it was unanimously agreed in the last meeting of the Presbyterian Committee to report to the Assembly that consideration of articles of faith was not "sufficiently matured" for them to be laid before the Assembly. I have searched Dr Gibb's report in vain for this declaration; and as he in his speech has made a statement so much at variance with fact, I feel compelled also to draw attention to his report, which it is true is more guarded than his speech, for while his speech errs much in excess his report errs rather in defect.



Obviously this matter is of the deepest interest not only to Presbyterians, but to Methodists and Congregationalists as well; and nothing is to be gained for union or the cause we all have at heart by a wrong impression being created in the mind of the Church at large as to the actual progress of negotiations.

I do not know whether Dr Gibb has returned to Wellington. Probably he has. Consequently I need scarcely remind readers of this note to suspend all judgment in the matter until Dr Gibb has an opportunity to explain or to correct me on any point. I hope those specially interested will keep my letter by them for reference.—I am, etc.

P. B. FRASER.

Lovell's Flat, November 24.

[December 17, 1903.]

## PRESBYTERIAN AND METHODIST UNANIMITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—The Rev. P. B. Fraser has sent me a copy of your issue of the 26th ult. containing a letter from him on the question of the unanimity of the Presbyterian and Methodist Committees in the matter of the Articles of the Faith, to which reference was made by me when addressing the General Assembly on the subject of Church union. I should not have thought it worth while replying to this letter, especially so long after the date of its appearance in your columns, but Mr Fraser, as I judge from his private communications, is extremely anxious that I should. Here, then, as briefly as possible, are the facts:—

1. At a meeting of the Union Committee held early in the year I submitted certain Articles of the Faith prepared for the Presbyterian Church of England some time ago, and commended these as a suitable basis for a doctrinal statement that might meet the needs of a united Church. The Committee went over the articles one by one, and though no definite pronouncement was made on any one of them, the majority were regarded with favour, only a few being singled out for criticism as unlikely to be accepted by the Methodists and Congregationalists. Finally, it was resolved that a Committee, consisting of Drs Watt, Dunlop, and myself should be appointed to go carefully into the articles and make such alterations as we might deem desirable. It was also resolved that the articles thus revised should be printed and a copy sent to each of the members of the General Committee.

2. The sub-committee met and performed its task with absolute unanimity. The articles were revised, altered, printed, and forwarded to the members of the Committee. At the same time a number of copies were sent to the Methodist and Congregational Committees, with a request that they should take them into careful consideration and come to a definite finding anent them.

3. After due interval the Presbyterian Committee met and adopted about half of the articles as they came up from the sub-committee, with a very few and unimportant alterations. The work of revision was not completed on this occasion, because arrangements had been made for the attendance of the Methodist and Congregational Committees at a certain hour in the afternoon, and when that hour arrived the Presbyterian Committee had to desist.

4. The three Committees (Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational) then proceeded to cover the ground that had been traversed by the Presbyterian Committee—i.e., they examined about one-half of the articles. The Congregationalists suggested various amendments which were not carried, but the Methodists and Presbyterians saw eye to eye. The former suggested only two slight verbal alterations in the articles as they had been adopted by the Presbyterians. These alterations were accepted, and, as far as this meeting is concerned, greater unanimity could not have existed.

5. Before the next meeting of the united Committees took place I had left for Wellington. I handed over the business to Dr Dunlop, instructing him to arrange for a meeting as soon as possible, at which the three Committees should deal with the remaining articles as the first half had already been dealt with. In due course I received a report of this meeting, with the articles as they had been by it adopted. It appeared that this second united meeting had been as unanimous as the first.

6. The Methodist Committee that had thus far co-operated with the Presbyterian and Congregational was a committee local to Dunedin. The Central Methodist Committee was situated at Christchurch, with the Rev. H. Bull as its convenor. I had been in correspondence with him all along the line. Some time before the meeting of the Assembly I ascertained that the Central Methodist Committee approved of every jot and tittle of the work that had been done by their Dunedin Committee in co-operation with our own and the Congregational.

7. It thus appears that there was, as I said to the Assembly, a wonderful and profound unanimity between the Methodist and Presbyterian Committees. The articles had been adopted by both without the slightest jar or discord or difference of any kind. And this being so, I had them printed in the report which I submitted to the Assembly's Committee during the recent session of that body. When the Committee met, however, it was speedily apparent that there was no unanimity on the question of submitting the articles to the Assembly at this juncture. It was accordingly resolved to withhold them and to ask the Assembly merely to send down to Presbyteries and sessions the general question whether they were in favour of negotiating with the Methodists and Congregationalists for a union of the Churches. Personally, I was disappointed with this finding, though I offered no opposition, and fell in with it heartily enough as the line of the least resistance. But the fact stands that there was, and, as far as anything to the contrary yet appears, there still is, unanimity between the Presbyterian and Methodist Committees on the question of these Articles of the Faith. Mr Fraser, indeed, informed the Committee that he could not agree with this article and the next, but the articles were not discussed, or, rather, rediscussed. What conclusions the Committee would have come to if a rediscussion had taken place Mr Fraser knows just as little as I do. What I do know is that the Methodist and Presbyterian Committees at every meeting at which they considered these articles were in profound agreement.

I have written this letter with great reluctance. It is not of general interest, and the columns of the 'Daily Times' are hardly the place for the settlement of differences of opinion between me and Mr Fraser. But perhaps the letter will serve to throw into clearer relief the very remarkable unanimity that exists between these two Churches, once so far apart in the matter of doctrine. Union may come in our time and it may not, but it is coming. The Churches, as the author of that fine book "Ourselves and the Universe" says, "will detach themselves more and more from the divisive elements in their separate formularies to unite on the deeper life beneath." Practical identity of belief and life must issue in outward union.

May I, through you, say to Mr Fraser that I shall not reply to any further letter he may send to you on the question he has raised? I have said my say, and life is too short for controversy of this kind. If it were the question of union, that would be another matter.—I am, etc.,

JAMES GIBB.

Wellington, December 10.

[January 5, 1904.]

REV. DR GIBB'S "EVANGELICAL" UNION.

THE NATIONAL "EVANGELICAL" CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—There are three things Presbyterian people are anxious to have full and clear and accurate information about at present. They are:—(1) Have the members of the Assembly's Union Committee unanimously adopted Dr Gibb's new creed. (2) If not unanimously, who are the persons that have assented to that creed, and are responsible for its now being before three Churches as the creed of the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church? (3) What is this new creed? What is its attitude to the Presbyterian creed, to the Reformation doctrines, to the Catholic faith of Christendom?

These are questions of importance, and the first two were raised by me in the Assembly, and in my letter of the 26th of November. To that letter, after three weeks' delay, Dr Gibb says he has replied "with great reluctance."

because, from private communications with him, he says he judged I was "extremely anxious" he should reply. My private communications took the form of two telegrams, sent for obvious reasons, the first after a week's delay, asking if he had seen my letter and whether he intended to reply, to which he made answer that he had not seen it. The second, stating that a 'Times' had been sent, made the same inquiry, to which he made answer he probably would reply. There was, therefore, no anxiety whatever expressed or implied that Dr Gibb should honor me with his notice. The manner and tone, somewhat "igh and 'aughty," of his reply perhaps indicate that Dr Gibb's recent "honours" have not had sufficient time to become quite assimilated to the genial nature he shows to his friends.

