

men equally worthy to be mentioned with those whose names we should record. And let it not be forgotten that many of the *Elders* in the Council were not less eminent than the *Ministers*. We refer not to the fact that four noblemen were found among these *Elders*, but rather to the eminent talents consecrated to the cause of Christ, the magnificent liberality and the fervent piety which undeniably shone forth in many of the lay members of the Council. Most edifying were the prayers and the addresses—especially on topics closely related to personal religion and the service of Christ—uttered by these *Elders*. The voice of some of these men had been heard with consideration in the Imperial Parliament, but they evidently deemed themselves more honoured in confessing with their brethren, touching those matters that “concern the King.”

The spirit of the Council was truly Catholic; whilst, as might be expected, and as was certainly proper, a good degree of prominence was given to the principles which distinguish the Reformed Churches. But so kind and courteous was the tone of discussion, that the three or four Lutherans who, for special reasons, had been invited to be present, seemed quite at home. Take the meetings indeed from first to last, and we cannot conceive that they should not have been relished by any Evangelical Christian who should have been present. The spirit of love was breathed over the proceedings with hardly an exception.

In times when so many doctrines received by the Church of Christ are being called in question—times of theological eagerness and unsettlement—times when the hearts of many are failing them with fear—it was most reassuring to find a great assembly, so truly representative of the Presbyterian Church, express with one voice its belief in the great doctrines which have ever characterized the Reformed Church. It might be too much to say that had close theological discussion been held, no variations of opinion would have emerged (this were not to be expected); but no one could fail to see that the heart of the Presbyterian Church was sound on the great truths proclaimed by the Reformers when they went forth to rouse the nations of Christendom from the sleep into which the sorceries of Rome had cast them. No one was heard to suggest that the advance of biblical scholarship, or the exigencies of modern apologetics, rendered it necessary to reconsider the doctrines of justification by Faith alone, of the expiatory nature of Christ's death, or of the victorious efficacy of Divine Grace.

The ascertaining of this essential unity of Faith, along with the generating and strengthening of holy affection in the fellowship enjoyed, have done not a little, we may be assured, towards removing the obstacles which still hinder incorporating union. When the servants of Christ feel that they are really one—when they discern that their methods of work as well as their aim and spirit are almost identical—they begin to doubt whether this real oneness should not have complete outward manifestation.

But, it may be asked, what practical fruit has the Council borne? Or what fruit may it be expected to bear? Well, surely, if it has promoted fellowship and inspired mutual confidence among the Presbyterian Churches, it has borne fruit of great value. If it has quickened zeal in the cause of truth and of Christ, it has not been held in vain. What results, indeed, would we place before these? What greater service could be rendered to the Church in the present day? But not to speak of other results which no one would refuse to call practical, the action of the Council towards securing unity of plan and co-operation in Foreign Missionary work and mission work on the continent of Europe, is of the highest importance. But the Council was wisely careful not to trench upon the province of the several Churches represented, nor to interfere with their administration. It had of course no authority to do so, nor did it wish to have this authority. It never dreamed of questioning the complete autonomy of these several Churches. Whether in the providence of God, the Council may eventually come to occupy a closer organic relation to the Presbyterian Churches as a whole, being invested by common consent with some measure of the power of an Ecumenical General Assembly, is a question which we need not here discuss. In the meantime let us gratefully acknowledge the divine goodness in permitting this first Council to meet, to enjoy much precious fellowship, to concert measures for the furtherance of interests vital to the Church of Christ, and to separate with feelings of brotherly love and mutual respect and esteem very perceptibly strengthened.

The next meeting of the Council to be held in Philadelphia, in September, 1880, will be looked forward to with much interest, and, we are sure, much prayer by the Presbyterian Churches—numbering not less than forty-nine—that took part in the proceedings of the Council in Edinburgh, or signified their desire to be regarded as included in the great alliance. W. CAVEN.