

## Ministers and Churches.

We find the following in the Embro *Planet* of last week: "We were favoured on Monday with a call from our old and highly respected friend, Rev. D. McKenzio, of Ingersoll, who, accompanied by his family, has been stopping in the neighbourhood for the past few days in order to attend the sacramental services in Knox Church. His many friends in Oxford and elsewhere will be pleased to learn that he is looking hearty and enjoying good health."

On Sabbath, the 25th ultimo, the anniversary services in connection with the Presbyterian Church in Dresden took place, and three sermons were preached by the Rev. Professor McLaren, of Knox College, Toronto, at the hours of 10.30 a.m., 8 and 7 o'clock p.m., respectively. His texts were, morning, Matthew 6th chap. and 10th, 20th, and 21st verses; afternoon, Acts 16th chap. and 14th and 15th verses, and also 25th verse to 31st verse, in which he contrasted the disposition of Lydia with that of the gaoler, showing that the Spirit of God worked upon different people according to their temperament; instancing that, therefore, some Christians were excitable in their religious manner, while others who were calm and collected, previously, carried the same disposition throughout their Christian life. Evening, Zechariah 12th chap. 9th to 14th verse. All his sermons were characterized by such ability and eloquence as to absolutely rivet the attention of his immense audiences—the church being absolutely crowded at all the diets. The collections on the plate amounted to \$39.16—very good for these hard times. On Monday evening the church was again crowded on the occasion of a strawberry festival given by the ladies of the congregation, and a lecture to be delivered by Professor McLaren. After full justice had been done to the seasonable provisions, the chair was taken and the lecturer introduced. His subject was, "Man and his dwelling place," and to say that he handled his subject well, is to speak meagerly of his lecture. There can be no doubt it is one of the ablest compositions in the language. It was listened to with great attention, and at the close drew down the plaudits of the large audience. The proceeds were large. Every one was delighted, and a programme of excellent music by the choir was highly appreciated. Dresden Presbyterian Church is growing rapidly, and the prospects of a good congregation in the future are very encouraging. Only nine months ago Mr. Alison went in amongst them and took hold of the church—his congregation then fluctuating from twelve to forty people; and now the church is nearly full at every diet of worship and sometimes crowded.

Professor McLaren expressed himself as highly gratified at the appearance of the congregation, and declared it to be far above his most sanguine anticipations when he accepted the invitation to preach the anniversary services. An excellent Sabbath School, formed about eight months ago, was also addressed by the Professor on Sabbath at two o'clock, and his remarks were listened to with evident interest and pleasure by the children. We feel very much encouraged in this western country to have a gentleman of Professor McLaren's standing and ability come so far to help us, and we are quite certain that his valuable services in this place will not for long be forgotten, and they will stimulate us to still greater activity and effort in the service of our common Master, Head, and Intercessor, Jesus Christ our Saviour, and God our Heavenly Father.

Those great doctrines which tell of His Redemption-work, as set forth in the history of the Church, in the promises of a Saviour's advent, the glorious atoning sacrifice which He would offer for the salvation of men; doctrines exhibited not only in the promises given from Eden downward, but also in the types and emblems by which that Redemption work was set forth before the Saviour came—then the great facts of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. And along with this, the way in which this Redemption is applied by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of men, and their opposition to God's claims is overcome, and they made willing to be saved by Christ, or to be infinitely indebted to the grace of God. Then also the precepts of the Gospel, or how faith works by love and obedience.

All this surely gives ample scope for the minister of the Gospel as a builder, together with God, in building on the foundation already laid in Zion, precious materials which accord with the character of the foundation—that is divinely revealed, evangelical truths—those who thus build shall receive a glorious reward.

2nd. What is meant by the wood, hay, stubble?

By these terms here is meant materials which cannot stand the fire, or test of Divine judgment, because not in accordance with the character of the foundation.

