

"I hope that this statement will prove satisfactory."

This statement was considered by some as sufficient and satisfactory, and a motion was offered to accept it as such. By others, however, it was regarded as vague and even evasive, and one gentleman characterized it as "very clever," to which Mr. Macdonnell replied that "he was sorry to hear his statement characterized as clever. He had not deserved that. He wrote the statement without intending to make it clever. He had endeavoured to make an honest statement. He could have made a clever statement by saying that he adhered to the language of the Confession of Faith on the points under discussion. If the Presbytery required him to say he had got rid of difficulties on these points, the matter could be settled that evening, because he did not expect to get rid of such difficulties. He had been advised to make a more cautious statement, in all simplicity and honesty, by more than one friend. He had followed the dictates of his own heart and conscience in submitting the statement he had drawn up, because it let the Presbytery know what were his thoughts. If the statement was inconsistent, then his thoughts were inconsistent."

The non-contents, however, prevailed, and an amendment was moved by Prof. McLaren, and carried by a vote of 17 to 9, to appoint a Committee to confer with Mr. Macdonnell, and report upon his statement of views at a subsequent meeting.

The Report of that Committee was submitted to a special meeting of Presbytery on the 18th ult. The document is a lengthy one and dealt with three questions, viz:—1. Did Mr. Macdonnell's paper embody a statement of views which the Presbytery should accept as satisfactory? 2. If there is indicated in said paper a deviation from the received doctrine of the Church, is it of such a nature as can be tolerated in one holding the office of a Gospel minister? 3. What action should be taken by the Presbytery in the premises?

In regard to the first of these the Committee reported that "they cannot recommend the Presbytery to accept Mr. Macdonnell's statement as satisfactory" for several reasons, chiefly because Mr. Macdonnell "did not declare his adhesion to the doctrine of Future Punishment as taught in the Confession of Faith, in the well understood and historical meaning of its language," and because he did not properly define in what sense he understands the phrase "everlasting punishment."

Appended to the report they also submitted the following "Notes" by Mr. Macdonnell in explanation of his former statement:—

"1. I substitute the words, 'everlasting punishment,' or, rather, the Greek words in Matt. xxv, 46, for 'eternal torments,' because the former expression is in Scripture applied to the punishment of wicked men, and the latter is not. There is an obvious distinction between 'punishment' and 'torments.'"

"2. The word *aionion* may, of course, mean 'absolutely endless.' I do not deny that there is strong ground for assigning to it that meaning in the passage quoted. But it has often in Scripture a more limited signification, and if there is room for even a shadow of doubt as to whether the Saviour intended to teach that evil would be endless, there is room to 'hope,' however vaguely, that God may in some way put an end to sin and suffering."

Upon this section of the report an earnest and lengthened discussion arose. Mr. Macdonnell expressed himself as "immensely disappointed" at the character of the report. "He was disappointed for his own sake, and he thought he might honestly say for the Church's sake, as much as for his own. It seemed to him that while the Committee, acting, he had no doubt, with the fairest intentions, had given full weight—too full weight, in his judgment (but a man was never a fair judge in his own case)—to the doubt which he had expressed, and did express, concerning that word, and presented it in the most unfavourable light, there was not a word in the report about the declaration to which the Rev. Mr. Bain had called attention and which he thought a most important practical point, as it bore on the teaching—'I am satisfied that it is not a part of the message with which I am entrusted, as a minister of the Gospel, to hold out any hope of future