

Our own Church.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.*

The fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada opened in St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, Wednesday evening, 11th June. There was a very large attendance of Commissioners, indeed unusually large for the opening of Assembly. The attendance of visitors was also large. The services opened by singing the 100th Psalm, reading the 122nd Psalm, prayer, reading the 16th Chapter of St. Mark, and singing the 69th Paraphrase.

The retiring Moderator, Rev. Dr. Jenkins, of Montreal, preached the annual sermon. His text was ;—

As thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. St. John, xvii., 18.

He said the twelve Apostles were sent into world by Jesus Christ, as God had sent Him. This apostleship, thus ordained, and ordered by both the Father and the Son, was perpetuated to the nineteenth century, and existed in the Church to day. For they to whom was committed the ministry of reconciliation were Apostles, not in its technical and official sense as used in the first age of the Christian Church, but in a broader sense—the literal sense. They were sent forth into the world as were the twelve, and Jesus before them, to whom was confided the original message from God, of good-will towards men. St. Paul was the true Apostolic model, on whom modern ministers were to fashion their course. He was a grand model, and, indeed, his examples had never been surpassed, even if equalled, in the history of the Church, excepting by Christ Himself. The Moderator advised young ministers to imitate no man, no modern example, but to take their inspiration from the book of life itself. The rock upon which many young ministers had split was that of selecting some popular living preacher, or an admired professor, as worthy of imitation. The result was that they followed their cherished model in some ungainly gesture, unattractive elocution, tricks of style ; but the robust qualities, the real solid and valuable characteristics—those which lay at the root of popularity and power—were either overlooked in the modelling or found too difficult to copy. There was only one model he would advise them to follow ; and that was He who, in a ministry of only three years, had lived as no man lived before, and taught doctrines which had never been equalled for purity, holiness, and simplicity—he advised them to copy the Saviour Jesus

Christ himself. Devoutness distinguished his life, and he loved to commune with his Father in prayer. With great self-denial and zeal he worked the works of Him who had sent Him. It was His sole desire to finish the task His father had set Him—to save mankind. The qualities enumerated, and all those which contribute to the best side of human life, were those characteristics which went to build up the religious side of Christ's life. He urged them to endeavour to imitate the devoutness, the tenderness, the strength and endurance of Christ's piety. How was all this to be accomplished ? By earnest, constant, personal study of the oracles of God ; by much private prayer ; and by a simple every day faith in Christ as a personal Saviour. The ordinary services of a minister were nothing unless guided by really devoted Christian men. A whole hour should be set aside every day from the toil and bustle of life for communion with God. Such a course would tell powerfully upon their ministry, the discharge of their pastoral duties, and their pulpit work. Their work should ever be sanctified by earnest prayer. The meekness and earnestness of Jesus in the prosecution of His mission were worthy of imitation by ministers. The concealment of personal power, rather than display, was a characteristic of Jesus. No true minister of Christ boasted of great powers and claimed that they had been overlooked by the Church. As sure as such men pushed themselves forward, so sure would they fail in obtaining the preferment they desired. The men who rise to places of prominence were those who did not thrust themselves forward in the streets or cry out that they had been set aside and overlooked. The men who shrunk from responsibilities, these were the men who were promoted. The weakest member of the Church should remember that by earnest prayer and work he could merit promotion. The teaching of Christ in substance and manner was also worthy of being studied and followed. It was in harmony with that morally defective condition of humanity which prompted His being sent down by the Father. The teachings of Christ could be classified under three heads :—The fact of human sin, the penalty of human guilt, and the purpose of God in regard to human salvation. He devoted a few words to the ethical teaching by Jesus, who propounded a law of duty and a law of love with greater power and force than the great Athenian philosopher. The Moderator requested them to follow out the investigation of this subject in every day's study as a preparation for effective pulpit ministration. Be teachers and preachers after the supreme model he had referred to ; insist on the law of duty as Christ did, so as to make men think that in obeying they were yielding to the law of love. They should teach men to be true, good, and virtuous, not alone to accept the mere

* Chiefly from reports by the *Ottawa Free Press* and *Toronto Globe*.