

British American Presbyterian PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AT TORONTO, CANADA.

TERMS: \$1 a year, in advance. POSTAGE BY MAIL, 40 cents per year, payable at the office of the Publisher.

Address: C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, P.O. DRAW 2484 Publisher and Proprietor

British American Presbyterian.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 1874.

THE ASSEMBLY AND SYNOD.

From being anxious to give as much as possible in one issue of the report of the proceedings of the Presbyterian Church Courts, which have been holding their meetings at Ottawa, during the past week, we have omitted editorials and miscellaneous items.

THE UNION FINALLY AGREED TO.

We are sure that all our readers will be rejoiced to know that the negotiations for Union have at last arrived at a successful and most harmonious issue. To all appearance, there will not be even a single recusant. Those who were at one time most opposed have been brought wonderfully round by the changes which have been made in the basis and accompanying resolutions.

KIRK SYNOD.

Saturday, 6th June.

The Synod met at 10 o'clock a.m., and after devotional exercises resumed the debate on Union.

Dr. Jenkins, of Montreal, spoke strongly in favor of union, and concluded by affirming, that if, after four years of negotiation, this Church was to recede from the final step, it would be held up to the reprobation of every religious body in Canada.

At 10.45 the debate was adjourned, in order to receive the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church, and some of both sides were appointed to represent the Synod at the Conference. At 11.15 the General Assembly, headed by its Moderator, arrived. After all were seated, Mr. Croil, elder, was called to preside.

Dr. Topp then explained the changes that had been proposed in the Assembly, and read the new preamble, which is to the following effect:

"The Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, the Canada Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, holding the same doctrinal government and discipline, believing that it would be for the glory of God and the advancement of the cause of Christ that they should be united, and thus form one Presbyterian Church for the Dominion, independent of all other Churches in its jurisdiction and under authority to Christ alone the head of His Church, and held over all things to the Church, agree to unite on the following basis, to be subscribed to by the Moderators of the respective Churches in their name and on their behalf."

He said that he had every reason to believe that this would be received unanimously, or almost so, by the Canada Presbyterian Church, and with the three first articles in the basis would be regarded as sufficient ground of union.

Dr. Cook expressed his great gratification at living to see that day, when union seemed so certain.

It was then agreed that the two bodies should first discuss the propositions separately.

The Preaching of Christ, a Cause of Rejoicing.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE C. P. ASSEMBLY ON THE SECOND OF JUNE, 1874, BY REV. WM. BRID, TORONTO, RETIRING MODERATOR.

Philippians I xviii. "What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in prison or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

At the time when Paul wrote this Epistle he was a prisoner at Rome, in bonds for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. But he was not ashamed of his bonds; nor did the cruel persecution to which he was subjected break down his spirit, or make him swerve in the least degree from his faithful adherence to the Saviour in whom he trusted. He counted not his life dear unto himself. He was willing that his Lord and Master should be magnified in him, whether by life or by death. As to himself his bonds only served to bind him more closely to the Saviour, to deepen his love to Him, and to strengthen his resolution to serve Him. In regard to others, the bonds of the Apostle produced different and opposite effects. Some, when they saw his steadfastness amidst his sufferings, and the comfort and support so abundantly vouchsafed to him by the Master whom he served, were encouraged, and emboldened to be still more resolute in preaching the gospel of the grace of God, and in testifying for Jesus. There were others, of a more selfish disposition, who finding the Apostle now withdrawn from the position which he had occupied, a position of influence and activity in the Church of Christ, were desirous of taking the opportunity of advancing their own interests and promoting their own glory. But even they could hope to obtain influence and position in no other way than by setting forth the great truths of the gospel, preaching Christ. Thus it was that in various ways and through different influences, the sufferings of the Apostle, although intended by his persecutors for evil, were overruled for good, and fell out rather for the furtherance of the gospel; and the Apostle calmly looking at the result could say "What then? Notwithstanding every way, &c."

Let us, first, look for a few moments at these words as used by the Apostle with reference to his own circumstances at the time, and afterwards consider some of the lessons which they are fitted to teach us. And may God bless us in the consideration of His word, and may He grant that we may have more and more of the spirit of the Apostle and be followers of him as he was of Christ.