These were perishable materials, out of which ordinary houses were built, but not temples; wood for doors, posts, &c., hay or dried grass mixed with mud for walls, and straw for the roof. These materials—unsuitable for the Temple of God—are appropriate emblems of false doctrines. By wood, hay, stubble, is here meant teachings mixed with human philosophy and Judaism, curious and trifling speculations, instead of revealed truth.

In accordance with this interpretation the emblem evidently includes all vain unscriptural speculation about a future state, beyond what God has revealed in His Inspired Word. God has therein made the way of salvation very plain to us, and has declared in the plainest possible terms that there is no other way of salvation but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that, too, while in the world. (Acts iv. 12; 2nd Cor. vi. 2; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18, 36; Hebrews ii. 3; iii. 7, 19; x. 26, 31; Rev. xii. 11.)

The Lord Himself has spoken, and when He has done so, His poor finite creatures have no right either to question His Word or to speculate as to the propriety of it, or as to the possibility of that Word being set aside at some future period, however distant, or in some unrevealed way that we cannot comprehend. When God has plainly declared that now, and only now, is the day, or period, divinely appointed to obtain salvation, is it not presumption in the highest degree for any mere creature to doubt His Word, or to cherish a hope in the face of God's declaration that He will belie Himself at some future time? "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?" When God has spoken, that decides the matter; and any speculations in the face of His Word carries presumption in its very existence. The proper attitude of the creature is then to say, and that with deepest humility, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." I will be told, perhaps, that men are not responsible for their convictions, or their doubts and hopes, and the result of these.

It is evident from the Divine Word that God does hold all His creatures responsible for these very things. The whole history of man teems with proofs of this. God held the antediluvians responsible for their convictions and doubts respecting their own conduct, and the threatened flood which their wickedness was about to bring upon an ungodly world, and because

they did not repent at the preaching of Noah, the flood came and destroyed them all. And so all down through the history of the ancient world.

I have only time to refer to one special proof of this, in the judgment that came upon the Jewish people for their rejection of Jesus Christ, and their refusal to own Him as their long-promised Messiah. The Jews might well argue that they had very grave doubts as to his being the Messiah. He was not the kind of Messiah they expected or wanted. They fully believed that their Messiah would come in great glory as a mighty conquering hero-prince. And lo! this Jesus of Nazareth was like a root out of a dry ground, of obscure parentage, without learning, wealth or power, or any of the usual insignia of royalty. Yet, with all this, God held them responsible and poured out upon them, because of their rejection of Christ, the most awful judgments which any people ever endured on earth; and these, we have good reason to fear, were only emblems of far greater tokens of divine displeasure which awaits them individually in a future state. Why did not God admit the force, the reasonableness of their doubts and convictions in this matter? Because the Lord Himself had spoken, and made it plain in His Inspired Word that just such would be the character of the Messiah.

But they were so blinded by prejudice and self-interest, that they could not understand these predictions, but wanted a Messiah after their own hearts and to suit their own ends. The principle is just the same here. God declares in His Inspired Word that He has provided salvation for the fallen and guilty family of man. He offers that salvation freely to all and every one that will accept it, and He commands all to believe on Christ and receive Him as their Lord and Saviour, and He promises eternal life to those that do so, and threatens eternal death to those who do not believe in Christ, or rely on His atoning sacrifice, and trust in His Person, and power, and promised salvation. (John iii. 16; vi. 29; Acts xvi. 31; Rom. vi. 23; Mark xvi. 16.)

The loving and gracious Saviour, who came down from heaven to die for sinners in order to save them, solemnly declares respecting all who do not now believe on Him, and who are, therefore, unsaved at the great judgment day, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," just as the righteous, or His believing and redeemed people, shall enter into "everlasting life"; the one shall remain in a state as everlasting on the other. Now, though the Greek term here rendered "everlasting" is in certain connections used in a limited sense, yet, wherever it is applied to the future state of the saved or lost, it means forever and ever—that is endless happiness or endless woe. When applied to period, it always denotes to the end of that dispensation or period. Now, if the promise of that Aaronic priesthood shall be everlasting, it plainly denotes to the end of Mosaic economy or Levitical dispensation. So also when applied to the future state of mankind, that is to eternity, the term everlasting or forever and ever plainly means to the end of eternity, or endless duration. The term (eternity) everlasting, is applied fifty-five times in relation to the future state of the righteous, which all hold to denote eternal; and what right has any man to change its meaning with reference to the unsaved? If those who believe in Christ are saved with an endless salvation, those who are not saved now are plainly lost with an everlasting condemnation and misery. This is the plain import of many passages of the Word, but we will only hear two witnesses, by whose plain testimony this should be placed beyond dispute. In Rom. vi. 23 Paul affirms, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here death and life are placed in contrast, the one evidently commensurate in duration with the other, and they are so placed as the direct results of unbelief and faith.

