

THE DAILY RECORDER.

FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH OF CANADA.

No. 12.]

TORONTO, ONTARIO, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1874.

[Vol. III.]

Reception of Representatives from other Conferences.

Conference met to receive the representatives from other Conferences, and to hear and receive their addresses. The meeting, which was a session proper of the delegate, was one of unusual interest.

The President announced the 135th hymn, which, in the absence of the organ accompaniment, was sung with inspiring effect by the large audience. Rev. George Young led the assembly in prayer.

Dr. RYERSON dwelt at some length on the steps by which the present union was accomplished. He referred with pleasure to the fact that on the platform were representatives of the English Wesleyan and New Connexion Conferences, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Southern States, of the M. E. Church in this Dominion, and also of the Primitive Methodist Church in the Dominion.

He called on the Secretary to read the Address from the British Conference:—

ADDRESS OF THE BRITISH CONFERENCE TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH IN THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

DEAR BRETHREN,—We greet you in the name of the Lord. "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Our affection for you, dear brethren, and our interest in the work of God committed to you, are none the less because we address you in a new relationship. You are now to us the representatives of the two Connexions with which it has been our joy through many years to hold official communications; and we do not forget that your Conference represents also a branch of the Methodist family, whose union with the two previously existing bodies now comprehended in your Connexion, has been consummated to the satisfaction of all the contracting parties. "Our hearts desire and prayer to God" is, that the Church which is formed by this union may be the home of brotherly love, and may be the medium of the eminent display of the saving "power from on high."

We need not remind you, however, that all Church organization is but a means to an end. We rejoice, therefore, that the brethren who met in Conference at Hamilton, and whose Address we received with great satisfaction, were able to assure us of their unwavering determination to hold fast, and to hold forth, the great doctrines of the gospel which God used so mightily in the preaching of our fathers. In thus addressing us we doubt not that they may be taken to represent the other brethren of your Conference. To us this is an unspeakable comfort. We value far more highly the substance of a Church's teaching, than the form of a Church's ministrations. This latter must necessarily be adapted to meet the needs of different nations, varying social conditions, and successive ages; always having regard to well recognized and essential principles. But the faith of Christ's Church is the "faith once delivered to the saints." In it is the truth needed by, and sufficient for, all lands and all time. And we rejoice that while we shall continue to cry aloud to the dying world, the voice of your Church will be heard uttering in harmonious tones the self same testimony. The orthodoxy of any Church, however, depends more on its spiritual life, than even on its regulations, or its formularies. We do not undervalue these latter. But where vital godliness does not flourish amongst a people, neither discipline nor creeds will preserve its members from deadly errors of practice and of faith. We are thankful, therefore, to hear that the word of God is prospering within your borders. Methodist Churches live most happily, and grow more surely, in the genial atmosphere of an intelligent and sound revival. May the cry of broken hearts and the shout of hearts made new never be wanting in your borders, till the earth be filled with righteousness.

We are glad to know that you are able to commence a Mission to the Heathen beyond the boundaries of your vast territory. We mark with affectionate interest the commencement of your operations in Japan, and shall follow your brethren in that new field with our sympathy and prayers. Our experience convinces us that you will not be less strong for any good work at home because of your efforts to extend the Gospel abroad. In this sense also "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

We are holding our Conference in Cornwall, a county which has been the scene of extraordinary Gospel triumphs from the earliest days of Methodism. Our session has been made memorable not only by the great public interest which it has excited, and the warmth of affection exhibited by the people of the country, but by the great spiritual power which has attended most of the public services. It will have gratified you to know

that our President is the Rev. William Morley Punsion, LL.D., whose lengthened residence and great labors in "the Dominion" endeared him to you all, and who has always been to us, whether present or absent, a brother beloved. The interest of our sessions has been further increased by the presence with us of honored brethren from our affiliated Conferences, and from the Mission field; and especially by the presence and addresses of Bishop Harris and Dr. McCauley, who brought to us the fraternal salutations of our brethren in the United States. We hope that in future years we may have—at least, occasionally—the pleasure of welcoming brethren deputed from your Conference who shall bring to us tidings of your prosperity.