I. Let us, then, briefly consider the words before us as originally used by Paul. "What then? &c." The Apostle with all his burning zeal, and with all his consecration to the service of the Saviour, was not an austere, unfeeling man. He had a generous, joyous, sympathetic nature, a large loving heart. His religion was not one of gloom but of sunshine. He had no doubt his conflicts, he tells us of them in his writings, but peace and joy in believing specially characterized his Christian life. Even when the sufferings of Christ abounded in him, his consolation also abounded by Christ. It would be easy to multiply proofs of this. At an earlier period of his ministry we find him in the prison at Philippi with Silas singing praises unto God in the midst of the cruel indignities and suffering to which he was subjected. And here again, after a protracted confinement in prison, and when as appears from several expressions in the Epistle, his confinement was becoming more rigorous, we find him not brooding over his sufferings, not sinking into despondency, but presenting the evidences of a calm, happy, joyous state of mind. In the face of many discouragements and of severe sufferings, and not knowing what things should befall him, we find him declaring—"And I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." The Apostle, no doubt rejoiced in the experience of the love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, in the knowledge of his own personal interest in Christ, in the assurance that Christ was his with all his precious blessings, and that neither life nor death could separate him from Christ Jesus his Lord. May we all live in the knowledge of God as our reconciled God and Father, in the experience of the love of Jesus, and in the fellowship and comfort of the Holy Spirit, and then no matter what our sufferings or troubles may be, the joy of the Lord will be our strength.

But the joy of the Apostle in the circumstances in which he was placed, was occasioned, or at least greatly enhanced by the consideration that in so many ways, notwithstanding his own bonds, the knowledge of Christ was spread abroad, that "in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ was preached." He could not himself now preach Christ,—at least he could do so to a very limited number. Of course he would not be silent if he had but one to whom to speak of Christ. And we know that, even in prison, the ministry of Paul was not fruitless. But he could not as when he was at liberty, go where he could, proclaiming the name and the salvation of Jesus. But he rejoiced when it was done by others. There was no selfishness in the Apostle's heart. It was so full of love,—love to Christ and love to the souls of men,—that there was no room for such feelings as selfishness or jealousy. He could rejoice when the good work was done, although his hand had nothing to do with it. He could even rejoice when the work was done by those who were jealous of him, and sought to exalt themselves at his expense. When even by them Christ was preached, when the great facts connected with His life and death, His resurrection and ascension, were made known, when the infinite value of His sacrifice, His power and His willingness to save even unto the uttermost all who came unto God by Him, were set forth, the Apostle rejoiced, knowing that, in whatever way those truths might be made known, the Spirit of God was able to bless them for the salvation of men. This was the character and style of the Apostle's own preaching. We find, indeed, great variety in the subjects set forth in his Epistles and in the discourses which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. He did not by any means continually dwell on the same topic. But Christ was never long out of his view, or rather he was

never out of his view at all. This was his determination—and we know how well he carried it out—to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To His eye the glorious rays of the Son of righteousness lighted up every object which he beheld. To him "to live was Christ." He had experienced the power of the gospel. Christ was to the Apostle himself all in all, and he was constrained to preach Christ to others, believing as he did, that through the application of the Spirit, Christ was the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation. The Apostle thus rejoiced when others, even those who were moved by envy and strife, preached Christ. He did not rejoice on account of the disposition and temper with which they exhibited. He did not approve of their state of mind. But believing that the doctrines which they preached were the truth of God, which the Spirit of God could own and bless by whomsoever made known or in whatsoever way spread abroad he rejoiced, trusting that the seed of the Kingdom, even thus scattered, would take root in some hearts and yield fruit unto life eternal.

