

# The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHERN."

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## UNION NUMBER.

*The Gathering at Montreal.*

A SUCCESS IN EVERY WAY.

Progress All Along the Line.

### REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

Wednesday evening, June 9th, found the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec assembled in Montreal for its 1880 session. The weather was glorious, the very perfection of a June evening. Emmanuel Church—where the meetings were held—was beautifully adorned with choice flowers. Behind the pulpit was a conspicuous and seemly motto "Union is Strength."

A large congregation was present to hear the inaugural sermon. The Rev. J. F. Stevenson, D.D., the genial pastor of Emmanuel Church, opened the proceedings by reading the hymn beginning with

"O Spirit of the living God,  
In all thy plenitude of grace  
Where'er the foot of man hath trod  
Descend on our apostate race."

The Rev. A. Duff, D.D., of Sherbrooke, read psalm xc., and offered prayer.

#### THE OPENING SERMON

was by the Rev. H. D. Powis, of Toronto, from the words, "Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her king in her?" Jeremiah viii., 19. The discourse was carefully prepared and earnestly delivered. We can only present the leading thoughts advanced by the preacher.

He began by saying that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, is its king and law-giver. By His Spirit He is present in His church. He pleaded for simplicity in worship, and strongly deprecated the tendency to a gorguous ritual.

Imposing ceremonies, splendid sanctuaries, were not tokens of God's saving presence, for then the ancient Jews and Mohammedans, or the Catholic Church, would thus be far exalted over the pure, simple worship of Protestants. God is a Spirit, and the true worshipper must worship him in spirit and in truth. Jerusalem was only a synonym for Judaism, only a formula for ceremonial and symbolic services, such as in the temple of Solomon—the most gorgeous of any land or age, with its thousands of Levites and ministers, and solemn grand music and vast congregation of hundreds of thousands. But these were enjoined by God only under a dispensation that was typical, and which He withdrew in favour of a worship more simple and spiritual. Take St. Peter's at Rome. Bring in the Pope and all his Cardinals, priests and ministers and choirs, and the best music and pictures and gorgeous architecture which the very utmost of their treasure and superstition could obtain, and compared with Solomon's temple and services it would be a mere child's toy. That is past. It was like the veil over Moses' face. Then we saw darkly. It was only a state of bondage which is superseded. These dim ceremonies to which some still fondly cling were just like the figures of a magic lantern—shadowy, indistinct. If rites were to be emblems of truth we should go back to Judaism and reconstruct a system declared by God to be deceased and superseded, and if they were not practical and suggestive and symbolic—if only sensuous and impressive—the arrogance was insufferable which offered to God what was positively unmeaning, to amuse

his heavenly powers with the gauze and mimicries that children love. God dwelt not necessarily in temples made with hands.

Altars might be wreathed and the dim religious light might stream in through the stained windows, and pictures and music might enrich the worship, but He might not be there. The whole system of mere outward form and ceremony is an abomination to Him who knew no temple on earth but that which was made by His own enduring Spirit, and recognized no priest as men so understood, save One who had entered within the veil and obtained redemption for us by His own blood, the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world. Therefore we ought to correct that tendency, very natural at a certain age and with enthusiastic and sensitive minds, to think that God was honoured by a striking and ornate character of worship. Nor was the presence of God to be inferred from a strict adherence to creeds. He dwelt at length on this subject, shewing the importance of correct doctrine, as no Church could live above its accepted creed. He proceeded to shew, however, that a slavish adherence to creed tended to check religious growth. The Church to-day was not over-devoted to creeds, but was too indifferent to creeds. We must have a firm grip on some truth else morality will decline. The great want of the Church was a fuller proclamation of the grand old Gospel that Paul preached, and which is still the power of God unto salvation. He thought that perilous times had come, that the Churches of Christ were languishing, and as God cast off Israel of old, He might cast off His so-called people to-day and choose others to carry on His will. He urged ministers to a closer walk with God, and the membership to love and purity. The days to come may be yet fuller and fuller of blessing, for God would fulfil His promise and be present by His Spirit wherever His Word was faithfully preached and lovingly believed. In an eloquent conclusion he counselled adherence to the old-fashioned truths by which our fathers had lived and died.

After the sermon the following appointments were made:—

*Business Committee*—Rev. Dr. Jackson, convener; Revs. J. L. Forster, C. Duff, H. D. Powis, E. C. W. McColl, and J. Wood, and Messrs. H. Cox, James Smith, J. Lamb, H. Savage and J. W. McIntosh.

*Membership Committee*—Rev. Professor Fenwick, convener; Revs. R. K. Black, W. H. Claris, W. Day, Dr. Cornish, R. W. Wallace, J. B. Silcox, and Messrs. H. J. Clark, C. Whitlaw, F. McCallum, H. Sanders and J. McFarlane.

*Nomination Committee*—Rev. W. H. Allworth, convener; Revs. Dr. Duff, E. D. Silcox, G. Purkis, J. G. Sanderson, and Messrs. G. S. Climie, J. Pim, W. G. Pullen.