The review of our work has discovered cause for devout thankfulness of Almighty God. Our material prosperity advances without check. The work of chapel erection proceeds at a rate increasing year by year.

There is an addition of several thousands to the number of scholars attending our daily schools, with a still larger increase in the number of our Sunday scholars, and we are looking for a still further enlargement and consolidation of our Sunday-school work, by means of a Connexional Sunday-school Union which we have determined to establish. Moreover, we are endeavoring to supply the missing links in the chain of our Educational agencies. On one hand the work of reclaiming and uplifting the orphan and deserted children of our land (a work to the success of which your valued co-operation has largely contributed) is attended with a manifest blessing. On the other hand we have determined to establish a High School in close neighborhood to the University of Cambridge, where the sons of our most intelligent people may receive an education which will fit them for the highest positions in commercial and professional life. Thus we are striving to bring the youth of all classes under the penetrating and purifying influence of a godly education. Meantime our Home Missionary efforts are not relaxed, and our Foreign Missionary Income is larger by several thousands of pounds than in any previous year. But the best of all, is, God has been with us in the preaching of the Word; and we report an increase in the membership of our churches of three thousand souls. Though this is not commensurate with our desires and hopes, we accept it as a proof that the Lord is with us, and is a challenge from Him to bring to His service a more impassioned zeal, and a more complete devotion, so that "He may open the windows of heaven, and pour us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to contain it."

We have deputed as our Representative to your Conference the Rev. Gervase Smith, M.A., the honored Secretary of our Conference, who enjoys the confidence and affection of our churches. He will inform you in detail of the progress of the Lord's work amongst us, and we are sure that you will give to him a hearty welcome.

And now, brethren, farewell. May you be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!" And as your great Dominion develops its population, and opens up its territories, may you be always equal to the calls of the moment, and be able to spread over the whole extent of the vast region embraced within your boundaries the knowledge of that salvation which alone can make any people really prosperous and truly great, and to take your full part in the evangelization of the whole world!

Signed on behalf and by order of the Conference, W. MORLEY PUNSION, President.

The Rev. GERVASE SMITH, representative of the English Conference, then delivered an address of nearly an hour and a half in length. He expressed his pleasure at seeing Dr. Ryerson in the chair, and remarked that the manner in which the business had been transacted at this first united Conference augured well for the future of the body, while at the same time, he stated that a few topics discussed had filled him with grave anxiety. He remembered with great satisfaction his visit to the Canadian Conference four years ago, and he had great pleasure in communicating to them all the kindest wishes from Dr. Punsion, who had been the central figure on that occasion. He referred to the addresses which had been presented to the English Conference in reference to the proposed formation of an independent conference, and observed that the progress of Methodism in Canada showed that the time had come when the request of those addresses should be granted. It had been his privilege to second the proposal to accept the series of resolutions which were submitted on this subject, and though he regretted to see the bond which had existed between the English and Canadian Conference severed, he said to them heartily on behalf of the British Conference, "Go, dear friends, and fulfil the great mission on your continent to which the Providence of God has called you." (Cheers.) The Rev. gentlemen then proceeded to give some account of the proceedings at the recent Conference held at the little town of Cambridge, in England. The work might be divided into special and ordinary proceedings. He was sure they would all rejoice with him at the choice which was made of his dear old

friend Dr. Punsion, as President of the Conference. (Cheers.) The next business of the Conference was to present an address to the Queen on the subject of the recent Royal marriage. He was delighted to find that existing in Canada the good old English feeling of loyalty to the highest personage in the realm. (Cheers.) Christianly had generally had to make its way among the poor and humble, but all good people must rejoice when rank and wealth and power were consecrated to the spread of religion, and everyone was grateful for the personal character of the Queen, and the beautiful influence exercised by her upon the morals of English society.

He closed this noble tribute with the following fine poetic apostrophe.

How glorious is thy calling,
My happy Fatherland,
While many through thy calling,
In righteousness to stand!
And the earthquakes leaving thus
To rest in pasture green,
Then do be praised, who helpeth us,
And God preserve the Queen!

Onation, greatly favoured
As thou art being
A sacrifice well savoured,
Now let a thy children raise,
In faith and love serene,
Thy least and best of praise
Of God preserve the Queen!

