

## ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

### FIRST DAY.

The General Assembly met in Chalmers' Church, Quebec, on the evening of Wednesday, June 7th, at half-past 7 o'clock. The Moderator, the Rev. Michael Willis, D.D., LL.D., late Principal of Knox College, Toronto, after devotional exercises, preached the opening

### SERMON,

on Colossians I, 27, 28, 29:

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

"Wherunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

He said—These words bring impressively before us the great subject of the Gospel ministry or the object which it proposes; and, as exemplified by the Apostle here, the spirit of earnestness and conscientiousness befitting the sacred trust. We may profitably, in dependence on God's blessing, apply our minds to both these topics of meditation.

The subject. Who may not see that it is something of which the Apostle's mind was full; something for which, in the consciousness of having received it by revelation from God, he with authority claims the attention of men, and which, in the knowledge of its intrinsic value to all, he felt it incumbent on him to promulgate everywhere; uncompromisingly setting himself against all schemes of earthly wisdom by which the designs of Heaven might be hindered, or the light of revelation darkened—"who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church"—meaning of course no part of Christ's expiatory sufferings, but that by which the mystical body of Christ is perfected in sanctification, in following, or conforming to the Head—"whereof," he adds, "I am merely a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

We cannot acquiesce in the bald and meagre interpretation—as it appears to us—which has been put by some on the word "mystery," as if that word never in the New Testament meant what is above our comprehension, but only what has never before been revealed. A definition so general removes, as it seems to us, all emphasis from an expression evidently meant to be emphatic. Why, creation itself—the creation at least of all things out of nothing and by the word of God—might be called a mystery according to this definition, as really as the scheme of redemption. Why then so emphatically appropriated to the Gospel truth? True, in this passage before us, and in one or two more, the word stands in close connection with the subject of the extension of the Gospel among the Gentiles, which, in distinction from the more limited sphere of the Israelitish church, might be called a new development of the Divine purpose. "If ye have heard," says the Apostle to the Ephesians, "of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery." And again, "Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." These passages and one in the Epistle to the Romans, do, it must be acknowledged, connect the mystery closely with the fact of the introduction of the Gentiles