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That sermon of Rev. Dr. Lyle as retiring Moderator of the General Assembly, remarks the Hamilton Times, does not read like the deliverance of a minister who has retired from the active work of the pastorate. It was a splendid effort, and one which was well calculated to inspire to hopefulness and enthusiasm in the great work of the Church. It was a clarion call to duty and self-sacrifice, to effort for the good of mankind.

The general cult known as Unitarianism embraces a variety of types, and when a man gives reasons "why he is not a Unitarian," it may be that he belongs to one type of the genus, and is simply telling why he does not adhere to another species. The Channing variety of the article is, perhaps, the least objectionable of all the shades and types of the general school, but all along the line, from the Channing stamp down to the most offensive form of the general theory, the real divinity and eternal existence of Jesus is denied.

In the same week that Britain lost its king by death, it lost also the man who was almost unanimously regarded by Englishmen as the king of British preachers—the venerable Dr. Alexander McLaren. On this side the Atlantic Dr. McLaren was known only by his books, and less by his sermons than by his expository writings, but his decease will be lamented in this country almost as much as in his homeland. Particularly the comments on the International Bible lessons, which were printed weekly for years in *The Sunday School Times*, endeared him to thousands who never saw him. Dr. McLaren was 84 years of age and had been pastor of Union chapel, a Baptist congregation in Manchester, since 1853, though in the last two or three years he had not been in very active service.

The Christian of London, states that the English Methodists have suffered a loss in membership during the past church year of 2,267. The loss for four years has amounted to 9,869. No sufficient explanation of the somewhat surprising fact is offered. It is hinted that failure to adhere to the old doctrines and methods have much to do with it. The Christian makes this suggestive generalization in concluding its comments on the loss referred to:

Unhappily, too, the apathy, of which we hear so much nowadays, is by no means confined to the pew and to the man in the street; and the fact is being widely ignored that the men who have boldly proclaimed, in season and out of season the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the need of repentance before God, and of faith in the finished work of the living Christ, have always been instrumental in leading souls from death into life.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOTES.

This is the fourth time the Assembly has met in Halifax: 1877, 1888, 1900, 1910. Thirty-six years ago, in Montreal, the General Assembly was organized with Dr. John Cooke, of Quebec as first moderator. Since then the Church has wonderfully lengthened her cords and strengthened her stakes from east to west.

"A Chief" in the Halifax Chronicle furnishes the following pen-portraits of prominent officials:

The distinguished minister of St. Andrew's Kirk, Ottawa, has the ascetic face of a Newman. The tweed suit and the business collar are no novelties with him. The people of Bedford will remember his holiday garb, which was worn on Sunday in the pew of the cosy church, and on Monday when his boat rocked on the bosom of the Basin. Now he goes a-train in mufti. Dr. Herridge does not often favor the Assembly with his chastened and compact speech. It is whispered that he is to be sponsor at this assembly for a matter of particular interest to one of the Church's institutions. We venture the opinion that his speech will be one of the big things of the Assembly.

From Montreal comes Dr. Mowat, still in the fullness of his rugged strength. Does the minister of Erskine Church ever don the dark look and the lowering brow? Those who see him at Assembly see only the smile, and the tender light of one who loves his fellow men. We think he is capable of a mighty indignation when there is need for him to cry aloud and spare not; but as George Elliot says of one of her characters, "He does not bark at the moon at noon day." The kind heart that is more than a coronet, and the simple faith that dwarfs ancient lineage shines in his face and vibrates in his hand.

Prof. Robt. Laird, of Queen's University, is one of the most versatile of our Canadian philosophic theologians. He is not quite in the middle-weight class in point of age; but in the matter of equipment and achievement he is a heavyweight. He has the historical sense and perspective. He has the power to take an unbiased view and to see the context and what is involved. As minister at various important centres and as Agent General for Queen's Endowment Fund he has had exceptional opportunities for usefulness, and these were fully taken. He is an "Islander," and that good start is accountable for much.