Dr Gibb replies that not only is his statement correct that the Assembly's Committee unanimously adopted the articles; but in the face of my letter he still affirms: "But the fact stands that there was, and, as far as anything to the contrary yet appears, there still is, unanimity between Presbyterian and Methodist Committees on the question of these articles of the faith." My opposition apparently does not count; and as, like the rest of the members, I am only a cipher to Dr Gibb's integer, one protestant more or less does not break the "wonderful and profound unanimity between the Methodist and Presbyterian Committees." It is, indeed, wonderful and most profound!

There are two methods, available to everyone, by which the value of Dr Gibb's assertions may be tested. There is the new creed itself. If there was profound unanimity in the Presbyterian Committee, the Committee happily are all living and can be produced. It is plainly not a creed that would or could ever be composed, for any purpose immediate or remote, save by men who attached but the slenderest if any weight to the principal doctrines of the Presbyterian Church or of the Reformed Faith, and that must be the opinion of the vast majority of the Union Committee, alleged to be profoundly unanimous in recommending its adoption to three Churches. This new creed, let it be borne in mind, while professing to be based on the articles of the Presbyterian Church of England, eliminates from those articles the Reformation doctrines of the origin of the living races of mankind, of the Fall, of the temptation of mankind by Satan, of the origin of sin, of native depravity, of the Atonement, of justification by faith solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice, of the election of Grace, of regeneration, of Christian perseverance, and of eternal punishment. Here is a creed in which not one shred, not if you search with a microscope, and if you make a chemical analysis, not a trace of distinctively Presbyterian doctrine is left; and the Christian people of New Zealand are asked to believe that it has been unanimously adopted by the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. To recite the names of the Union Committee from the Assembly's "Proceedings of 1902" is to banish Dr Gibb's glowing vision of "profound unanimity" into the limbo prepared from the foundation of the world for ecclesiastical fairy tales without hope of a second resurrection. Here they are:—"Revs. H. Kelly, W. G. Dixon, I. Jolly, J. Paterson, J. K. Elliott, J. M'Kenzie, J. H. MacKenzie, J. G. Smith, G. Lindsay, W. Hewitson, P. B. Fraser, D. Dutton, A. Cameron, Dr Watt, Dr Dunlop, J. Chisholm, R. R. M. Sutherland, J. Gibb; Messrs J. G. W. Aitken, R. Glendinning, A. C. Begg, W. H. Adams, G. Reid, D. A. M'Nicoll," and Dr Erwin added at the first meeting of committee. Here are twenty-five names of well-known men, twenty-four if you exclude Rev. H. Kelly as having left for the Australian Church. Does anybody, having the least acquaintance with these men, believe I will not say a "unanimous assent," but the assent of a majority, nay, of a respectable minority, of these brethren was ever obtained knowingly to Dr Gibb's new creed? Personally, though a member of this same Committee, I have not heard one single member, except Dr Gibb, who has distinctly expressed approval of it, and such as I have come in contact with have expressed the very reverse. Consequently, I am just as anxious to know as the Church at large is who are the persons forming this "unanimous" Presbyterian Committee. By simply taking this new creed in your hand and going to any of these gentlemen and asking them: Did you, and do you, give your assent to this thing? you will discover how "wonderful and profound" is the Presbyterian unanimity. That is one way—available to everybody—in which Presbyterians anxious to know who of their number have assented to



this creed may profitably inquire and learn who constitutes this "unanimous" Committee, and when and where they ever met.

But that method of inquiry brings in the merits of the new creed. And there is another way, equally open to all, without bringing in the merits of the new creed, in which inquiry may be conducted, and that is to investigate the history of its production as related by Dr Gibb. The new creed might have been as orthodox as if John Knox were convener, but that would hardly justify John Knox in saying that it was unanimously adopted, after careful consideration, by the Union Committee, unless in point of fact it was. For if the new creed were a true creed and shone with its own light, it would not much matter, so far as the creed itself is concerned, whether it was unanimously adopted or adopted by a majority of the Committee, or only by Dr Gibb himself. So noble a production would shed the lustre of its glory on all who claimed a share in its "inspiration" and composition, and would carry conviction with its own weight. And, therefore, honour should have been given where honour is due, and the exact number and the names of the Union "Committee" who have unanimously assented to this new creed should have been given from the first. But, apparently, Dr Gibb's theory is that a part is equal to the whole (if he is in the part), or might become the whole, as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. A feeble defence of this theory may possibly be sought in the fact that a mere quorum of an administrative Committee whose functions are strictly limited by regulations is called the Committee, but few, I imagine, will justify the convener of a large special Committee calling a selected coterie a unanimous Committee.

Let Presbyterians then investigate the history of the Assembly's Committee as related by Dr Gibb. To my statement in my letter that "the Presbyterian Committee, AS A COMMITTEE, has not itself come to any agreement on the articles in question," Dr Gibb does not allude, and has made no reply. Not only has he not contradicted it, but the truth of it can be demonstrated from his own letter. More than that, I will now add and demonstrate that, so far from his articles having received "the careful consideration of the Presbyterian Committee," that Committee, as a committee, never so much as had a chance to consider the articles on their merits. Here are the stages given by Dr Gibb in his letter:—

1. The first meeting of the Assembly's Committee was called in Dunedin, as is usual, at such date and hour as would naturally suit the convener. Of the twenty-four members named above, there were present—as far as I recollect—the following:—Revs. W. Hewitson, D. Dutton, A. Cameron, Dr Watt, Dr Dunlop, J. Chisholm, Dr Gibb, Dr Erwin, P. B. Fraser, and Mr A. C. Begg—that is, ten out of twenty-four members. It was quite evident the members were not prepared, and, indeed, were very much averse, to consider a definite move before they had made up their minds to any line of action whatever. There were some previous questions to be discussed and settled, and this the Committee as a whole never once had the chance to do. Dr Gibb, however, represented that he had the articles prepared by a Committee, of which Dr Dykes was convener, and adopted by the Presbyterian Church of England as their creed; and that as Dr Erwin and I had come a considerable distance to attend the meeting, he might read them; but as he himself records, "no definite pronouncement was made on any one of them." "Finally," he says, "it was resolved that a Committee consisting of Drs Watt, Dunlop, and Gibb should be appointed to go carefully into the articles and make such alterations as they might deem desirable." If minutes of the Committee contain this statement, I accept it; but my recollection is that authority was neither asked for nor given to any sub-committee "to make such alterations as they might deem desirable." Nor was I aware that Dr Gibb was, as he might well have been, convener of the sub-committee. The professors appeared to be much averse to having anything to do with it, and it was only on the understanding, I took it, that no changes were to be made, save those specified at the meeting, that they undertook the work at all; and I should be much surprised if they had asked for the responsibility or accepted it if laid upon them by a "committee" of the kind, to overhaul the whole Christian Faith on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. The changes spoken of were merely for the sake of future comparison, and referred to two articles. It was agreed that the whole of the original Presby-

terian articles, which Dr Gibb had with him, should in the first instance be printed in the 'Outlook' for reference and general information, and that these articles, less two of them, which, it was said, the Methodists might object to, should be printed for the Committee. It was never suggested nor implied that the omission of anything at that moment committed anybody to anything, for the articles having only been once read over by Dr Gibb to the meeting, nobody really knew what was their full import and relative bearing except Dr Gibb. It was certainly never hinted at that meeting that there was so much as a suggestion to tamper with the foundation doctrines of the Reformed Faith, much less of Catholic Christendom. The meeting in any case was somewhat hurried, and lasted probably not more than an hour and a-half at the outside. I repeat that in going so far at this stage even as to print these articles, it was done before members of the Committee had ever got time or opportunity properly to consider what they should do, or, in the Presbyterian fashion of fulness and freedom of discussion, to have the benefit of each other's opinions, and learn how far or in what direction it was proper or advisable to move. It was recognised that it was only a preliminary meeting of ten members out of twenty-four.

