

course, on minor questions it is well enough known there are differences in the world, but the general note at the Council was that of confidence in the Bible's divine revelation. Then there was a good discussion on the authority and extent of Church creeds, the symbolical books of the different Churches. But if there were any topic that occupied above others the interest of the Council, I would say it was the question of missions, home and foreign. The extension of the Christian religion over the world seems to have taken a great hold of all the Churches in our time."

Canadian Church Union.

Dr. Caven was asked whether the proposed organic union of the Canadian Churches was discussed. "There were references," he replied, "to the proposed unions in both Australia and Canada, although the subject was not formally set down to be discussed. A good deal was said about the principles upon which Church union should proceed. The tendency was favorable to union, but, of course, the question as to the symbolical books and confessions is involved, and the Council is always very careful not to assume the prerogatives that belong to Church courts. The opinion of the members, however, was strongly favorable to union on a larger scale than we have yet seen."

A large deputation from the Free Churches of England addressed the Council, which subsequently expressed hearty endorsement of their position on the educational question. Dr. Caven explained that the Free Churches were not united in an organic sense, but that a sort of federal connection had been established between the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians of England to promote their own interests. The feeling in England over the education act is, Principal Caven remarked, tremendous, stronger almost than the press would lead one to believe, although it has spoken very freely. "Of course," said the doctor, "a great many of the preachers are refusing to pay school rates, but the Presbyterian Council, while expressing the opinion that the act was unwise and decidedly a grievance, took great care to say nothing upon that phase of the dispute."

Personnel of the Council.

Speaking of the personnel of the Council, Dr. Caven said that both the British and the American delegates were well representative of the several Churches. There was scarcely a country where Presbyterianism exists that was not represented; there were men from New Zealand and Australia, India and China. Considerable prominence had been given to the delegates from the small Churches in Europe—Waldensian, Belgian, French and Hungarian. Even in the heart of Russia there was a little Presbyterian community which had a delegate at the Council. Some of the continental delegates, such as Orellie and Gauthier, were known amongst theologians the world over, and they took considerable part in the discussions. It had been erroneously stated that the American representation was not very large; the Presbyterian Church of the United States sent fifty delegates, while Canada had eighteen or nineteen, only two or three less than they were entitled to.

Privy Council and Church Property.

"That is a very serious question in Scotland," said Dr. Caven, when asked concerning the Privy Council judgment in the case of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. "It involves some ten millions of dollars besides a lot of church buildings. It will not, however, have any effect, in my opinion, on the proposed organic church union in Canada, because here there is no established Church; the Church and State are entirely separate, and the law relating to Church property is different from what it is in Scotland. The Free Church of Scotland, in other words, the opponents of union, presented the argument that in the union a change had been made in the doctrinal belief of the Church, and in its relation to the confession of faith, and that no such change could be made without first obtaining the permission of the State. This led the law Lords to discuss points of doctrine in order to ascertain whether there had been any alteration. From the despatches in the Canadian papers I gather that the court has decided there was a change and has given to the minority all the property of the Church. It is a very sweeping decision. A similar question, that of the ownership of Church property, has frequently been before the Canadian and United States courts. For instance, a Church is divided into two sections and the question of property comes up. All that the courts here and across the line have done is to decide whether the Church court had come to

its decision constitutionally without in any way going into the merits of the agreement itself. The Church courts can make any change they like; a Presbyterian Church might turn Roman Catholic, to give an extreme supposition, so long as it is done constitutionally. If an agreement were arrived at by illegal process, the Canadian and United States courts would set it aside, but they would not begin to canvass the agreement itself. The Church and the State are so related in the old country that a State Church can do nothing without the permission of the State, and we that are not State Churchmen think that the House of Lords has been influenced by that condition of things."

Death of Rev. Alex. McKay.

Rev. Alex. McKay, M.A.D.D., who was called to his rest on Saturday at the age of 71, from 39 Hepburn street, Toronto, was born in Embro, Oxford county, Ontario, and brought up at the feet of the late Rev. Dr. McKenzie. He began to prepare for the ministry at the age of twelve years. In his early days he taught school, and after teaching for some time in the high school, Chatham, pursued his studies for seven years at Knox College and Toronto University. The study of Latin, Greek and Hebrew was a specialty among the subjects he devoted much attention to. He preached his first sermon in 1856. Graduating from Knox College in 1859 he was ordained and inducted as pastor of the Presbyterian church in Tiverton, 1860, where he labored faithfully and diligently until 1868. From there he was transferred to Knox church, Elmira, N.S., continuing there as pastor till 1873. He was then transferred to Duff's church East Puslinch, where he gained much success and continued as pastor till 1889, after which he was settled as pastor of Chalmers church, Durwich. Advancing years and weakness of voice are among the reasons assigned for his retirement.