II. But let us proceed to notice some of the lessons which we may deduce from the words before us:—

1. First we observe that one very important lesson which these words may teach us is that the preaching which we should aim at, and the preaching which should give us joy by whomsoever it is practised, is the preaching of Christ. Paul was filled with joy when Christ was preached, even although by those who had no love to himself personally. At a very early period of the history of the church we find that there was a tendency to depart from the simplicity of the gospel. Paul and John, and Peter, gave earnest warnings against false teachers and false doctrine. The simple truth was soon marred by the additions of men, and by the speculations of philosophy, falsely so-called. And from the Apostolic period down to the present day the same tendency has been exhibited,—a tendency to substitute something else for the simple gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,—to keep back, or to modify and dilute the great and glorious truths which it was the object of Paul and the other Apostles to make known. There is the same tendency in our own day. It is with heartfelt gratitude to God that we can declare with all sincerity our belief that in no portion of the church is the gospel set forth more fully and faithfully than in our own church. But it is sad to think in how many ways in our own and in other lands the gospel is marred, and Christ kept out of view, and the way of salvation through faith in Him lost sight of or only dimly and uncertainly indicated. In one quarter ordinances, and rites and ceremonies are dwelt upon to the exclusion of Him who alone is the way and the truth and the life. In another quarter, the grand fundamental doctrines of God's word, the necessity of an atonement, the propitiatory character of the death of Jesus, as well as his divinity are boldly denied, and the Bible itself treated as wholly or in a great measure a book of fables. By others we find the language of the word of God still used, the terms of orthodox theology employed, perhaps also the forms of sound words which have come down to us from our Fathers, not openly impugned, while after all the substance is rejected. The sign is retained while the thing signified is lost sight of. The basket is preserved as something venerable, while the precious jewels have been cast away or at any rate are undervalued and neglected. While we listen to or read the eloquent disquisitions in which some of this class indulge, are we not sometimes constrained to cry out "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Again, by others there may be no actual negation of the great truths of the gospel. Many things may be truly set forth in regard to Christ, while there is apparently little or no desire or aim to set forth Christ Himself, and to bring lost, helpless sinners into contact with a living, loving, all-powerful Saviour. They may be said to preach about Christ, rather than to preach Christ Himself.

In contrast with this, let it be our great desire and aim to preach Christ to sinners, and invite and plead with them to come to Him. To set Him within His character of Emmanuel, God with us, to preach Christ as the great Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church, as the ever-living and ever-loving Saviour, who is able to save unto the very uttermost all who come unto God by Him, whose blood still cleanseth from all sin, who to His people is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, who is, by His Spirit, ever present with His church and people, and will be with them even unto the end of the world, and who will at last appear the second time without sin unto salvation to gather His redeemed ones unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also. It is not of course meant that the same round of doctrines, the same circle of truths should be, Sabbath after Sabbath, set forth that there should be no variety in the provision made for the flock. The well-structured scribe will find, and will bring forth out of the treasury of the word, things new and old. But the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, the great facts of the Christian system, the sin and guilt of men, the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, His power and willingness to save, should, in some connection or other be brought forward in every address to sinful men. An eminently useful minister of the gospel lately called to his rest, says: "When I reflect that scarcely a Sabbath passes, in which there are not in the house of God one or more who are there for the last time, and hearing for the last time the announcement of God's purposes to men, I do feel that there is not a Sabbath in which it does not become the ministers of Christ to speak to sinners of Christ's salvation. They are not, indeed, to use always the same language or to have recourse perpetually to the same arguments and illustrations, but still the same great truth must substantially be pressed upon the notice of mankind—that it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners." Other kinds of preaching may entertain the fancy, may flatter the self-love, may even stimulate and improve the intellects of the hearers. But it is the preaching of Christ which is in ac-

cordance with the truth of God's Word, which glorifies the Saviour, and which, through the application of the Spirit, proves effectual for the salvation of sinners. It is thus which, by the blessing of the Spirit, is really the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation.

2. If we have the spirit and the mind of the apostle, we shall rejoice when the gospel is preached not only in connection with our own Church, but to others. We do not defend divisions in the Church of Christ upon earth. But all who truly believe in the Saviour, and who heartily love Him, are really one in Christ, and one body in Him. They are all branches in the one living vine. There is thus real union among Christians—unity which is not affected by outward differences.