The same principles are clearly set forth in 2 Thess. i. 7-10, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven . . . taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." Here the everlasting nature of the punishment of the unbeliever is very plainly set forth. What is the everlasting destruction here threatened? Our Lord in Mark ix. 43-48, makes that very plain, where He again and again solemnly and lovingly warns all the disobedient who continue impenitent and unsaved, that at death and judgment they shall "go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Whether there be material fire or the fire of their own guilty and accusing conscience under the direct frown of a Holy and just God, matters not as to the principle involved—which is the endless duration of awful and conscious suffering. This idea is also corroborated by the language of the loving John in Revelation, where he says of the lost in the place of woe, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."

But the doctrine of the endless punishment of the unsaved does not depend on the meaning of any term, but its import ever so plain. The doctrine itself is interwoven with the very warp and woof of divine revelation. It is necessarily implied in the doctrine of the atonement and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He endured infinite suffering in order that He might save His people from their sins. And His Divine Word declares that none can be saved in any other way. If men can be saved at length, through any amount of personal suffering, would God have given up to death His own eternal and well-beloved Son to save us? And would the Lord of Glory have endured the awful agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary unless to deliver us from going to the pit where there is no escape? In the presence of the fearful anguish endured by the Holy One of God, I see the strongest proof of the fearful and endless suffering of the lost in hell.

This doctrine of the endless nature of future punishment is implied in the whole teaching of Divine Providence with mankind, and in the many solemn and earnest pleadings of God Himself with men, not to rush upon such fearful and irretrievable ruin (Ezek. xxi. 11). It is especially plainly and awfully set forth in the many solemn warnings of the loving Saviour Himself. Let the reader carefully ponder such passages as these, Matt. vii. 13, 14, 21; xix. 10-24; xiii. 36-43; xiv. 21-29; xxv. 41-46; Mark iii. 28-30; ix. 43-49; Luke xiv. 16-24; xvi. 19-26; John iii. 8-30; vii. 21; see also 2 Cor. v. 10; Heb. x. 31; Jude 23; Rev. xx. 11; xxi. 8; xxi. 11-15.) The compassionate Saviour who died for us here declares that those who reject the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and do not receive Him as their Saviour, have never forgiveness, that they are cast into an everlasting fire or a state of everlasting woe, from which there is no deliverance. Yea, mark this warning as to the endless nature of that state, He says, "There is a great gulf fixed between heaven and hell," which can never be bridged over, for it is fixed in the eternal decree of Him who is holy in all His ways, and righteous in all His dispensations. This doctrine of the endless duration of the future punishment of all not saved by an interest in Christ, is most evidently a part of the foundation laid in Zion, with which salvation is connected. It is certainly fundamental, if any doctrine of Scripture is such, for it is bound up with the work of Christ, and is ever set forth as the alternative of not believing on Him or being saved by Him. It cannot be rejected or even doubted, but at the peril of any soul, for "if the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?"

When God has thus so plainly and fully decided the matter, what right has any man to doubt on the subject of the eternity of future punishment? If God had left it an open question, undecided by Him, it would have been a different matter, but since God has spoken, all doubts and reasonings are in their very nature sinful, (and, when set forth before men, are evidently the work of hay, and stubble here condemned), for they are doubts as to the wisdom, goodness, holiness, and truth of Jehovah.