2. Of the next stage Dr Gibb says: "The sub-committee met and performed its task with absolute unanimity." This sounds well, no doubt; but what does it mean? For all I know, this sub-committee may have been of a fractional nature, as Dr Gibb's unanimous committee is fractional and infinitesimal throughout. Be that as it may, I may be permitted to believe that when the articles left this sub-committee they were entirely satisfactory to Dr Gibb. Apparently it was Dr Gibb's desire to obtain for this new creed the authority of professorial sanction, as he has certainly displayed a feverish anxiety and haste to anticipate and claim the sanction of the committee of his Church; but I may be permitted at the outset to say regarding professorial sanction that the Presbyterian Church has never taken or believed her creed on the sanction of professors, but her professors have been appointed to their posts of special trust and influence on a written and solemn declaration, given and received with the solemnity of an oath, that they believed her creed in the terms in which it is given and received, and that they will maintain and defend it. And there is no evidence whatever that the professors ever gave their deliberate sanction to the creed in circulation at the Assembly. And it is a moral impossibility that Dr Dunlop could: for I have lying before me a contribution of Dr Dunlop's in the Expository Times for August, 1903—mark the date,—in which he pours all the scorn of a copious and powerful eloquence on just such a creed as his sanction is now claimed to commend to the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. Space will not permit a quotation here, and in due time and manner I shall quote it in full, and much else besides, for the Presbyterians of New Zealand. As to Dr Watt, I have no reason whatever to think that his creed is different in the main from Dr Dunlop's or from the historic Reformed Faith of his Church.

Now, mark the next step in the evolution of Dr Gibb's new creed. The moment this new creed came out of the hands of this sub-committee, he says, "a number of copies were sent to the Methodist and Congregational Committees, with a request that they should take them into careful consideration and come to a definite finding anent them." And from that moment, be it observed, Dr Gibb parted company with the last pretence of authority, either from his Church or her committee. He and any two individuals of the Presbyterian ministry might just as well have got together, struck their pens through every article of their Church's creed that clashed with their own opinions or with the creed of the Roman Catholic Church, and have sent the product of their labors and profound unanimity to the Pope at Rome, asking him "to come to a definite finding anent it." As he would! The committee of which Dr Gibb was chairman had never so much as resolved to accept the original articles as a basis of treaty, much less the brand new creed of Dr Gibb's sub-committee. Yet before they have so much as seen these new articles, Dr Gibb has forwarded them to the Methodist and Congregational Committees for a "definite finding anent them." Needless to say, even if the entire Presbyterian Committee had so far lost their sanity as to cut every shred of Presbyterianism out of their Church's creed, and done the same thing, they would have been equally ultra vires.



3. The next stage is, that "after an interval the Presbyterian Committee met. Like, I presume, other members, I had got a copy of the product of the sub-committee, with an intimation of a meeting of the committee with the representatives of the other churches. But when I read the articles, at a single glance, the whole movement for "evangelical" union in the hands of Dr Gibb took on a new aspect. I could not believe my eyes when I read the new creed, and made the comment that whoever was at the bottom of it, it could not be the work of the professors. For very good reasons, some of them quite obvious, I did not attend this meeting; and it got on excellently and unanimously without me. How many of the 24 members of the committee attended has yet to be learned. But did those who attended get a chance to consider the articles and come to any conclusion on their own account, representing, as they were supposed to do, the dearest interests of their Church? No. Dr Gibb had it all arranged, and appears as general manager of the whole concern. And while they were "deliberating," and before they had completed half their work, they were hustled again. "The work of revision," writes Dr Gibb, "was not completed on this occasion, because arrangements had been made for the attendance of the Methodist and Congregational Committees at a certain hour in the afternoon, and when that hour arrived the Presbyterian Committee had to desist"—had to desist and merge themselves with the Methodist and Congregational Committees. Not one hint does Dr Gibb give of how many of the 24 members of his own committee were thus, in the name of that committee, yet without their knowledge or sanction, by his arrangements previously made, hustled into throwing the creed of their Church into the melting pot of a general meeting of this kind.

4. But there they are, and the half of the articles that the Presbyterian "Committee" had been "considering" were dealt with, and as a result they were amended and "adopted" by this united committee.

5. "Before the next meeting of the united committees took place," says Dr Gibb, "I had left for Wellington. I handed over the business to Dr Dunlop, instructing him to arrange for a meeting as soon as possible of the three committees to deal with the remaining articles." In due course, in obedience to these masterful "instructions," Dr Gibb received a report of this meeting, and "it appeared this second united meeting had been as unanimous as the first." I believe nobody outside of a little coterie of the Presbyterian Committee got any notice of this second united unanimous meeting, even if they would have attended; and obviously its meeting with the other committees had not a shadow of pretence to be regarded as a meeting of the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. So far as I am concerned as a member of that committee, like, I believe, the vast majority of the Union Committee, I never heard more of its doings from its first meeting I attended till the Assembly met and there was put in my hands, amongst the Assembly's printed reports, what purported to be the report of the Union Committee, where for the first time I saw the articles of the new "Evangelical" Church of New Zealand that had survived the furnace of Dr Gibb's "united" and uniting committees.

In this report the following sentences are sufficient to reveal Dr Gibb's ideas and intentions:—"The following are the articles unanimously approved of by the Methodist and Presbyterian Committees. . . . Your committee ask the Assembly to consider these articles seriatim, to adopt them provisionally, and send them down to presbyteries and kirk sessions with an inquiry as to whether they consider union desirable on this or a similar doctrinal basis." And what he expected the Assembly to do, he had already announced at Lyttelton, on his way to the Assembly, under the title of "Acting-Moderator": "He was of opinion that the Wesleyan proposals would be approved by the General Assembly of Presbyterians." Here his new creed is adroitly called "Wesleyan proposals." "There will be a fight, though," he prophesied; and he concluded his interview: "It is alleged, also, that the union would lead to doctrinal strife, but I think these difficulties are mere bogies." When visions are about, there is no knowing what some people may regard as "bogies." Consequently, it appears, Dr Gibb expected that, it is presumed, on the testimony of great names and to the sound of big drums, the General Assembly of Presbyterians would swallow holus-bolus a new creed and new faith; while he should announce to an expectant world the birth, as of one born out of due



season, of the National "Evangelical" Church of New Zealand! Later, the simple Presbyterians were to discover that they had been misled into a fog or become agnostic on the main articles of their Christian faith—but only, be it observed, "provisionally"! This wise "provision" would make the change of front easier: while it left room for new developments, it also left room for a return to sanity and to repentance and new obedience!