He wrote and published several works and contributed many interesting articles for the papers. In his preaching he was evangelistic and a spiritual revival followed his labors. To hear him meant to love him, and he had no enemies. In his last illness, which continued over a year, he was kind, patient, affectionate and sympathetic.

British and Foreign.

The late Earl of Cork and Orrey left estates valued at £42,748.

Excellent reports continue to be received of the harvest prospects in Ireland.

An abnormal rainfall occurred in Glasgow on the 21st ult., six-tenths of an inch being recorded in a quarter of an hour. This has been equalled only twice in the last 24 years.

The chief procurator of Russia, in a report to the Tsar on the state of Russian religion, states that there are 66,780 churches in the empire. During the last year 833 new places of worship were consecrated.

In less than half-a-dozen years Harland & Wolff, Belfast, have earned the distinction of having four times in succession constructed the "biggest vessel afloat," with their Oceanic, Celtic, Cedric, and their latest and largest, the Baltic.

All new schools in Switzerland have a portion of the ground floor appropriated for baths. Each class bathes once a fortnight, summer and winter. Soap is used, and a warm bath is followed by a cooler one. Sick children and those having skin diseases are excluded.

The Rev. Dr. M'Murtre, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, speaking on the 22nd ult. at a bazaar in connection with Auchencrain Parish church, Kirkcudbrightshire, expressed the hope that co-operation with the United Free Church might result in a reunion. The old church, he said, would extend to them every bit of privilege and every bit of endowment they had.

Among other traits of its new civilization Tokio boasts an imperial public library, which is managed after the manner of the best institutions of the kind in Europe. But European taste in reading is reversed in Japan. Whereas fiction and imaginative writing finds most favor in the West, history, geography, biography, and travels are the favorites in Japan. In twenty-four days 10,228 works of these classes were taken out of the library, 9,768 of them printed in Japanese or Chinese. Theological works are just as little read in Japan as in the Western countries.

A German astronomer submits a new theory of the origin of the craters on the moon's surface in *Sirius*, the organ of German astronomers. Dr. Voigt comes to the conclusion that were the water covering them suddenly dried up, the ocean bed in tropical regions of our earth would show much similarity with the face of the moon. Coral formation would have exactly the appearance of the craters of extinct volcanoes, and Dr. Voigt, therefore, suggests that the greater part of the moon's "craters" are the work of the coral insects in long vanished lunar seas.

An Edinburgh contemporary prints the following under the appropriate heading "Not thinking Imperially"—On a July market day in a Dorset town a small crowd of farmers and their wives were reading the war lines in a contents bill of one of the local newspapers. An old lady, anxious to know the cause of their interest, questioned a bystander. "They're only reading the war news," he said. "Be there a war on, then?" was the next query. "Yes; the Japs is fighting the Russians." "Oh!" she exclaimed, with a long drawn sigh of deep thought, "well, they've got a fine day for it, anyhow."

A contemporary here pithily and truthfully says:—"A Venezuelan method of finance are beautiful in their simplicity. When the Government wants money it sells some valuable assets to a foreign company. After securing the cash it discovers some flaw in the contract and sets up a claim for forfeiture. The law courts patriotically complaisant to the Government, invariably decide against the foreigners, and the latter are dispossessed. This game has been played several times too often, and now that United States capitalists are in the same boat with those of Great Britain and Germany, the Venezuelans are in a fair way of being taught a lesson in commercial law and international obligation."

The visit of the Canadian bowlers to the Borders was looked forward to with keen interest by the bowlers of Galashiels. The Canadians, whatever place they have visited in Scotland, says the Border Advertiser, have received hearty welcome. Nowhere did they get a heartier or more genuine one than here where a real border reception was accorded them, and where they were made to feel at home in the Land of Scott. The drive through the classic district, their inspection of the "Romance in Stone and Lime," and their visit to the stately ruin of Melrose Abbey is one which would delight the hearts of any lovers of nature. Being made under the pleasantest of weather conditions the visitors enjoyed their outing to the full, and it will live in their memories for many years to come.

There has been something like a plague of mackerel in the sea at Isle of Man. The Manx fisherfolk were having an experience akin to their Galilean prototypes. Never within memory has Ramsey seen such huge shoals of mackerel. A fisherman's remark that they may be justified by the following:—One boat landed 870 fish. A net swung in Ramsey Harbour, where mackerel swarm up in black masses, landed 3000. Another boat caught 1500. Fleets of hookers had big draughts. Visitors in rowing boats captured scores. Men on the beach landed remarkable bags with the rod. The market was glutted, and mackerel sold at fourpence a dozen.

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