We state this emphatically, because there is a tendency to think and speak of external union as identical with, or necessarily involving real Christian unity. But we have only to look at the state of some of the churches around us, to see that there may be outward union without any real unity, either of doctrine, or of feeling and affection. Still it would be delightful to have outward and visible union among those who are followers of the same Lord. While we believe these outward separations have in many cases been over-ruled for good, and that the present state of the Church, divided into different sections, is not an unmixed evil, still we do rejoice in looking forward to a time when even outwardly God's people shall be one. But that state of things has not yet come, and as yet we have different sections of the Church, separated in some respects from each other, but all working for the advancement of the glory of the Kingdom, and the promotion of the glory of their common Master and head. Now, we say that we may learn from the example of Paul to rejoice, not only when Christ is preached, and His work is done by ourselves, but also when this is accomplished by others. The harvest field is wide, and there is room for many bands of reapers. The enemies of the Lord, and of His truth are many as well as lively, and in the battle field many different hosts, or rather many different battalions of the same host may be engaged, without encountering each other. If only the work is done—if only, in the work in which we are engaged, strongholds are taken—if only in the Lord's precious field, the wheat is gathered unto the garner, we may rejoice, with no feeling of jealousy, and with no mutual provocation except of love and good works.

It is scarcely necessary to say that it is only when Christ is preached, when the grand fundamental truths of the gospel are held and set forth that we can rejoice. If these are compromised, if the truth as it is in Jesus is not set forth, it would be spiritually unprofitable to rejoice. The beloved disciple, with all his love and charity, could not say God speed to those who did not abide in the doctrine of Christ. Differences on subordinate points there may be, for, while all truth is important, all truth is not equally important. But Christian charity can only rejoice in the truth. It was only when Christ was preached that Paul could say, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. But when the doctrines of grace are set forth, when the glorious gospel of the blessed God is proclaimed, when Christ is preached, although by those who do not belong to our section of the Church, or who do not recognize the same order, if we are like-minded with Paul, we shall rejoice, believing that, by whomsoever sown, the good seed shall yet yield fruit.

3. We may say too that the more we have of the spirit of the apostle, the more shall we rejoice on account of any special progress in the Lord's word, any special revival of religion, wheresoever the same may take place, and by whatever agents. When the Church in Jerusalem had heard of the good work in Antioch, they sent forth Barnabas that he might go and see how the work really prospered. When he had reached the place and had seen the grace of God he was glad and did what he could to help on the good work. It is our privilege at the present day to hear from various quarters, some more remote, and some more near at hand, of gracious outpourings of the Spirit, of awakenings more or less extensive, and if we have such interest in the Lord's work as Paul had, we shall rejoice, nor shall we be too ready to condemn any thing out of the way of the ordinary routine of means. It is true God is not the God of confusion, but of order. We are not to undervalue the ordinary means of grace, nor do anything that might tend to lead people to undervalue them. But if Christ is indeed preached, if sinners are aroused, if souls are saved, if Christians are quickened and benefited, we shall rejoice even although means and agencies may have been employed beyond those used at ordinary times, provided that they are Scriptural. At times when copious showers fall, the waters may not only fall, and perhaps alter a little the lower channels, but in some cases, may open new channels in addition to the old, which sufficed in ordinary times. So in times of religious revival, spiritual life may be developed in new modes, and the energies of new-born souls flow out into new channels. But if the work is really of God, we should rejoice that Christ is set forth, and that souls are saved.

4. We may make a closer application of these words, and gather lessons of a more personal kind. It may be that one minister or one labourer in the gospel vineyard is much more successful in his work than another. One may be called to occupy a prominent and important position, while another labours on in obscurity. One may have crowds waiting on his ministry, while that of another attracts but few. One may receive applause and admiration, while another is barely tolerated. One may be privileged to gather in a good harvest, while another appears to have but few sheaves as the fruit of his labour. Or again, the servant of Christ, who has laboured long and successfully in his Master's cause, as his vigour decreases and his strength abates, may see others gradually stepping into the position he has occupied, and gaining the influence which he has wielded. In all such cases, if we have the spirit of Paul, and the mind that was in Christ, we shall not murmur, or fret, or repine; but, subordinating self to the glory of the Master and

