

Engraved by Samuel Sartain, Phil^a

Alfred Young

REPRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLETSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA FROM A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL ENGRAVING IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLETSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

262-7
P93.5

THE PULPIT

AND INTELLIGENCER OF THE

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

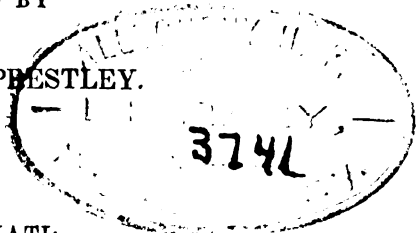
OF THE FIVE SYNODS.

AND

DENOMINATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.



CINCINNATI:

PRINTED BY LONGLEY BROTHERS,

NO. 169½ WALNUT STREET.

1854.

CLOSING ADDRESS;*

AT THE MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF STEUBENVILLE.

MARCH 7, 1855.

BY REV. ALEXANDER YOUNG.

Pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, St. Clairsville, O.

Fathers and brethren—In meetings of our Presbytery we have often come together, with feelings of pleasure, to attend to the interests of the congregations intrusted to our care, and in adjourning, we have looked forward with satisfaction to the hope of meeting again for similar objects. Our parting *to-day* is connected with very different feelings. About to form other presbyterial organizations and to meet no more in an associated capacity as we have been used to meet, the present exercise has been assigned to me as the last official act of our existing organization. If we were about to part from our friends for a season, and to enter upon a sphere of duty in new relations, we would naturally wish to leave no unexplained circumstance of an uncomfortable character behind: and our thoughts would reach forward to our field of future action considering the means of success—and this course may be useful to us as members of a presbytery on the present occasion.

It has been our privilege to have a connection with this presbytery for a period of nearly thirteen years. In the great variety of business transacted in that time we have had many important interests before us for consideration, and we have differed in opinion respectively in many of them; yet,

few bodies consisting of so many members could be found characterized by so little that has been improper in feeling.

There are few things connected with the meetings of a presbytery that are more unseemly in the estimation of the members of the church and of the world, than difference of opinion among members. But if the difference be accompanied with a christian spirit, what is there unbecoming in it? Perfection of judgement does not belong to man; and in every deliberative assembly we must expect difference of opinion, and in such assemblies we ought to express our views freely. In the first council held under the New Testament organization of the church there was no decision of the question until there had been "much disputing;" and generally, those measures which are approved after the most ample discussion are the most heartily adopted in the practice of the church.

The highest degree of piety does not free its possessor from liability to advocate or to embrace very inexpedient measures. The piety of Barnabas cannot be questioned. "He was a good man and full of faith and the Holy Ghost," yet a difference of opinion arose between him and Paul on a question of expediency, and the contest was so sharp that they departed asunder, the one from the other. Doubtless there must have been strong reasons in the view of both parties to lead them to the course they followed. Perhaps relative affection had too strong an influence over the mind of this good man, and led him to a course in favor of his nephew which he would not have approved in the case of another person similarly situated.

We see the necessity of a straight forward expression of opinion in the case of the Apostle Peter at Antioch. For a time, in that city, his christian intercourse, both with Jewish and Gentile converts to christianity, was conducted upon principles that would lead to the conclusion that he discarded the idea of Jewish superiority of privilege. "But when certain came from James he withdrew and seperated himself,—fearing them of the circumcision." Here was a case in

which a mistaken opinion of the Jewish convert, countenanced by the apostle's habits of intercourse, was likely to do great injury. Even Barnabas, who had been specially set apart to minister to the gentiles, was so far influenced by Peter's course, as to be forgetful of the equality of privilege enjoyed by the Gentile, and his freedom from many of the observances of the Old Testament dispensation. The apostle Paul saw the dangerous consequences resulting from such a course; and publicly called attention to its inconsistency. It was, doubtless, a very painful thing for Paul to separate from the beloved Barnabas with whom "he had hazarded his life for the cause of the Lord Jesus," and just as painful a thing, publicly, to stand up as an accuser of Peter's want of decision; but the emergency required the duty, and Paul's christian faithfulness fulfilled it.