6. What did happen may be learned in connection with Dr Gibb's sixth stage. He called a meeting of the Union Committee—the first that in any fulness could reasonably have been convened since the previous Assembly,—and to them was allotted the barren "honor" of "adopting" the printed report and articles already in the hands of members of Assembly, and the creed already before three Churches as the *Creed of the Union Committee*. Of the meeting that took place Dr Gibb gives no record or hint in his letter. Of the great history-making Presbyterian Committee of 24 that had been so busy during the year concocting, "after careful consideration," a new creed for the "Evangelical" National Church of New Zealand only three turned up to meet the convener; and among the three not one, unless Mr A. C. Begg were one, of the "unanimous committee" who had "'united' two churches once so far apart in the matter of doctrine"! This was very sad and ominous; for, inveterate Protestant that I am, I was one of the three! Why the others did not attend I have no means of knowing. Most of them, like myself, had been treated as ciphers during the year; they therefore might have thought that they did not count, and did not, like me, want to count only among the Protestants, and that possibly their absence now might be counted to them for righteousness. Other less important considerations as their not having heard of the meeting, or their having other engagements, may possibly have accounted for their absence. Anyway, I believe 20 out of the 24 members mentioned were in Dunedin at Assembly time. I would not have mentioned this meeting, which being duly called was entitled to be regarded as a meeting of the committee, if Dr Gibb had not ungenerously and unfairly left it to be inferred that I was attending all the meetings of his committee, and only uttered a somewhat feeble and belated protest in the final meeting presently to be mentioned. For at this meeting of four I let it clearly be known to Dr Gibb what I for one thought of the new creed, and that I believed it never would be accepted "provisionally" or otherwise either by committee or Assembly. Mr A. C. Begg and the Rev. W. G. Dixon, the others present, will bear me out that my objections, which appeared new to them, were neither indefinite nor feeble. From the outset Dr Gibb agreed that a committee of four could do nothing, and he intimated he would call another urgent meeting. The consequence was that the union debate could not come before the Assembly during the first week. The second meeting, constituting the sixth and, as I hoped, last stage in Dr Gibb's new creed, was attended by a good many, and the statement I made regarding it in my letter of the 26th of November is not questioned, much less refuted, by Dr Gibb's letter—unless silence be refutation. I wrote of this meeting: "The fact is, it was unanimously agreed in the last meeting of the Presbyterian Committee to report to the Assembly that consideration of articles of faith was not 'sufficiently matured' for them to be laid before the Assembly"; a statement regarding which Dr Gibb observes a silence that may be felt. And I will now add, what Dr Gibb might have been spared, that the committee practically ignored his printed report and articles, except so far as to permit him to pass the exordium and peroration of his report. The Rev. Mr Hewitson drew up, at request of the meeting, a motion, which was unanimously carried, to the effect that the Assembly should submit the previous question to the Church at large, whether negotiations should be entered into for a union at all; for the committee felt that the Church at large had never constitutionally given its sanction to this movement. It was he who dictated more than once as the finding of the committee for insertion in the new report the words I have referred to, that consideration of articles of faith was "not sufficiently matured," and thus clearly affirmed the fact that the articles referred to were never assented to by the Union Committee. Then Dr Gibb suggested that the articles might be embodied in the report as articles under consideration. I rose and protested against their getting even the sanction of this side-wind, and challenged the production of minutes to show the relation of the committee to the articles. No minutes were forthcoming; and as I do not know who is the

secretary to this epoch-making committee, I will add that I have never heard any minute read. And, as Dr Gibb shows in his own letter, no independent sanction of even an infinitesimal fraction of his committee was ever at any duly convened meeting obtained for these articles. Consequently, the motion of Mr Hewitson disposed of them when, for the first and last time, the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church came together in fairly full strength. The Committee, courteously and gently withal, but as firmly as possible, refused to be committed to what Dr Gibb had with so much enthusiasm done in their name. And if Dr Gibb had kept perfect faith with his committee (or had not so completely mistaken and misinterpreted their mind and temper); if he had made his new report in spirit and in letter in terms of their finding, or had even kept his speech within the terms of the evasive report which he submitted to the Assembly, all this present trouble, with its inevitable consequences, would not have arisen. But Dr Gibb seems to have committed himself, if not his committee, up to the hilt to other persons or committees; consequently he seems to have either found it impossible to draw back, or was determined not to do so. Anyway, his zeal in the Assembly outran all discretion; he seems to have entered the fool's paradise of "Evangelical" Union, and so, again treating his committee as ciphers, he declared in the Assembly that his committee were unanimous for this new creed. Plainly, the object of my protest in the Assembly, which Dr Gibb as unwisely as unfairly endeavored to bury, was to clear myself and others for whom I might speak from all complicity in a double-dealing with the Church's creed, and to protest from the outset that the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand never gave its sanction to this new creed.

In conclusion, permit me to point out to the Church at large as a remarkable and significant fact the absence of the elders—the ordinary representatives of the people—from any part, at its crucial stage, in this new creed-making. Instead of there being, according to the constitution of the Church, an equal number of ministers and elders on so vitally important a committee, only the names of six elders appear on this committee of 24; and I question if a single one of the six ever gave, or ever would give, his assent to this new creed. It certainly does not increase one's confidence in the coming new "Evangelical" Church of New Zealand that it should be purely a clerical movement, and the origin and sanction of its creed shrouded in mystery. "Evasive and ambiguous" I have described the new creed; evasive and ambiguous is Dr Gibb's history of its inception.

What I have now written will help to throw some light on the first two questions at the beginning of this letter, and it will help Presbyterians to seek for more. What it shows is that it was an act of rare audacity and recklessness for Dr Gibb to claim for this new creed of his the unanimous sanction of the Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church. And before the Church at large runs the risk by giving a mandate to Dr Gibb or any clerical coterie of flinging the most vital Articles of her faith into the crucible of a visionary clerical debating society, she will ask more about this new creed that, full grown, has suddenly emerged, like a chimera, from her bosom. Who are its authors, and what, indeed, do they believe and mean, and whither are they bound? As the Ancient Mariner relates:

We were the first that ever burst,  
Into that silent sea.

This long letter is written for the information of Presbyterians, and its length will, it is to be hoped, deter the merely curious from a perusal of it. Regarding the third question, and eventually the only question, as to what this new creed means, that is a large question not suited to your columns, and one that a great many highly competent to elucidate it will take a part in deciding. A distinguished American divine (not a Presbyterian) says that the Presbyterian Church is the most theological in the world; she is at all events amply competent both to understand and defend her creed. Already the Rev. J. Jolly, one of the "unanimous" Union Committee, writes to the Outlook that the new creed "will create keen and angry discussions, even to the breaking of friendships"; and he declares that there has been eliminated from the English Presbyterian Articles—the alleged "basis" of the new creed—"the very centre of the Gospel, the very ground of our hopes." This only shows how necessary it is that this new creed should be carefully scrutinised, and



that no sanction of great names or of "unanimous" committees should stand in the way of the most searching investigation. It is at least fairly clear that the new creed can with no more truth be said to be based on Principal Dykes's English Presbyterian Articles than a parody and burlesque of a poem can be said to be based on the poem burlesqued, as it no more represents the Presbyterians of New Zealand than do the opinions of the celebrated three tailors of Tooley street represent those of "the people of England."

Dr Gibb informs me "through you" that he "will not reply to any further letter I may send to you," therein manifesting a rare discretion. The matter raised, he says, "is not of general interest," and represents only a "difference of opinion between me and Mr Fraser," therein manifesting a rare obtuseness. And he concludes: "If it were the question of union, that would be another matter"! therein provoking me to say something unkind. I will rather add: May Presbyterians, when they have come through their hereditary theological controversy, understand their creed even better and love it more, and exclaim at the close: "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better!"—I am, etc.,

P. B. FRASER.

Lovell's Flat, January 2.

## APPENDIX II.

The following is the "Report of Committee on Union of Churches," which was in circulation among the Assembly reports, 1903. It contains the Articles of the Faith so much criticised. This report, however, was not presented to the Assembly.

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON UNION OF CHURCHES.