the advancement of His cause; rejoice, if only his work is done, and his honour is promoted, and souls are brought to the knowledge of his salvation. We do not mean that we are to have no longings of soul for extensive usefulness, that we are coldly to acquiesce in want of success in the great work of the Gospel ministry. How earnestly did Paul long for the salvation of souls; how did he wrestle in prayer, and travail in birth till Christ should be formed in those to whom he preached. But it should not be for our own credit a glory that we should be ambitious of success. We should have no jealousy of others whose success may be greater than our own. If we ourselves are influenced by true love and devotedness to the Saviour, and are really seeking to advance His cause, we may rest assured that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. "In due time we shall reap if we faint not." Let us make the glory of the Redeemer our great aim, and then we may safely leave all results in His hand; and if our position should be an inferior one, if even we ourselves be as nothing, let us still rejoice if He is exalted, and His work is done and His Kingdom extended. You remember the spirit and the words of our Lord's forerunner "This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." Some of you no doubt have read in the life of that eminent minister, Mr. James Durham, who lived in the 17th century, an incident which illustrates the point which we have been noticing. On a certain day he and Mr. Andrew Gray, a brother minister, a young man at the time, were walking together on their way to their respective Churches. Mr. Durham seeing many thronging into the Church in which Mr. Gray was to preach, and but here and there one dropping into the Church where he himself was to preach, said to Mr. Gray, "Brother, I perceive you are like to have a thronged Church to-day." To this remark Mr. Gray replied "truly, they are fools to leave you and come to me." "Not so dear Brother" said Mr. Durham, "for a minister can receive no such honour and success in his ministry, except it be given him from heaven. I rejoice that Christ is preached and that His Kingdom and interests are gaining ground, and that His honour and esteem doth increase, though my esteem in people's hearts should decrease and be diminished, for I am content to be anything, so that Christ may be all in all."

5. In the case before us the Apostle refers to some who were preaching Christ from no pure motives, from no Christian spirit, but in a spirit of contention and envy, and with a view to vex or injure himself. Even in this case he rejoiced that Christ was preached. It is possible for us to conceive of a similar thing being done, although we should always be slow to judge of the motives of men, even if their actions seem to speak pretty plainly. But if we should even be placed in circumstances all similar to those of the Apostle, we should still, like him, rejoice if Christ is really preached if the truth is set forth. We may grieve at the spirit indicated, as no doubt Paul did, while he rejoiced at the work done, God's grace is omnipotent and sovereign, and can work by very unlikely means. He can and he may bless the word preached by one who is not influenced by the truth itself. As an old writer says,—some times the traveller ready to perish has been guided to the fountain by the cry of some foul beast of prey, and souls may be brought to Christ by the truth spoken by one who does not himself know the Saviour. But although this may be the sovereignty of God's grace, it is not His usual way of working. Paul while he rejoiced when Christ was preached even by these men, did not regard the state of mind of the preacher as an unimportant thing. He appeals again and again saying to his own sincerity of heart and his own consistency of life, and from many passages in the Word of God we learn the necessity of the preacher realizing in his own soul the truth and power of the Gospel which he preached to others, so that he shall be enabled to speak that which he knows and testify that which he himself hath experienced. It is from the fullness of our hearts that we are to speak, and not merely as if we were repeating a lesson or going through a task. We shall generally find that there is a correspondence between the state of mind of the preacher and the effect of his preaching "so we preach and so ye believe." It is when the truth comes from the deep convictions and experiences of our own hearts, that it is, by the blessing of God, most likely to come home to the hearts of the hearers. It is when we ourselves are feeding on the hidden manna that we are most likely to be owned and blessed of God in feeding the flock committed to our care. Let us then look well to our own hearts, let us seek to have our souls fed from day to day if we would feed others. When we read the word of God, let us not be all the time thinking what we may get to say to others, but seek first of all to have it brought home to ourselves. When we shake the precious fruit from the tree, let it not be merely that others may catch it up; but let us see that it fall especially into our own lap that we may eat it and find it to be the joy and rejoicing of our hearts.

Friends and brethren there are lessons for you too, there is instruction for you here also. If the great work of ministers to preach Christ, then he is to you all in all. The knowledge of Christ is the one thing needful. The end of a Gospel ministry, the great thing to be aimed at in sermons is not to entertain, or gratify, or flatter you, not to amuse you, or even to give you an intellectual treat. It is that Christ may be found in you, it is that you be reconciled unto God. Be not impatient under the preaching of the Gospel. Turn not away from the preaching of Christ as from a hackneyed subject. If you have not embraced Him, receive Him now as your Saviour, your all in all. If you have received Him, seek to live as living Epistles of Christ, showing forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into light. And may the Lord grant that whatever be our position in the Church we may be all working for Jesus, living not unto ourselves but unto Him, and rejoicing in seeing His Kingdom advancing, and in looking forward to the time when He shall reign from sea to sea and from shore to shore. Amen.