When it comes to be a question between God's plain declarations in His Holy Word and the speculations of any man or class of men, I am constrained to say as a loyal subject to the Great King, "Let God be true though every man be a liar."

The opinions of men should have no weight whatever when put against God's plain statements. And as we have seen, this doctrine does not depend on verbal criticism as to the meaning of the word everlasting in certain relations. The doctrine itself is embodied in the very essence of the doctrine of the atonement, and in the whole teaching of the Holy Spirit respecting salvation through Christ. It is everywhere either plainly stated or implied in the very idea of salvation, for it is represented as so great a deliverance that it required an infinite price to procure it, and infinite power to apply it. Hence the question of the Apostle, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Hence, also, the startling language of Peter, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begins at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" If even the righteous are saved with difficulty or so as by fire, what shall the end be of the ungodly and of all unbelievers, but utter ruin? And equally startling is the language of Paul, "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Now the teacher of Christianity that dares to set forth any doubts or surmises in opposition to all this, is evidently building that which will be burned up or destroyed, because it cannot stand the touchstone by which all doctrines and actions will be tried at the great day. Christ declares that by His work, or by the work or doctrines which the apostles, as accredited by Him, set forth, all will be tried. And the Holy Spirit directs to judge doctrines and men by this standard of appeal, "To the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in them." Now God has decided this matter in His Word, and there is no truth in anything apart from this, no foundation for it in Scripture, and therefore, there should be no countenance given to it in human speculations, and above all, in the teachings of the sanctuary, the teaching of the builders of the temple of God.

(To be Continued.)

Ecclesiastical Metamorphosis.

DR. MURCHMORE, IN THE *Philadelphia Presbyterian*.

The Presbyterian Church of Canada is now struggling from a lower into a higher organism. To this end, if not in pain, it is in a state of rather uncomfortable uneasiness. In order to attain this new form of life-activity, it had first to make itself larger, and this was done by the union of about all the elements that could be made to homologue. By one of those senseless acts of ecclesiastical suicide, too frequent on the pages of church history, the Church divided, at the disruption in Scotland, into the Established and Free Churches.

In Canada it became the Old and New Churches, and as there was no patronage in the case, it was nothing more than espousing the quarrel on the other side, and having a sham battle to convince their friends of their loyalty to the ways of fatherland. We mean this is the way it appears to a stranger, as he asks and hears the explanations at the end of a quarter of a century, when now they are at one again. We do not mean to convey the impression that the parties did not accomplish good in the interval of separation, for each wrought with great energy—as we of the States did during our unhappy division. But two

Churches claiming the same symbols, same history and parentage, can never get it out of the thoughts of the world around, which has no mind for subtle distinctions, that they are either bigoted or quarrelsome, or without true charity at least. Then they justify each other in their work, put antagonistic forces together, and build churches without reference to the best interests of the cause. We need not enumerate the points of petty mischief; none know them better than we.

But the greatest mischief in the Dominion was the loss of power in civil government. We do not mean that a Church should meddle in such matters. But governments are ordained of God, and she is bound to let her influence for good be felt, and her moral life diffuse itself, and her position as a power in the State be known in all moral movements affecting legislation. We understand that, in the aggregate, there were about as many true Presbyterians during the division as now. But they were treated with about the consideration due the largest branch of the divided Church, whereas now the Presbyterian Church is regarded in all her elements of strength, if not the first religious power in the Dominion, certainly not in any true sense the second.

Grace overgrew the wounds, and time had almost obliterated the scars in the hearts of those who were tired of a fence built by those long gone, and whose motives for building they could not understand; besides, the motives no longer existed, and the fence had so far rotted down that they could straddle it backward and forward into each other's churches, as Providence indicated. So they wisely determined, two years ago, to lift the old fence, and save what was sound, and burn the briars with the rest. This work was well begun in Montreal during the last assembly, (1875), and now in the present one, where we have the honor to be a delegate, it seems to us that that old fence-way is so well grown up that we could not have traced a rod of its course if it had not been pointed out by the fathers; and the flocks are crossing and recrossing and finding pasture, as unconcerned about the battle-grounds of their fathers as we are of the places of battle with the American Indians.