When the word of God furnishes us with examples so eminent as these standing in need of admonition, we are prepared to expect the probability of such occurrences in the experience of the church, and when we find the grace of God furnishing a faithful adviser in Paul, we may expect that his grace will raise up men like-minded and bless the church with the results of their self-denying faithfulness for the preservation of the truth—and as Paul's zeal for the truth flowed from a pure motive, we may expect the blessing of God to rest upon all such occurrences—and every brother who has been the subject of fraternal admonition will feel towards the admonishing brother as Peter felt towards his "*beloved brother Paul.*"

Another point deserving consideration by all who think the proceedings of the presbytery are sometimes marked by too much feeling is—the *constitutional peculiarities of its members.* There is a great diversity in the natural temperament of men and that diversity is often further modified by men's habits of thought and action. It should be remembered, too, that grace does not eradicate these peculiarities of temperament; it only gives them direction and supplies them with proper motives and aims. Hence, we often find a man who

really desires the success of some important measure, advocate it with apparently little earnestness: while another, no more earnestly desirous of its success, will plead for it with all his energy. Some men are bland and conciliating in manner; others are blunt, bold and earnest. Uniformity does not mark the works of God in the inanimate creation. There is diversity also of intellect, and diversity of manifestation of the work of grace. Among the disciples of Christ we have the mildness of John and the ardor of Peter. Among the Reformers we have the calm Melancthon and the bold and impetuous Luther. The head of the church has given to every man severally as he will. "He has work for every variety of temperament and they are all required for efficiency, and harmoniously uniting—and lovingly diffusing—each, supplies some element of usefulness which another lacks. Those who regard the proceedings of a presbytery with a critical eye or a censorious spirit, should remember these things, and so long as the world lieth in wickedness and zeal is needed to carry forward any enterprise for the extension and establishment of the kingdom of Christ; there will be much forgiven that earnestness of christian zeal which leads a man to advocate measures whose wisdom may be questioned by the cautious and discriminating. The members of presbytery—the living "and the dead—have their various temperaments" and in separating—if we have the feeling that we have exercised christian faithfulness towards each other's defects, we have only love one towards another and a disposition to rejoice in all that God hath wrought in us and done by us.

About to be organized into new presbyteries—you will bear with a suggestion. It usually happens in deliberative assemblies that the management of a large share of the business falls to the direction of a few members. In presbyteries this is almost an unavoidable circumstance. Some men have had a training in institutions connected with the studies preparatory to the ministry that leads them to feel a greater interest in presbyterial business than others: and some men have a greater satisfaction in such matters than others. A

long connection with a presbytery, and an interest felt in the welfare of vacancies and congregational concerns, necessarily gives a man prominence in his presbytery; and he may, through such circumstances be made to appear ambitious of display, while he is only discharging an unavoidable duty in a spirit very different from that of Diotrephes. The duties of a presbyter are very important; and every minister should feel conscientiously bound to become acquainted with presbyterial business, and to attend to it faithfully. If we have any matter affecting the interests of our own charge, how anxious are we to have it properly arranged! When a matter affecting the usefulness of brethren, or the welfare of a congregation comes before us, should we not patiently and calmly attend to it? Can we expect good results without care and attention? or ability without cultivation? A minister is just as much bound to cultivate a talent for usefulness as a member of a presbytery, as he is to strive for usefulness in preaching the gospel. Dr. Chalmers at one period of his life, cared little for his duties as a preacher of the word, and usually felt little concern in the proceedings of his presbytery. On one occasion, however, when a matter of interest to him was expected to come up for consideration, he prepared with care to advocate the cause. Losing his cause through ignorance of presbyterial forms, he resolved to give greater attention to this department of a minister's business. Influential as his powers of oratory made him afterwards, who can suppose that Chalmers the *preacher* would have accomplished for the church what he achieved, when he added to that influence his power as a presbyter. Every subject of importance laid over from one meeting to another, and every item of new business likely to be introduced, should be thoughtfully considered before the meeting, not for the purpose of prejudicing a cause, but for the purpose of gaining information and having it brought up in regular order, and properly decided. We should then be ready to interchange views and come to harmonious and satisfactory conclusions.

Our work is one of incalculable value in all its agencies

and results. About to separate to meet no more as a pres-tery, how impressively are we all admonished in the language of Paul to the officers of the church at Ephesus, who grieved most of all, "*that they should see his face no more.*" What zeal, what self-denial, what sincerity of purpose should characterize our labors, that our rejoicing may be this: "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshy wisdom, but by the grace of God we have our conversation in the world." Along with this, let us bear in remembrance the admonition and encouragement of Peter—the elders which are among you I exhort—feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.