Your Committee were instructed by last Assembly to approach the Methodist Conference and the Congregational Union, and to inform these bodies that, in the opinion of the Assembly, the time had come to consider seriously whether a Union of the Churches they represent with our own might not be accomplished. In accordance with these instructions the Committee waited on the Congregational Council at its meeting in Dunedin last February, and by delegation on the Methodist Conference at its meeting in Christchurch in the month of March. By both Council and Conference the delegates and the proposals they submitted were received with great enthusiasm, and at later seditary resolutions similar to that of the Assembly, and appointing committees to co-operate with the Assembly's committee, were unanimously adopted.

Your Committee were further instructed, in the event of the Assembly's proposal receiving a favourable reception at the hands of the Conference and Council, to bring up a report to this Assembly, indicating the main lines of doctrine and polity, on which negotiations for a Union of these Churches with our own might proceed. After careful consideration the Committee came to the conclusion that it would be well to confine their deliberations this year to the matter of doctrine alone. This resolved on, they next determined to take as the basis of their work the very admirable articles prepared some years ago by a committee of the Presbyterian Church of England—Principal Dykes, convener—and approved of by that Church as a statement of the living faith of the Church. The Committee were of opinion that with the elimination of one or two articles and the modification of certain others these Articles of the Faith would commend themselves not only to the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, but also to the two other Churches with whom we have entered into negotiations. This anticipation has been amply fulfilled, as far as the three committees can be regarded as reflecting the opinions of the Churches concerned. With one or two merely verbal alterations and the addition of an Article setting forth the sanctity of the Lord's Day, the Methodist Committee have accepted the doctrinal basis sent on to them by your Committee. The Congregational Committee are also in almost entire accord with the Methodists and ourselves in this matter. They would prefer a slightly different statement in a few of the Articles, but as they have not completed their work at the date of writing this report, the slight changes they desire will be brought before the Assembly when the report is under discussion. The following are the articles unanimously approved of by the Methodist and Presbyterian Committees:—



## Articles of the Faith.

### I.—OF GOD.

We believe in and adore one living and true God, who is spirit and the Father of spirits, present in every place, personal, infinite, and eternal, the almighty Author and sovereign Lord of all; most blessed, most holy, and most free; perfect in wisdom, justice, truth, and love; to us most merciful and gracious; unto whom only we must cleave, whom only we must worship and obey. To him be glory forever! Amen.

### II.—OF THE TRINITY.

We acknowledge, with the ancient Church, the mystery of the Holy Trinity as revealed in Scripture, and believe that in the unity of the ever-blessed Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of one substance, equal in power and glory.

### III.—OF CREATION.

We believe that Almighty God, for His own holy and loving ends, was pleased in the beginning to create the heavens and the earth, by the Son, the Eternal Word; and through progressive stages, to fashion and order this world, giving life to every creature; and to make man in His own image, that he might glorify and enjoy God, occupying and subduing the earth, and having dominion over the creatures, to the praise of his Maker's name.

### IV.—OF PROVIDENCE.

We believe that God the Creator upholds all things by the word of His power, preserving and providing for all His creatures, according to the laws of their being; and that He, through the presence and energy of His Spirit in nature and history, disposes, governs, and over-rules all events for His own high design; yet is He not in anywise the author or approver of sin, neither are the freedom and responsibility of man taken away, nor have any bounds been set to the sovereign liberty of Him who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth.

### V.—OF SIN.

We believe and confess that all men, through disobedience to the will of God in whatsoever way made known, are in a state of sin, and so are estranged from God, have come under just condemnation, and are subject to the penalty of death; and we acknowledge that out of this condition no man is able to deliver himself.

### VI.—OF SAVING GRACE.

We believe and proclaim that God, who is rich in mercy as well as of perfect justice, out of His great love to man was pleased to hold forth from the first a promise of redemption, which from age to age He confirmed and unfolded; and that, in the fulness of the time, He accomplished His gracious purpose by sending His son to be the Saviour of the world; wherefore our salvation out of sin and misery is ever to be ascribed to free and sovereign grace.

### VII.—OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We believe in and confess, with the ancient Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the Eternal Son of God, became man by taking to Himself a true body and soul, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; so that He is both God and man, two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the divine and the human, being inseparably united in one person, that He might be the Mediator between God and man, by whom alone we must be saved.

### VIII.—OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.

We believe that the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, being anointed with the Holy Spirit to proclaim and set up the Kingdom of God among men, did by His perfect life on earth, through words and deeds of grace, declare the Father, whose image He is; and did fully satisfy the demands of the Divine nature, and obtain for us forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and the gift of eternal life, through His obedience on our behalf to the law and will of His Father, even unto the death of the cross, wherein, bearing our sins, He offered Himself up a sacrifice without spot to God.

## IX.—OF THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST.

We believe that Jesus Christ, being for our offences, crucified, dead, and buried, saw no corruption, but was raised again on the third day, and declared to be the Son of God with power, in whose risen life we live anew, and have the pledge of a blessed resurrection; that in the same body in which He rose, He ascended into Heaven, where, as our High Priest, He maketh continual intercession for us; and that He sitteth at the right hand of God, Head of the Church, clothed with authority and power as Lord over all.

## X.—OF THE GOSPEL.

We believe and proclaim that God, who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, has, by His Son our Saviour, given commission to the Church to preach unto all nations the Gospel of His Grace, wherein He freely offers to all men forgiveness and eternal life, calling on them to turn from sin to God, and to receive and rest by faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

## XI.—OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who worketh freely as He will, without whose gracious influence there is no salvation, and whom the Father never withholdeth from any who ask for Him; and we give thanks that He has in every age moved on the hearts of men; that He spake by the prophets; that through our exalted Saviour He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten the minds of men 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.

## XII.—OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

We believe that everyone, who through the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit repents, and believes the Gospel, confessing and forsaking his sins, and humbly relying upon Christ alone for salvation, is freely pardoned and accepted as righteous in the sight of God.

## XIII.—OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

We believe that those who receive Christ by faith are vitally united to Him, and become partakers in all the benefits of His redemption; that they are adopted into the family of God; and that they have the Spirit of His Son abiding in them, the earnest and witness of their inheritance.

## XIV.—OF THE LAW OF THE NEW OBEDIENCE

We believe and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ has laid His people by His grace under new obligation to keep the perfect Law of God; and that by precept and example He has enlarged our knowledge of that law, and illustrated the spirit of filial love in which the divine will is to be obeyed.

## XV.—OF THE CHURCH.

We acknowledge one holy catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who, being united by the Holy Spirit to 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 should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, organised for the confession of His name, the public worship of God, the upbuilding of the saints, and the proclamation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge, as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular Church throughout the world which professes faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, as Divine Lord and Saviour.

## XVI.—OF CHURCH ORDER AND FELLOWSHIP.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole Head of His Church, has appointed its worship, teaching, discipline, and government to be administered, according to His will revealed in Holy Scripture, by officers chosen for their fitness, and duly set apart to their office; and although the visible Church, even in its purest branch, 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.

## XVII.—OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

We believe that God, who manifests Himself in creation and providence, and especially in the spirit of man, has been pleased to reveal His mind and will for our salvation at successive periods and in various ways; and that His Revelation has been, so far as needful, committed to writing by men inspired of the Holy Spirit, so that the Word of God is now contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are therefore to be devoutly studied by all; and we reverently acknowledge the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures to be the Supreme Judge in questions of faith and duty.

## XVIII.—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 new covenant ratified in His precious blood; through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord, and to be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world; Baptism with water into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost being the sacrament of admission into the visible Church, in which are set forth our union to Christ and regeneration by the Spirit, the remission of our sins, and our engagement to be the Lord's; and the Lord's Supper, the sacrament of communion with Christ and His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and of His sacrifice on the Cross, and in 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.