The reverend gentleman then proceeded to relate the other special work done by the late English Conference. One thing which had been taken up at Cambridge was the subject of temperance. (Applause.) To himself it had always been a matter of personal regret, that the Conference did not sooner see its way to take action on this subject though he vindicated the integrity of the Conference in its course, and he was thankful that a step had now been taken which he hoped would be the prelude to more decisive action in the future.

The Conference adopted the following Resolutions:—

1. That the influence of Wesleyan Methodism in opposition to the evils of Intemperance should be consolidated and further developed; and that this may be done in harmony with the acknowledged discipline of the Connexion, and specially with the functions of the Committees of Privileges and Exigency.

2. That any Connexional organization which may be attempted should rest upon a basis which would admit of the hearty co-operation of all persons, whether they be abstainers or non-abstainers.

It also appointed a large Committee for the fuller consideration of the details of such an organization, and with instructions to report to the Conference of 1875. Next came the question of lay delegation in reference to which a committee had now appointed, after the Irish Conference, the French Conference and some forty or fifty circuits in England had memorialized the British Conference to take steps to bring the laymen into closer associations with them. In this matter he advised the laymen to be careful that the organization did not become a hierarchy on the one hand or degenerate into the mere servitude of any party on the other. The maintenance of the rights of the pastorate meant the maintenance of the rights of the whole Christian Church.

The following was the action of the Conference with respect to lay delegation:—

The Conference remitted to the Committee appointed to consider the constitution of the Committees of review, the subject of lay-delegation to the Conference, brought before it several memorials from Circuits, together with a resolution of the Irish Conference, and a memorial from the French Conference bearing on this question. To the same Committee the Conference remitted the consideration of some Memorials from Circuits on the subject of Lay-Representation in District Meetings. After a reference to the Annual Fernly Lecture, he described the action of the late Conference on the subject of higher education, stating the steps which were taken to bring all children, from the gutter children of London to the University students, under the influence of Methodism. Referring to the subject of the Revision of Districts, he stated that among some of the senior as well as junior members of the British Connexion a feeling was arising that their Conference was getting unwieldy, and there were quiet suggestions made by the older and wiser as well as by the younger men that a change was necessary, that the number of districts should be diminished, and that instead of the present Conference they should divide themselves, at no far distant time, into several Conferences, according to the example set them in Canada. A Committee had been appointed to look into the above question, viz, the Revision of Districts, during the year. Then came the question of the Revision of the Liturgy. There were expressions in the prayer-book which he and many others believed ought not to be used in Methodist Churches, and some alteration was needed. The Conference appointed a Committee to consider the subject of revising the Liturgy and the Book of Offices, especially with a view to the removal of all expressions which are fairly susceptible of a sense contrary to the principles of our Evangelical Protestantism, and to report to the next Conference. The reverend gentleman here referred to what is called the Kebleton controversy, and to the influences which were at work in many of the village populations of England to the damage of Protestant Evangelical truth. He gave, among others, the following extracts from books widely circulated by ministers and others who are called Protestants—who were doing their utmost to un-Protestantize the good old land.

The following extracts from a Church Catechism recently published were read:—

We have amongst us various Sects and Denominations who go by the general name of Dissenters. In what light are we to consider them? A. As heretics; and in our Litany we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of "false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Is then their worship a laudable service? A. No; because they worship God according to their own evil and corrupt imaginations, and not according to His revealed will, and therefore their worship is idolatrous.

Is Dissent a great sin? A. Yes; it is in direct opposition to our duty towards God.

How comes it then in the present day that it is thought so lightly of? A. Partly from ignorance of its great sinfulness, and partly from men being more zealous for the things of this perishing world than for the Lord of Hosts.

But why have not Dissenters been excommunicated? A. Because the law of the land does not allow the wholesome law of the Church to be acted upon; but Dissenters have virtually excommunicated themselves by setting up a religion of their own, and leaving the ark of God's Church.

What class of Dissenters should we be most upon our guard against? A. Those who imitate the most nearly the true Church of Christ.