The Canadian Presbyterian Church, as now organized, is a grand one in its elements. The Old Kirk and the Free Kirk are now united. But having taken on such majestic proportions, their old ecclesiastical running gear will no longer suit them. This Assembly is only a big Synod, represented by ministers and elders as far as they chose to come. It is, therefore, a great body of five hundred members, run by the ecclesiastical rigging of a Presbytery. Everything is too tight, and there is a kind of smothered sensation all about.

Having taken on body and strength for their grand metamorphosis, how can they get rid of the old skin now all burst, and the old Synodical tail, that clings despite of all wriggling? It is easier to get ecclesiastically big than little, and they must reduce themselves into a representative body less than half as large as they now are as a Synodical organization. This is the problem. If they do not do it faster than we in the States, it will be a long struggle. It is very inconvenient and uncomfortable to be big, but it is a little more so to grow small through the Banting process. This is the only hope left for our Assembly, i.e., being unable to reduce themselves so long as there is so much farinaceous diet prepared by the cities entertaining, that the city people on whom they feed on such occasions, should either refuse to have so many, or if they must, give them neither bread, potatoes, corn-starch puddings, butter, nor molasses, substituting beef, dry toast, eggs, and compel them to run a couple of miles on double-quick, morning and evening, or tug with empty stomachs at the health-life. If this were practised a single year, we have not the slightest doubt that either Assembly might be reduced at least half of its size. For only a few skinny old doctors and lanky elders would come, who could live a fortnight on statistics and contention.

The Assembly chose unanimously for its Moderator, Dr. Topp, pastor of the most powerful church in Toronto for over seventeen years, who gave up his living in Scotland and went out in the Free Church exodus with Chalmers. He is a large, well-proportioned man of six feet in height, and as handsome as he is large. We did not hear him preach, but the responsible positions he has held so well proclaim the fact that his ministerial furniture throughout is first-class. He is the very impersonation of good nature, whose voice and smiles go into blandness, yet withal unusually firm, not so much in manner as in a well-poisedness which comes from the possession of good judgment and accurate knowledge. He stood before this stormy Assembly like a pilot in a squall holding the wheel. By his strict justice to each member, and through his imperturbability in their contentions, and the great respect the Assembly had for him, he kept the Church well in hand until the port was reached and the storm overpast. We have seen a good many Moderators, and a few at the wheel. We do not hesitate to say that, in what might have been a disastrous storm, had it not been watched and guided, Dr. Topp was a model Moderator.

We heard the Assembly only two days in the ordinary course of business. The Macdonnell case was the all-absorbing one, and the first strain put upon the union lately welded, and there seemed to be both fear and anxiety struggling in the hearts of all. Nobody could divine the mind of the Assembly, for they were a company of strangers, who knew little of each other's convictions on the subject. They were as strangely mixed in the house. One would find them in the same seats, approving the sentiments uttered by their speakers. We feel that this condition was a good one, for had they been arranged according to affinities, segregated party feeling might have risen higher than a squall, and ended in disaster.

We find that the Canadian Assembly grows on our hands, and must beg leave of our readers to speak of the moral and intellectual strength of this great Church, as it appeared in the discussion of the Macdonnell case, next week.