## XIX.—OF THE LORD'S DAY.

We believe that the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath, is a Holy Day, and is to be observed for rest and worship.

## XX.—OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

We believe that on a day known only to God, the Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly come again from heaven with power and great glory, for which appearing we ought always to wait in sober watchfulness and diligence, that we may be found ready at His coming.

## XXI.—OF THE RESURRECTION.

We believe that the souls of the righteous enter at death upon a state of rest and felicity at home with the Lord; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, when the bodies of all who are fallen asleep in Christ, as well as of the faithful who are then alive, shall be fashioned anew and conformed to the body of His glory.

## XXII.—OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

We believe that God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, before whom all men must appear, who shall separate the righteous from the wicked, make manifest the secrets of the heart, and render to every man according to the deeds which he hath done in the body, whether good or evil.

## XXIII.—OF THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

Finally, we believe in, and desire the life everlasting in which the redeemed shall receive their inheritance of glory in the kingdom of their Father, and be made fully blessed in the presence and service of God, whom they shall see and enjoy for ever and ever. Amen.

Your Committee ask the Assembly to consider these articles seriatim, to adopt them provisionally, and to send them down to Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions with an inquiry as to whether they consider Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches desirable on this or a similar doctrinal basis. It is not suggested at this stage that the articles should be sent down under the Barrier Act, or that Presbyteries and Sessions should express other than a general approval of the proposal for Union on the basis suggested. In the event of the Assembly's agreeing to this course, the Committee, in pursuance of the resolution adopted a year ago, ask authority to formulate, in co-operation with the Methodist and Congregational Committees, suggestions towards a Basis of Union in respect of the polity of the Church.



The movement inaugurated by last Assembly for the Union of the Evangelical Churches of the colony is happily on a line with similar movements in other parts of the world. In Canada the question is being eagerly discussed. In Australia, at the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the recommendations of the Committee for a Union of Presbyterianism, Methodism, and Congregationalism were adopted by a very great majority. On every hand there are indications that the Churches of Jesus Christ are drawing together. The time is assuredly not far distant when not only in this colony, but in every land, the Churches that practically hold the same creed and follow the same methods of work will throw down their denominational barriers, and unite to form one grand victorious body, in which the desire of Christ for the unity of His people shall be realised, and by which the waste and strife occasioned by sectarian competition and rivalry shall be brought to a perpetual end. May God speed the day!

JAMES GIBB,

Convener.

### APPENDIX III.

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON UNION OF CHURCHES.

ADOPTED BY ASSEMBLY, 1903

Your Committee were instructed by last Assembly to approach the Methodist Conference and the Congregational Union, and to inform these bodies that, in the opinion of the Assembly, the time had come to consider seriously whether a Union of the churches they represent with our own might not be accomplished. In accordance with these instructions the Committee waited on the Congregational Council at its meeting in Dunedin last February, and by delegation on the Methodist Conference at its meeting in Christchurch in the month of March. By both Council and Conference the delegates and the proposals they submitted were received with great enthusiasm, and at later sittings resolutions similar to that of the Assembly, and appointing committees to co-operate with the Assembly's committee, were unanimously adopted.

Your Committee were further instructed, in the event of the Assembly's proposal receiving a favourable reception at the hands of the Conference and Council, to bring up a report to this Assembly, indicating the main lines of doctrine and polity on which negotiations for a Union of these churches with our own might proceed.

In compliance with this instruction your Committee, in co-operation with the Committees of other Churches, have held several meetings, at which the question of a suitable creed has been under consideration, and a number of Articles of the Faith have been framed. But, being persuaded that if any real advance is to be made in this matter, the advance must be slow, and the mind of the whole Church ascertained at each step, your Committee deems it inexpedient to submit these articles to the Assembly. They ask the Assembly to remit to Presbyteries and Sessions the question if they are agreeable to the Assembly negotiating with the Methodist and Congregational Churches with a view to Union upon a basis of doctrine and polity to be considered, and in due time sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions.

The movement for the Union of the Evangelical Churches of this colony is happily on a line with similar movements in other parts of the world. In Canada the question is being eagerly discussed. In Australia, at the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the recommendations of the Committee for a Union of Presbyterianism, Methodism, and Congregationalism were adopted by a very great majority. On every hand there are indications that the Churches of Jesus Christ are drawing together. The time is assuredly not far distant when not only in this colony, but in every land, the Churches that practically hold the same Creed and follow the same methods of work will throw down their denominational barriers, and unite to form one grand victorious body, in which the desire

of Christ for the unity of His people shall be realised, and by which the waste and strife occasioned by sectarian competition and rivalry shall be brought to a perpetual end.

JAMES GIBB,  
Convener.

#### APPENDIX IV.

### THE UNION OF THE CHURCHES.

#### CLUTHA PRESBYTERY--NOTICE OF OVERTURE.

(From the 'Otago Daily Times,' Saturday, December 12, 1903.)

The Rev. P. B. Fraser, at the meeting of the Presbytery of Clutha on 11th inst., tabled the following overture for presentation by the Presbytery to the ensuing meeting of the Synod of Otago and Southland, which meets about Easter time. He gave notice of motion to move it at the next quarterly meeting of the Clutha Presbytery:—

Overture of the Presbytery of Clutha to the Ensuing Meeting of the Synod of Otago and Southland.

1. Whereas the Presbytery of Clutha adopted an overture to the Synod of Otago and Southland for adoption and transmission to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand petitioning that steps be taken for the establishing of "an annual conference or other association of Christian Churches which would make for practical co-operation of Christian Churches in the present, and which, without the sacrifice of truth to charity or of charity to truth, but with the triumph of both, would in the providence of God make for an ultimate fusion of Christian denominations into a zealous and powerful National Church of New Zealand";

2. And whereas that overture was adopted unanimously by the Synod and received from the Synod by the General Assembly held at Wellington in November, 1902;

3. And whereas that Assembly, without being overtured in due form by any of the courts of the Church, adopted a resolution (of which notice had been given during the sittings of the Assembly) authorising proposals to be made to the Methodist and Congregational Churches with a view to Union, and passed from the overture of the Otago Synod petitioning the Assembly to move for co-operation only at present;

4. And whereas a committee was accordingly appointed (Rev. Dr Gibb, convener) to negotiate with the said churches, and reported to the Assembly held in Dunedin in November, 1903, that certain Articles of Faith had been framed;

5. And whereas the convener reported that the said Articles, which were not submitted to the Assembly, had been unanimously agreed to by the Assembly's committee (a statement which the mover of this overture in the Presbytery, being a member of the said Union Committee, has from the first strenuously contested and denied) and also by representatives of the negotiating Churches;

6. And whereas the said Articles of Faith appeared amongst the Assembly's reports, and purported to be based on Articles of Faith prepared by a Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England—Principal Dykes being convener—and adopted by that Church;

7. And whereas a comparison—a statement of which is appended hereto—of the said Articles with those of the Presbyterian Church of England aforesaid reveals, instead of a similarity of the system of doctrine, a grave and fundamental departure and contrast, inasmuch as the Reformation doctrines of the origin of the living races of mankind, of the Fall, of the temptation of mankind by Satan, of the origin of sin, of native depravity, of the Atonement, of justification by faith solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice, of the election of grace, of regeneration, of Christian perseverance, and of eternal punishment are all eliminated from the Articles of the Presbyterian Church of England referred to;

8. And whereas the said articles, in their changed form, do, on the great foundation truths of the origin of the living races of mankind, of the origin and transmission of the sin of the race, of native depravity, of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, of justification by faith, and of the destiny of sinful and unrepentant men, take up an attitude evasive, ambiguous, or agnostic:

