

PRESBYTERIANISM DURING THE LAST FIFTY YEARS IN NOVA SCOTIA.

ADDRESS BY REV. JOHN McMILLAN, B. D. AT
DR. MCCULLOCH'S JUBILEE.

Fifty years ago there were four separate Presbyterian bodies in the Maritime Provinces, viz., the Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia, the Synod of Nova Scotia in connection with the church of Scotland; the Presbytery of New Brunswick in connection with the church of Scotland, and the Reformed Presbytery of N. B. and N. S. There were in all about 60 ministers.

Belcher's Almanac for 1839 gives a list of the ministers in connection with the first two bodies I have mentioned. There were 24 in connection with the first, and 22 with the second—46 in all. In that list Truro is marked vacant, and the name of William McCulloch is given as a preacher within the bounds of the Synod. With the exception of Rev. Alex. Romans, Dr. McCulloch is the only minister in connection with either Synod at that time, who is now living. All have gone to their reward. Having fought a good fight, they now wear a crown of glory. There is only one minister whose name is on our Synod roll, who is older in the ministry than Dr. McCulloch, viz., Dr. McLeod, of Sydney. He was ordained on 7th Nov., 1833 but he was not in Nova Scotia 50 years ago. Dr. McLeod, I believe, has been longer in the ministry than any other Presbyterian minister in the Dominion.

There are, according to Presbytery rolls submitted to last Assembly, 885 Presbyterian ministers in the Dominion. Of these about 390 were ordained since the union of 1875; 715 since the union of 1860, and only twelve have been over 50 years in the ministry.

There were many truly great men among the ministers of fifty years ago. I do not say that the ministry is degenerating in any respect. I do not believe that it is. Nay, I am sure that it is not. I affirm that the young men of the present day, educated in our own colleges, are in most respects the equals, and in some respects the superiors of the young men who a half a century ago came from the mother country. I believe that, as a rule, our ministers now do more and harder work than our forefathers. No doubt they had

hardships of various kinds to endure of which we know nothing; but in these busy bustling days, when all are on the rush; in these days of close determined competition, every minister must work hard, earnestly and constantly, or he will be a failure. I cannot admit that the former days were better than these—that there were greater men formerly than now—men whose labors put us all to shame! Still, there were many great and good men among the fathers—men who left their footprints all over our land: men whom to copy is to make our lives sublime; men to be held in everlasting remembrance!

There were nine men on the roll of Truro Presbytery when Dr. McCulloch joined it on 14 February, 1839, viz., Revs. John Waddell, John Brown, Thos. S. Crowe, John I. Baxter, John Sprott, A. Kerr, Jas. Smith, J. Murdoch, and R. Blackwood. I was personally acquainted with Messrs. Baxter and Sprott only. When in 1866 I went as a young man to my first charge in Musquodoboit, Mr. Sprott showed me no little kindness, and gave me much valuable assistance. One advice I shall never forget was "always choose a fat text."

The last sermon he ever listened to, he heard from me on 29th December, 1867, at the opening of a new church, and the last time he ever preached—indeed the last time he was ever out of the house—was the same day. He gave a most touching address from the words "so run that ye may obtain."

In 1843 "the great disruption of the established church of Scotland occurred, and in the following year "the Free Church of Nova Scotia" was formed, and in 1845, "the Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick." During these years there was much excitement—and many changes. In Pictou Presbytery all "the Kirk" ministers left for Scotland, excepting Rev. Mr. Stewart, who joined the Free Church, and Rev. Alex. McGillivray of McLellan's Mountain. To the latter I owe much, as it was through his advice and assistance I left for college in the autumn of 1859.

In 1845 there were six Presbyterian bodies in the Maritime Provinces. It was an age of earnest contention, shall I say bigoted contention for the truth, or what was supposed to be the truth. If now there is a tendency to latitudinarianism, then there was a tendency to exclusiveness. Doctrine was magnified, practical