

CHURCH UNION—THE BASIS.

By Rev. Alex. Henderson, M.A.

The London "Advertiser" of the 18th instant contained the following:

At St. Andrew's yesterday morning Rev. Dr. Ross took as his subject, "The Basis of Church Union." He outlined the Calvinistic doctrine, touching upon total depravity, unconditional election, particular redemption, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints, the five points in dispute.

Dr. Ross pointed out that with the exception of "particular redemption," all the other points mentioned are in the basis of the union. Particular redemption was, he thought, one of the least important points, and was more an outgrowth of the other parts than something justified by Scripture. It was the result, he said, of logic, and while there were a few texts that could be quoted in favor of it, there were many against it.

From the inception of this movement I have been rather opposed to it, not that I have any quarrel with, or prejudice against my Methodist brethren, but because I, like the late Dr. Potts, could not see how such a union could be brought about without the sacrifice of principles of religious belief on either side; believing as I do that such sacrifice ought not to be made, and could not be made without serious moral and spiritual loss to the church and to the world both now and in future generations. As a member of the Union Committee, Dr. Ross should know whereof he speaks—and he does not usually speak rashly. His utterances, therefore, on this question are worthy of consideration.

Assuming the above report, though brief, to be fairly correct, I gather that his hearers are given to understand that so far as the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church are concerned, there is, except on one point, to be practically no change; or in other words that the system of doctrine known as Calvinistic, is the system of doctrine set forth in the basis of union, upon which the committees of all the three negotiating bodies have harmoniously agreed. If this be really so, I shall greatly rejoice; for I have no prejudice against union, but I think I have, and I hope I shall continue to have unwavering loyalty to divine truth (as I understand it), and to the honor of the Most High. To all Christian brethren who may differ from me in doctrine I heartily accord the same liberty and motive.

But this view implies a great change from the teaching that I have known as characteristic of Methodism, that with all due respect to Dr. Ross, I must hesitate to accept his view of the "basis," until I hear it indorsed by my Methodist brethren: this all the more so in reading the "basis" for myself I have not yet discovered what Dr. Ross seems to have found in it.

1. I find what is, I presume, meant for the doctrine of depravity; but it is not altogether the doctrine of the Presbyterian faith.

2. I find election, but not necessarily unconditional election. I see nothing inconsistent in it with the doctrine of an election founded on repentance, faith and perseverance therein; foreseen as the condition of it.

3. I find grace, but not irresistible grace. I do not care for this expression—"irresistible" grace. I much prefer to say "efficacious" grace.

4. "That the believer's hope of continuance in such a (holy) life is in the preserving grace of God" (Basis, Art. xii.). If this is what is intended

for the Perseverance of the Saints," it appears to me a shallow delusion. I find nothing in it contrary to the view that a sinner converted and regenerated may in time fall away so as to be finally lost.

5. As to Particular Redemption which Dr. Ross seems to belittle as of small importance, it occurs to me that when in order to rest a doctrine that is confessedly the logical outcome of other well established doctrines, even were there no direct Scripture proof of it, one must rule logic out of court, said rejection is to be viewed with suspicion. Apply that principle to the interpretation of Scripture, and there are other things besides Particular Redemption, held in common by many churches which will require to be discarded.

The object of this letter is not to discuss the rightness or wrongness of either side of the above doctrines; but I may be permitted to say that the greatness of this issue—Union—with the mighty and far reaching consequences that may result from it for good or ill—consequences that shall be forever beyond our control, demands that the utmost candour should obtain between the negotiating parties. If it is not to be a mere paper union, if we are "all to speak the same thing," creed, we must first come to be "all of one mind." The basis of union, or doctrinal confession must be a straight forward, honest statement of divine truth, and not an agreement come to by an understanding to maintain silence on points where we may be aware of difference. One of the ostensible objects of the negotiations is to constitute a church that will be great, and strong as a regenerating power in the world. If so, she must bear witness to the truth. Her ministry must have a distinct message to the world founded on the Word; and a creed constructed mainly out of an attempt to blend Calvinistic and Arminian, or any other sets of discordant views, will never make a church, either great, strong, or influential. Whether the time is yet ripe for the different churches to gather around the Divine Word and construct a testimony from it—Independent of Presbyterian, Methodist or Congregational bias instead of an attempted blending of all three, is very doubtful.