9. And whereas, in particular, there have been eliminated from the Article on Justification by faith the concluding words giving the ground on which God justifies sinners—viz., “solely on the ground of Christ’s perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice”—thus removing Christ crucified as an atoning sacrifice from before sinners as the Object of their faith and from before God as the ground on which He freely offers pardon and acceptance to all sinners of mankind;

10. And whereas, in another particular, in the Article on the Judgment there have been eliminated the concluding words, which are Christ’s own—viz., “that the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”—thus causing the Church in her Creed and testimony before the world to become avowedly agnostic on the most awful Article of the Christian faith, and, in effect, to deny her Lord’s explicit testimony, while permitting men to enter her ministry who may proclaim within the same Church the contradictory doctrines of universalism, annihilation, and eternal punishment, and substitute the opinions of men for the Word of God;

11. And whereas the said Articles, being evasive, ambiguous, or agnostic on the foundation doctrines of the Reformed Faith, would therefore open the door for admission into the ministry of the Church of men holding mutually contradictory and conflicting doctrines on the main Articles of belief and subversive of the Christian faith;

12. And whereas, owing to their evasive and ambiguous character the said Articles would be either entirely useless as a test of subscription and adherence to a common system of doctrine, or be liable to be abused as an instrument of tyranny and oppression if variously interpreted by changing majorities in Church courts;

13. And whereas these Articles in their substance are totally opposed to the doctrinal standards of the Church adopted so recently as two years ago, and would, if adopted, tend not to unite Christendom, but to disunite it by the formation of a new religious sect;

14. And whereas it has been remitted by the Assembly to Presbyteries and Sessions to report whether they are in favour of negotiating with the Churches named on a basis to be submitted;

15. And whereas, according to the convener of the Assembly’s Committee, and also the convener of the Congregational Committee (as appears in his report published in the ‘Outlook,’ dated December 5, 1903), the Assembly’s Committee are said to have already given their assent to the said Articles of faith in circulation among the Assembly reports;

16. And whereas there would be created alarm, dissension, and distress in the Church if the Assembly should give its authority to consider a union with other Churches on such a basis;

Therefore the Presbytery of Clutha hereby respectfully overtures the Synod of Otago and Southland to take the whole question raised by the proposed union on such a basis into its careful consideration with the view of learning for itself and the Church at large how far the premises above recited are true in substance or in fact, and of petitioning the Assembly to dismiss the Committee, and to take such steps as, in its wisdom, it sees fit to satisfy the Church at large that there is no danger of the Church departing from the substance of her present doctrinal standards, and further, to secure the objects petitioned for by the overture from the Presbytery of Clutha which was unanimously adopted by the Synod and received by the Assembly of 1902; or, in the alternative, to take such steps in view of the premises above recited as shall tend to promote the peace and prosperity of our Zion and the glory of God.



## THE CHANGES IN THE ARTICLES.

The changes made in the Articles of the Presbyterian Church of England, referred to in the overture, are as follows:—

## 1. The English Presbyterian Article:—

## V.—OF THE FALL.

“We believe and confess that our first father, Adam, the representative head as well as common ancestor of mankind, transgressed the commandment of God through temptation of the devil, by which transgression he fell, and all mankind in him, from his original state of innocence and communion with God; and so all men have come under just condemnation, are subject to the penalty of death, and inherit a sinful nature, degenerate in every part, and estranged from God, from which proceed all actual transgressions; and we acknowledge that out of this condition no man is able to deliver himself.”

The above is struck out and the following inserted in its place, as the convener reports, by Assembly's Committee:

## V.—OF SIN.

“We believe and confess that all men, through disobedience to the Will of God in whatsoever way made known, are in a state of sin, and so are estranged from God, have come under just condemnation, and are subject to the penalty of death; and we acknowledge that out of this condition no man is able to deliver himself.”

## 2. The English Presbyterian Article is as follows:—

## VIII.—OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.

“We believe that the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, being anointed with the Holy Spirit to proclaim and set up the Kingdom of God among men, did by His perfect life on earth, through words and deeds of grace, declare the Father, whose image He is; and did fully satisfy divine justice, and obtain for us forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and the gift of eternal life, through His obedience on our behalf to the law and will of His Father, even unto the death of the cross, wherein, bearing our sins, He offered himself up a sacrifice without spot to God.”

In the above Article on the Work of Christ the Assembly's Committee, as reported by convener, have struck out the words “did fully satisfy divine justice” and have inserted instead “did fully satisfy the demands of the Divine nature.”

## 3. The following is the English Presbyterian Article:—

## XIII.—OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

“We believe that everyone, who through the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit repents, and believes the Gospel, confessing and forsaking his sins, and humbly relying upon Christ alone for salvation, is freely pardoned and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice.”

In the above the Assembly's Committee, as reported by convener, have struck out the last words “solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice.”

## 4. The English Presbyterian Article:—

## XIV.—OF SONSHIP IN CHRIST.

“We believe that those who receive Christ by faith are vitally united to Him, and become partakers in all the benefits of His redemption; that they are adopted into the family of God; and that they have the Spirit of His Son abiding in them, the earnest of their inheritance.”

The Assembly's Committee, as reported, have altered the title of the above to read, “Of Union with Christ,” and have inserted the words “and witness”

after "earnest." The above Article is not specially mentioned in the overture, but is added here for the sake of completeness.

5. The following English Presbyterian Article has been struck out:—

XII.—OF ELECTION AND REGENERATION.

"We humbly own and believe that God, the Father, before the foundation of the world, was pleased of His sovereign grace to choose a people unto Himself in Christ, whom He gave to the Son, and to whom the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life by a secret and wonderful operation of His power, using as His ordinary means, where years of understanding have been reached, the truths of His Word, in ways agreeable to the nature of man; so that, being born from above, they are the children of God, created in Jesus Christ unto good works."

6. The following Presbyterian Article has also been struck out:—

XVI.—OF CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.

"We bless God that the obedience of Christians, though in this life always imperfect, is yet accepted for Christ's sake and pleasing to God, being the fruit of union to Christ and the evidence of a living faith; and that in measure as they surrender themselves to His Spirit, and follow the guidance of His Word, they receive strength for daily service, and grow in holiness after the image of their Lord; or if, through unwatchfulness and neglect of prayer, any of them fall into grievous sin, yet by the mercy of God Who abideth faithful, they are not cast off, but are chastened for their back-sliding, and through repentance restored to His favour, so that they perish not."

7. The following is the English Presbyterian Article:—

XXIII.—OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

"We believe that God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, before Whom all men must appear. Who shall separate the righteous from the wicked, make manifest the secrets of the heart, and render to every man according to the deeds which he hath done in the body, whether good or evil, when the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Assembly's Committee, as reported by convener, has struck out the last words, "when the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

8. For the sake of completeness, the following new Article, added by Assembly's Committee as reported, though not referred to in overture, is quoted:—

XIX.—THE LORD'S DAY.

"We believe that the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath, is a Holy Day, and is to be observed for rest and worship."

APPENDIX V.

**THE ARTICLES OF THE FAITH AS HELD BY THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND.**

I.—OF GOD.

We believe in and adore one living and true God, who is spirit and the Father of spirits, present in every place, personal, infinite, and eternal, the almighty Author and sovereign of all; most blessed, most holy, and most free; perfect in wisdom, justice, truth, and love; to us most merciful and gracious; unto Whom only we must cleave, Whom only we must worship and obey. To Him be glory forever! Amen.