But are there not some Dissenters who use the same form of prayer as ourselves? A. Doubtless; but the prayer of the Church being, for the most part, for the priest to offer up in behalf of the people, it must be sinful and presumptuous for those persons who are called dissenting teachers, to address the throne of grace, usurping the priestly office.

Is it wicked then to enter a meeting-house at all? A. Most assuredly; because, as was said above, it is a house where God is worshipped otherwise than He has commanded, and therefore it is not dedicated to His honor and glory; and besides this, we run the risk of being led away by wicked enticing words; at the same time, by our presence we are witnessing our approval of their heresy, wounding the consciences of our weaker brethren, and by our example teaching others to go astray.

The following is from the "Little Office Book," which furnishes prayers for "Prime, Tercer, Sext, Nones, Vespers, Compline," etc.

By the sign of the Cross deliver us from our enemies, O our God.

May Holy Mary succour the wretched, help the weak hearted, revive the sorrowing, instruct the clergy, intercede for the devout. May all experience thy help who celebrate Holy Communion.

May the Holy Mother of God pray for us.

In a small prayer-book, "intended chiefly for beginners in devotion," the following Romish doctrines are taught:—

May the intercession of St. Mary and all Thy saints assist us to obtain help and salvation from Thee O Lord, Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

Receive, O Eternal Father, this offering, which is now only bread and wine, but will soon, by a miracle of Thy Grace, become the True Body and Blood of Thine Only Son; and with this Oblation I desire to offer my most unworthy prayers, that through the merits of Jesus Christ I may obtain all the grace I need.

Most merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look graciously on the prayers now being before Thee, and send down Thy Holy Spirit on this Sacrifice, that He may make this bread and this wine the Body and Blood of Thy Christ; and grant to me and to all Thy people, by the grace of this Sacrifice, mercy and pardon here, and rest and joy hereafter.

At the words, This is My Body, This is My Blood, you must believe that the bread and wine become the Real Body and Blood with the Soul and Godhead of Jesus Christ; bow down your heart and body in devout adoration, when the Priest says these awful Words, and worship your Saviour then verily and indeed present on His Altar.

Listen carefully to all the Priest says to you, be sure to remember the penance he gives you, and receive the Absolution devoutly.

Kneel upright at the Altar, and when the Priest comes to you hold the palm of your right hand open and your left hand crossed under it; be most careful to receive into your mouth all, even the smallest portion, of the most Holy Sacrament, since one Crumb or Drop of it is worth more than the world itself.

May all the Angels and Saints of God assist and pray for me, now, and at the hour of my death. Amen.

Mr. Smith then gave an account of the reception given to the deputation from the American Episcopal Church, and expressed the hope that the day would come when the United States all who owned the name of Methodism would acknowledge one central authority—(Loud applause)—and when throughout the British Empire the same happy consummation might be reached. The ordinary work of the Conference included the foreign mission work, the home mission work, referring particularly to the village work in England, and their theological institutions. The copy right of the Methodist hymn-book had recently run out, and a new book was in course of preparation, but it was not intended to interfere with the first part of the old hymn-book. In the instance of Dr. Punsion and Dr. Jobson the Conference had resolved to make a grant of a selection of the standard books of Methodism to the College at Cobourg. (Cheers.) Then there was the chapel work. Last year there were 7,436 chapels and other preaching places in Great Britain, offering accommodation for 1,723,938 persons. He gave an account of the steps which had been taken, particularly by Sir Francis Lyett and Mr. McArthur, M.P., and others to raise the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund, which was intended to supply the great need for chapel accommodation in the metropolis. Two sums of £20,000 each were first raised, and then Sir Francis Lyett promised £50,000 on condition that another £50,000 was raised in the Provinces, and that fifty chapels were commenced within ten years. Promises had already been made to the extent of £75,000, and fifteen new chapels had been opened, each holding 1,000 people, for in London they had not the power to erect buildings equal in size or cost to that in which they were now meeting. During the last twelve years the following are the general results:—Number of chapels erected, including two small school-rooms and two enlargements, forty-two; number of sittings provided, thirty-eight thousand two hundred and eight; amount of loans, £3,195; amount of grants, £23,725; actual cost (say) £243,000. Of the £33,195 which has been loaned on sites and erections, £8,831 10s. has been already repaid, so that £24,363 10s. has yet to be repaid. In addition to the forty-two commodious chapels which the Fund has assisted to build during the last twelve years, seventy smaller places of worship, including school-rooms, iron chapels, halls, etc., have been built or hired independently