*Finance Committee*—Mr. G. S. Fenwick, convener; R. Thompson, Joseph Barber, C. Lawes, R. Robertson.

*Minute Secretaries*—Revs. H. Pedley and A. F. McGregor.

The following is a complete list of the ministers and delegates at the Union:—

MINISTERS: W. H. Allworth, R. K. Black, R. Brown, J. Burton, B.A., W. H. A. Claris, G. Cornish, LL.D., A. O. Cossar, W. J. Cuthbertson, B. W. Day, A. Duff, D.D., W. Ewing, B.A., K. M. Fenwick, J. L. Forster, S. T. Gibbs, M. S. Gray, W. Hay, W. H. Heu de Bourck, J. Howell, H. D. Hunter, S. N. Jackson, M.D., A. E. Kinmonth, J. L. Litch, R. Mackay, E. C. W. McColl, M.A., A. L. McFadyen, B.A., A. F. McGregor, B.A., D. McGregor, M.A., J. McKillican, J. F. Malcolm, H. Pedley, B.A., H. D. Powis, G.

Purkis, J. Salmon, B.A., J. G. Sanderson, B. B. Sherman, B.A., B.D., E. D. Silcox, W. W. Smith, J. B. Silcox, J. F. Stevenson, D.D., J. Unsworth, H. Wilkes, D.D., J. Wood, J. C. Wright, F. Wrigley, R. W. Wallace, M.A., B.D., Jas. Roy, M.A.; J. Fraser, of Vermont.

DELEGATES: J. Barber, Georgetown; A. Christie, H. J. Clark, J. Smith and J. Pim, of Toronto; H. Cox, Burford; G. S. Fenwick and B. W. Robertson, Kingston; S. Huxley, J. McKeand and E. Savage, Hamilton; C. H. Keays, W. McKillican, Vankleek Hill; J. Lamb, Ottawa; C. Lawes, Cobourg; G. Leet, Dunnville; J. Lyttle, Waterville; J. F. McCallum, Martintown; D. A. McEwen, Athol; J. McIntosh, Granby; Geo. Robertson, Cowansville, R. Robertson, T. Watt, Lanark; C. O. Swanson, Waterville; R. Thompson, Guelph; C. Wood, Melbourne; C. Whitlaw, Paris; H. Lyman, R. Macaulay, R. W. McLachlan, W. G. Pullan, T. Robertson, H. Sanders, Montreal.

#### THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 10TH.

The first hour of the day was spent in prayer. Rev. R. Mackay, led in the devotional exercises by reading the first chapter of the First Epistle of St. John. The hymn "I would commune with Thee, my God," was sung, and several engaged in prayer. Professor Fenwick in behalf of the churches extended a warm Christian welcome to the brethren, and hoped that the Union would be means of blessing to the churches of the city. He referred to the gracious revival at Inverness, where many children of the pioneers of the Church there had been joined to Christ—and the Church. The prayers of a godly member there had brought this shower of blessing on the Church. Mr. George Hague said he always received a blessing in attending the Union. He thought we were criticized now as never before. One of our first principles was purity of communion. The world is judging us by this standard. Let us remember the injunction "first pure then peaceable." We have been blessed in the past and may expect better days to come.

The Union was called to order, when the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, D.D., LL.D., delivered the annual address. The following is the address, which was listened to with deepest interest and frequent applause.

#### OUR PLACE AND FUNCTIONS IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND IN OUR COUNTRY.

Dear Brethren,—I desire to address you to-day on the place and functions of our Congregational churches in the Church of Christ and especially among the Churches of our own country. I shall do so with freedom and frankness, asking that the kindness which has placed me in this chair will extend itself to a generous interpretation of what I may desire to say, even though, as is likely enough, it may differ in some respects from the convictions of many among my brethren. It is not so much by argument that truth is elicited as by a quiet comparison of mind. It springs into visibility and assumes clear form and distinct outline while we are deliberately considering a subject in as many different aspects as are within our command. It is most undesirable, therefore, that we should all think alike. In thought, identity and negation are much the same thing. Exact similarity of thought is nearly, if not quite equivalent to no thought at all.

When I speak of our place in the Church of Christ I assume of course that the Church of Christ is larger than the Congregational denomination. No one will dispute that now. I do not know that there was ever a time at which it would have been denied. If there was we have passed beyond it, finally and forever. No man of ordinary sanity, at all events no such man out of the Church of Rome, supposes that his denomination is co-extensive with the whole body of the faithful. To think so would be to take a rustic, untravelled view of the Kingdom of God on earth. It would be to mistake the noises of our own little village for the murmur of the world. Experience has shewn that there is no very obvious tendency in any one denomination to swallow up the rest. They remain side by side without remarkable gain or loss relatively to each other and without any such clear differences in the purity or intensity of their spiritual life as to lead to the inference that one has fallen down from heaven and that all the rest are of the earth,