future punishment is implied in the whole teaching of Divine Providence with mankind, and in the many solemn and earnest pleadings of God Himself with men, not to rush upon such fearful and irretrievable ruin (Ezek. xxi. 11). It is especially plainly and awfully set forth in the many solemn warnings of the loving Saviour Himself. Let the reader carefully ponder such passages as these, Matt. vii. 13, 14, 21; xix. 10-24; xiii. 36-43; xiv. 21-29; xxv. 41-46; Mark iii. 28-30; ix. 43-49; Luke xiv. 16-24; xvi. 19-26; John iii. 8-30; vii. 21; see also 2 Cor. v. 10; Heb. x. 31; Jude 23; Rev. xx. 11; xxi. 8; xxi. 11-15.) The compassionate Saviour who died for us here declares that those who reject the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and do not receive Him as their Saviour, have never forgiveness, that they are cast into an everlasting fire or a state of everlasting woe, from which there is no deliverance. Yea, mark this warning as to the endless nature of that state, He says, "There is a great gulf fixed between heaven and hell," which can never be bridged over, for it is fixed in the eternal decree of Him who is holy in all His ways, and righteous in all His dispensations. This doctrine of the endless duration of the future punishment of all not saved by an interest in Christ, is most evidently a part of the foundation laid in Zion, with which salvation is connected. It is certainly fundamental, if any doctrine of Scripture is such, for it is bound up with the work of Christ, and is ever set forth as the alternative of not believing on Him or being saved by Him. It cannot be rejected or even doubted, but at the peril of any soul, for "if the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?"

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The Canadian Presbyterian Church, as now organized, is a grand one in its elements. The Old Kirk and the Free Kirk are now united. But having taken on such majestic proportions, their old ecclesiastical running gear will no longer suit them. This Assembly is only a big Synod, represented by ministers and elders as far as they chose to come. It is, therefore, a great body of five hundred members, run by the ecclesiastical rigging of a Presbytery. Everything is too tight, and there is a kind of smothered sensation all about.

Having taken on body and strength for their grand metamorphosis, how can they get rid of the old skin now all burst, and the old Synodical tail, that clings despite of all wriggling? It is easier to get ecclesiastically big than little, and they must reduce themselves into a representative body less than half as large as they now are as a Synodical organization. This is the problem. If they do not do it faster than we in the States, it will be a long struggle. It is very inconvenient and uncomfortable to be big, but it is a little more so to grow small through the Banting process. This is the only hope left for our Assembly, i.e., being unable to reduce themselves so long as there is so much farinaceous diet prepared by the cities entertaining, that the city people on whom they feed on such occasions, should either refuse to have so many, or if they must, give them neither bread, potatoes, corn-starch puddings, butter, nor molasses, substituting beef, dry toast, eggs, and compel them to run a couple of miles on double-quick, morning and evening, or tug with empty stomachs at the health-life. If this were practised a single year, we have not the slightest doubt that either Assembly might be reduced at least half of its size. For only a few skinny old doctors and lanky elders would come, who could live a fortnight on statistics and contention.

The Assembly chose unanimously for its Moderator, Dr. Topp, pastor of the most powerful church in Toronto for over seventeen years, who gave up his living in Scotland and went out in the Free Church exodus with Chalmers. He is a large, well-proportioned man of six feet in height, and as handsome as he is large. We did not hear him preach, but the responsible positions he has held so well proclaim the fact that his ministerial furniture throughout is first-class. He is the very impersonation of good nature, whose voice and smiles go into blandness, yet withal unusually firm, not so much in manner as in a well-poisedness which comes from the possession of good judgment and accurate knowledge. He stood before this stormy Assembly like a pilot in a squall holding the wheel. By his strict justice to each member, and through his imperturbability in their contentions, and the great respect the Assembly had for him, he kept the Church well in hand until the port was reached and the storm overpast. We have seen a good many Moderators, and a few at the wheel. We do not hesitate to say that, in what might have been a disastrous storm, had it not been watched and guided, Dr. Topp was a model Moderator.

We heard the Assembly only two days in the ordinary course of business. The Macdonnell case was the all-absorbing one, and the first strain put upon the union lately welded, and there seemed to be both fear and anxiety struggling in the hearts of all. Nobody could divine the mind of the Assembly, for they were a company of strangers, who knew little of each other's convictions on the subject. They were as strangely mixed in the house. One would find them in the same seats, approving the sentiments uttered by their speakers. We feel that this condition was a good one, for had they been arranged according to affinities, segregated party feeling might have risen higher than a squall, and ended in disaster.

We find that the Canadian Assembly grows on our hands, and must beg leave of our readers to speak of the moral and intellectual strength of this great Church, as it appeared in the discussion of the Macdonnell case, next week.

M.