## II.—OF THE TRINITY.

We acknowledge, with the ancient Church, the mystery of the Holy Trinity as revealed in Scripture, and believe that in the unity of the ever-blessed Godhead there are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—of one substance, equal in power and glory.

## III.—OF CREATION.

We believe that Almighty God, for His own holy and loving ends, was pleased in the beginning to create the heavens and the earth, by the Son, the Eternal Word; and through progressive stages, to fashion and order this world, giving life to every creature; and to make man in His own image, that he might glorify and enjoy God, occupying and subduing the earth, and having dominion over the creatures, to the praise of his Maker's name.

## IV.—OF PROVIDENCE.

We believe that God the Creator upholds all things by the word of His power, preserving and providing for all His creatures, according to the laws of their being; and that He, through the presence and energy of His Spirit in nature and history, disposes and governs all events for His own high design; yet is He not in anywise the author or approver of sin, neither are the freedom and responsibility of man taken away, nor have any bounds been set to the sovereign liberty of Him who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth.

## V.—OF THE FALL.

We believe and confess that our first father, Adam, the representative head as well as common ancestor of mankind, transgressed the commandment of God through temptation of the devil, by which transgression he fell, and all mankind in him, from his original state of innocence and communion with God; and so all men have come under just condemnation, are subject to the penalty of death, and inherit a sinful nature, degenerate in every part, and estranged from God, from which proceed all actual transgressions; and we acknowledge that out of this condition no man is able to deliver himself.

## VI.—OF SAVING GRACE.

We believe and proclaim that God, who is rich in mercy as well as of perfect justice, was moved by His Great love to man to hold forth from the first a promise of redemption, which from age to age He confirmed and unfolded, and that, in the fulness of the time, He accomplished His gracious purpose by sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world; wherefore our salvation out of sin and misery is ever to be ascribed to free and sovereign grace.

## VII.—OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We believe in and confess, with the ancient Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the Eternal Son of God, became man by taking to Himself a true body and soul, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; so that He is both God and Man, two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the divine and the human, being inseparably joined together in one person, that He might be the Mediator between God and man, by whom alone we must be saved.

## VIII.—OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.

We believe that the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, being anointed with the Holy Spirit to proclaim and set up the Kingdom of God among men, did by His perfect life on earth, through words and deeds of grace, declare the Father, whose image He is; and did fully satisfy divine justice, and obtain for us forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and the gift of eternal life, through His obedience on our behalf to the law and will of His Father, even unto the death of the Cross, wherein, bearing our sins, He offered himself up a sacrifice without spot to God.

## IX.—OF THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST.

We believe that Jesus Christ, being for our offences crucified, dead, and buried, saw no corruption, but was raised again on the third day, in whose



risen life we live anew, and have the pledge of a blessed resurrection; that in the same body in which He rose, He ascended into heaven, where, as our High Priest, He maketh continued intercession for us; and that He sitteth at the right hand of God, Head of the Church, clothed with authority and power as Lord over all.

#### X.—OF THE GOSPEL.

We hold fast and proclaim that God, who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, has, by His Son, our Saviour given commission to the Church to preach unto all nations the Gospel of His grace, wherein He freely offers to all men forgiveness and eternal life, calling on them to turn from sin to God, and to receive and rest by faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### XI.—OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who worketh freely as He will, without whose gracious influence there is no salvation, and whom the Father never withholdeth from any who ask for Him; and we give thanks that He has in every age moved on the hearts of men; that He spake by the prophets; that through our exalted Saviour He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten the minds of men 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.

#### XII.—OF ELECTION AND REGENERATION.

We humbly own and believe that God, the Father, before the foundation of the world, was pleased of His sovereign grace to choose a people unto Himself in Christ, whom He gave to the Son, and to whom the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life by a secret and wonderful operation of His power, using as His ordinary means, where years of understanding have been reached, the truths of His Word in ways agreeable to the nature of man; so that, being born from above, they are the children of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

#### XIII.—OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

We believe that everyone, who through the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit repents, and believes the Gospel, confessing and forsaking his sins, and humbly relying upon Christ alone for salvation, is freely pardoned and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice.

#### XIV.—OF SONSHIP IN CHRIST.

We believe that those who receive Christ by faith are vitally united to Him, and become partakers in all the benefits of His redemption; that they are adopted into the family of God; and that they have the Spirit of His Son abiding in them, the earnest of their inheritance.

#### XV.—OF THE LAW OF THE NEW OBEDIENCE.

We believe and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ has laid His people by His grace under new obligation to keep the perfect Law of God; and that by precept and example He has enlarged our knowledge of that Law, and illustrated the spirit of filial love in which the divine will is to be obeyed.

#### XVI.—OF CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.

We bless God that the obedience of Christians, though in this life always imperfect, is yet accepted for Christ's sake and pleasing to God, being the fruit of union to Christ and the evidence of a living faith; and that in measure as they surrender themselves to His Spirit, and follow the guidance of His Word, they receive strength for daily service, and grow in holiness after the image of their Lord; or if, through unwatchfulness and neglect of prayer, any of them fall into previous sin, yet by the mercy of God who abideth faithful, they are not cast off, but are chastened for their backsliding, and through repentance restored to His favour, so that they perish not.

## XVII.—OF THE CHURCH.

We acknowledge one holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who, being united by the Holy Spirit to 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 should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, organised for the confession of His name, the public worship of God, the upbuilding of the saints, and the proclamation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge, as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular Church throughout the world which professes faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, as Divine Lord and Saviour.

## XVIII.—OF CHURCH ORDER AND FELLOWSHIP.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole Head of His Church, has appointed its worship, teaching, discipline, and government to be administered, according to His will revealed in Holy Scripture, by officers chosen for their fitness, and duly set apart to their office; and although the visible Church, even in its purest branch, 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.

## XIX.—OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

We believe that God, Who manifests Himself in creation and providence, and especially in the spirit of man, has been pleased to reveal His mind and will for our salvation at successive periods and in various ways; and that this Revelation has been, so far as needful, committed to writing by men inspired of the Holy Spirit, so that the Word of God is now contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are therefore to be devoutly studied by all; and we reverently acknowledge the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures to be the Supreme Judge in questions of faith and duty.

## XX.—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 new covenant, ratified in His precious blood; through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and to be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world; Baptism with water in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost being the Sacrament of admission into the visible Church, in which are set forth our union to Christ and regeneration by the Spirit, the remission of our sins, and our engagement to be the Lord's; and the Lord's Supper, the Sacrament of communion with Christ and His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and of His sacrifice on the Cross, and in 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.

## XXI.—OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

We assuredly believe that on a day known only to God, the Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly come again from heaven with power and great glory; and we look for this second appearing of our Saviour as the blessed hope of His Church, for which we ought always to wait in sober watchfulness and diligence, that we may be found ready at His coming.

## XXII.—OF THE RESURRECTION.

We believe that the souls of the righteous enter at death upon a state of rest and felicity at home with the Lord; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, when the bodies of all who are fallen asleep in Christ, as well as of the faithful who are then alive, shall be fashioned anew and conformed to the body of His glory.

**XXIII.—OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.**

We believe that God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, before whom all men must appear, who shall separate the righteous from the wicked, make manifest the secrets of the heart, and render to every man according to the deeds which he hath done in the body, whether good or evil, when the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**XXIV.—OF THE LIFE EVERLASTING.**

Finally, we believe in and desire the life everlasting in which the redeemed shall receive their inheritance of glory in the kingdom of their Father, and be made fully blessed in the presence and service of God, whom they shall see and enjoy forever and ever. Amen.