of the Fund, providing fifteen thousand six hundred and thirty-four sittings, so that increased accommodation to the extent of fifty three thousand eight hundred and forty-two persons has been secured. When the Fund was established, about thirty-nine thousand sittings were provided within the Metropolitan districts. The present provision for London may therefore be stated at ninety two thousand eight hundred and forty-two sittings. The Committee are deeply impressed with the importance of increased effort. We aim at five new chapels per year; but the income scarcely provides the ordinary help for three. Either the Fund must be largely increased, or our work in London must be greatly crippled. The Committee earnestly asks the sympathy and help of this meeting and the Conference.

He pointed out that it was not sufficient to build chapels, but they must get men who could preach in them. If in England a man could not preach he was not fit for the work of the ministry. The Methodist ministry in England was determined to maintain three things—the Divine authority of God's Word, the great doctrine of the Atonement, and their dependence on the Holy Ghost for the work of the Church. In conclusion, he recommended young men to take as their motto, "safe progress." He rejoiced in progress, but it must be safe. (Hear, hear.) They should neither look entirely to the past, nor only to the future. They wanted men who lived in the present; men with broad views and large hearts, who would cling to truth to the death, but who were not wedded to mere conventionality; men who would endorse that grand maxim of Scripture—"Whatever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Loud applause.)

He quoted in conclusion the following spirit stirring lines from Whittier:

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to be the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue, carved upon our Father's grave;
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present
Light a crime!
Was the "Mayflower" launched by cowards, steered
By men beyond their time?
Turn the anvil to wards past age, which make
Plymouth Rock sublime.

The Rev. J. H. RANSOM, representative of the English New Connexion Conference, said that the present meeting was to him one of peculiar pleasure. He hoped that many such Conferences and many such meetings as the present would take place. He hoped that we would send an address to the English New Connexion Conference; he was sure it would do good. He felt bound to say that great evils have been avoided, great financial saving would be the result of this action. He expressed his great tranquility of mind, his joy in the Lord, that this affiliation had taken place without rending the Canadian New Connexion Church. He could not answer to his conscience and to his God in his dying hour if he had opposed this union. For himself, he felt a little lost; but if he remained in Canada, he would cast in his lot with the United Wesleyan Church.

Rev. R. BOYD, President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, was introduced, and said that on seeing the President in the chair he was reminded of 33 years ago when he (the speaker) heard him preach the first time. He assured the Conference that he was the subject of very peculiar emotions. He desired the unity of the church, for all the branches of the great Methodist family were essentially one. They all have one great Father—they have one grand rule of life—they all rejoiced in the prosperity of their church, and the success of one was in effect the success of all. As he looked at Methodism he was more and more convinced of the truth of Dr. Chalmers' designation, that it is "Christianity in earnest." Their doctrines were the same. They all sang the same grand hymns and he trusted that they would all by and-by sing the song of final triumph in their Father's house to go no more out for ever.

R. WALKER, Esq., in a similar strain, briefly addressed the Conference. He congratulated the Conference on the grand result which has followed their sincere desires for union.

Revs. Mr. Gardner and Benson, representatives from the M. E. Church in Canada, were introduced and presented the following address from their late General Conference, which was read by the Secretary:—

TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA:—

DEAR BRETHREN,—The General Conference of the M. E. Church in Canada would greet you most affectionately in the name of our common Lord.

It is a great satisfaction, indeed, to congratulate you upon the success in the blessed work of the Gospel that has made it necessary or expedient for you to divide your extensive field of labor and place it under the administration of several Annual Conferences, at the same time preserving your unity, and, we trust, increasing your efficiency by the Representative and Legislative Council of the whole church. The glory be unto God the Father and Christ His Son, the great head of the universal church, and to the Holy Spirit, the guide and sanctifier, that you have been so prosperous in this land, in the presentation and diffusion of the holy doctrines of the Bible, and in the establishment and maintenance of so many institutions that are at once an evident benefit to

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