An observer of the avoirdupois of the Assemblymen will find many who have the lean and hungry look of Cassius. These are in the ranks of the lay as well as the clerical members. But here and there is one whose length, breadth and depth of chest show the effects of oatmeal and the Shorter Catechism and work. Mr. Walter Paul, who comes from Montreal, is broad and very tall, and taken all in all, is one of the most useful members of the Assembly. He is a "Glesga" man by birth and by profession a provider of good things for the tables of the best homes in the big City of Montreal. As a mover of resolutions, or as a supporter of a cause on the floor of the Assembly he is second to none. Time was when he would mount to the platform with the agility of a boy. Now he would fain speak from his place in a pew, for the steps are "over high," and he is not as young as he was more than three score years past, and an eighth of a ton weight is a burden not easily ignored by the mind that moves it. May his shadow long continue at its present proportions.

There is a township in fine Ontario that has a reputation running up to the fame of Pictou County. In the matter of Presbyterian preacher productions. Zorra Township has given many men to the pulpit and the missionary compound and the professor's chair; but none of her gifts has excelled the one she has made to the Church in the person of Dr. R. P. Mackay. He is kind and gentle and wise with the canny prudence of the race he belongs to. Some men have a Provincial or Dominion notoriety. Dr. Mackay overruns small barriers and has taken all the world as his constituency. As Foreign Missionary Secretary of the Western Division his name is a household word. "From Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand" Two years ago he circled the globe on a tour of visitation and inspiring address to the men on the firing line of the missionary ranks of the Church. By the Presbyterian public Dr. Mackay is regarded as a sane and able administrator; by the smaller group of those who know his winsome personality he is held as a remarkable force acting in quiet ways on the life of the age.

The agent of the Church (Western Division) is the Clerk in extenso so far as height goes, and in executive capacity he is the medium through the year of the Assembly's expressed mind and expected necessities. For many years (and he is not an aged man yet) Rev. John Somerville, D.D., has been on the front bench in the Assembly and in the front rank of the workers. Augmentation and Home Missions have been his particular departments of activity; but his sympathies have compassed the whole budget of the Assembly for decades. So minute and exact was his interest in the Church's enterprises that unconsciously he was becoming fitted for the office he holds. It was an advantage of the first rank that his past had been what it was for the burden of the Agency in the Western Provinces rests safely on his shoulders. His genial humanness, his patient tolerance, and his sane judgment are invaluable assets to the Church. For a man of his tallness to "enter in at lowly doors" is far from easy; but he is as much at home in the smaller groups of Presbyterians as he is in the Assembly, and in all of them he is able to answer for decisions and to act nobly. His "hobby" is the writing of appeals to the rich people who need to know of the need of funds.

Here was the unequalled clerk of the Assembly with the tweed suit and the care-free air of the tourist. A man who cannot be hid, though, physically, he is not after the size of Saul. The eye of the famous clan survives in the well-poised, grizzled head of the venerable and revered clerk. What labors he performs as scribe of proceedings, as gubernator in perpetuo, as critic of ill considered movements, as conservator of the ties that bind Queen's University and the Church, as opponent of the proposal to abandon the path of Presbyterian principles and policy in the interests of Church Union. Full of nervous energy, capable of passionate and powerful speech, he is the bridge over which the legislative life of the Church steps on its continuous way. Two things he is sure to have in his bag—a book on procedure and a vasculum for plants. Ecclesiology and botany are his specialties, and his urbanity in the one and his enthusiasm in the other, and his erudition in both, put him in a place of splendid loneliness. The changes that come in the countenance of a man, have crept imperceptibly to him. He is gratefully regarded as a permanent, manifesting slight differences. He has carefully observed Ruskin's counsel, "When you speak let it be the truth; but don't always speak." The Clerk regards speech as something to be given in sparingly. He has no "boil down" speeches, and he knows that an ounce of argument is better than a ton of rhetoric.