

The United Church of Canada

OUR COMMON FAITH

By

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With a Brief History of the Church Union
Movement in Canada

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THE RYERSON PRESS

TORONTO

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FOREWORD

THIS exposition of the doctrines of the Basis of Union will be welcomed warmly by a wide circle of readers. The question is often asked: is it possible for evangelical Christians to unite in a statement of belief which will contain in full the doctrines of grace. This book is the answer.

Its author is admirably qualified to present to the entire Christian church this re-statement of the foundations of her faith. Dr. T. B. Kilpatrick is one of Scotland's best gifts to Canada. He came to Manitoba College, Winnipeg, in 1899, as Professor of Systematic Theology, and in 1905 was transferred to the same chair in Knox College, Toronto. Already a ripe scholar and a powerful preacher, his experience has deepened with the years. His passion is the saving grace of God in Christ. He has aimed to cultivate in the Christian ministry sound learning, fired with a love for the souls of men. As a professor he has trained and inspired hundreds of our ministers who are to-day shaping the church in this new land and directing her policy. As a preacher he has moved our congregations into the deeper experiences and higher attainments of the Christian life. It has then been his privilege to open the sources of the church's spiritual vitality and energy in the formative period of her history in this young nation.

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Dr. Kilpatrick has always been an enthusiastic advocate of Church Union. At the same time he has recognized the fact that no satisfactory basis of Union could ever be reached by compromise on the vital truths of Christianity. The triumph of the Basis of Union in forming which he had so large a part, is that in it the central truths of the Gospel are contained in their fulness. In this exposition the author brings out their religious rather than their theological values. In so far as it is theology it is experimental, rising out of the experience of God in Christ. Experts in technical theology will notice at once that a great deal which enters into the older credal statements is missing here. There is, for example, no technical discussion of pre-destination or of baptism or of the differences in respect to Holy Orders between Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches. The whole aim of the book is to make a synthesis of experimental truth. These doctrines are accepted by all evangelical Christians. There is nothing here to alienate believers from one another or to perpetuate divisions. The statement is a uniting document, and is designed to bring together those whose similarities and even identities are far more important than their differences. The book will therefore be peculiarly helpful to the pastor and preacher. It will be an inestimable boon to the church if, wherever possible, study groups are formed and series of sermons preached on the doctrines of the Basis of Union. This book will

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equip admirably our church's leaders for this service.

The brief historical sketch of the Union Movement in Canada which forms the first part of the book is from the pen of Mr. Kenneth H. Cousland, Lecturer in History in Emmanuel College. Mr. Cousland has made a special study of the subject, has had access to the historical records and documentary evidence, and has been at pains to write a clear, frank statement. He has done his work with rare skill and in excellent style.

[Signed]

GEO. C. PIDGEON.