London, Oct. 21st, 1909.

WINNIPEG AND WEST.

Rev. D. Woodside, pastor of the Presbyterian church at Franklin, Man., has resigned his charge to accept the pastorate of the Sherman avenue church in this city.

The call of Knox Church, Brandon, to the Rev. Geo. Edmison, of Russell, Man., was sustained by the Brandon Presbytery and will be forwarded to the Presbytery of Minnesota. The call was unanimous.

The induction of Rev. R. S. Laidlaw, as pastor of Saint Paul's church, Brandon, was conducted by Rev. J. S. Muldrew, of Souris, assisted by several other members of the Brandon Presbytery. Following the induction a reception was held in the Sunday school rooms, when Rev. and Mrs. Laidlaw were welcomed by a large number of the members of the congregation.

Earl and Countess Grey and party attended the morning service at Knox church on the 17th inst., when Rev. Dr. Du Val preached a strong sermon on "The Turkish Empire, History and Diplomacy." The preacher, after outlining the features of some of the prominent intrigues in which Turkey had been a controlling figure, said that it was a blot on Christian civilization that such things should be allowed to continue.

At the evening service Dr. Du Val dealt with the execution of Ferrer at Barcelona on the edict of a court martial. He praised the spirit which revolted at the horrors of despotism and the humanity which sympathized with a suffering fellow man.

GLIMPSES OF BAZAAR PREACHING

The Rev. D. F. Smith sends to Rev. Dr. MacKay, P. M. Secretary, the following brief notes of addresses given by natives in the Bazaar. They give glimpses of Mission work in India. Much preaching is done in the open, on the street, by the village well, anywhere—wherever an audience can be found. It requires much readiness in repartee to answer promptly and effectively the questions and remarks that come from the crowd. Experience cultivates such readiness, and it is still true—"It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak."

"Pandit. Ram Charn was the first speaker. He said,—you call me Pandit, and Maharaj, and Brahmin, and say well, for so I am, but let me tell you how it is possible to be a Pandit. I went to 'Kash' (Benares) and studied with the greatest Pandits in Hindustan (India). But not for that reason do I count myself wise, because the greatest wisdom is this,—that God through His word has revealed His love in Jesus. By accepting that revelation of God in Jesus all will become Pandits."

You call me Brahmin because I was born in that caste. Let me show you who are Brahmins. They and only they who know "Brahm" can be Brahmins. But you may all become Brahmins, because it is written in the Bible,—"To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe in His name."

Hira, a compounder from the hospital said,—We are all like travellers and this world is like Sara (rest-house) and we are here only for a night, and when we pass from this world we go alone. In that other world the place in which we abide will be the place which the road on which we are now travelling leads to. If we travel on the road called sin we will arrive in the place prepared for sinners. In the hospital every day from one to two hundred patients for treatment—and what do I see. It is that the sickness of many is brought on by their breaking God's laws. God is calling you to turn from sin and to place faith on the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, that you may inherit the place prepared for those that love Him.

The third speaker said—My name is Feroz Khau, and from my name you know that I am born a Mohammedan. At once one from the crowd said—"If you were a Mohammedan why did you leave the religion in which you were born." Listen and I will tell you. I read in the "Quran" that Jesus Christ the Son of Mary, is holy and undefiled and is called the "Ruh-ul-Allah" (The Spirit of God). It is also necessary for every Mohammedan to read and accept four books, the "Taurat" (The Law of Moses); the "Zubur" (Psalms), the "Injil" (The Gospel); and also the "Quran," (Koran). I read these four books and for that reason I am here to-day, to give witness that not "Mohammed" nor "Huslan," nor any other, but the Christ of the Gospel is able to save and keep from sin."

Rev. J. F. Macfarlane, of Warkworth, Ont., accepts the call to Zion church, Hull, and his induction will likely take place in November. Mr. Macfarlane was born near Kingston, and studied at the Kingston collegiate, having as classmates, amongst others, Messrs. Jackson and Fred Booth of Ottawa. He graduated at the university in 1890 and two years later graduated with honors in theology, gaining his B.D. In June of 1892 he entered upon his first pastorate at South Mountain, remaining there for more than ten years. Warkworth was his next charge, and the seven years he has been there have been marked by wonderful progress. Mrs. Macfarlane has also been an active church worker.