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GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING.

Dr. Armstrong Unanimously Elected Moderator.

Kingston, June 7.—The thirty-first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada convened in Grant Memorial Hall of Queen's University this evening. Fourteen years ago the Assembly met in St. Andrew's church in this city, and it was during the sitting of the court in 1891 that the passing of Sir John Macdonald was recorded in Canadian history. This year's Assembly meets in the hall created to the memory of the man whose name it bears and for the service of the university since brought into closer relations to the Church. It is, therefore, fitting that this gathering shall be known and remembered as Queen's Assembly. The four hundred commissioners now in attendance have only words of praise not only for the building in which the General Assembly meets, but also for the admirable accommodation provided for the offices and committees in the arts building with which Grant Hall is connected. It has been already suggested that the General Assembly should annually tabernacle in this place.

The Opening Service.

Rev. G. M. Milligan, D.D., LL.D., the Moderator, called the General Assembly to order in its first session at 8 o'clock, and announced Psalm 102. For the Scripture lesson he read Psalm 19, following which the congregation, led by a mixed choir, sang the Te Deum, and the Moderator led in prayer. The Assembly sermon, preached by the retiring Moderator, was a strong deliverance on the dynamic, impregnable and eternal character of the Word of God.

Dr. Armstrong Moderator.

Professor Bryce, Winnipeg, nominated Rev. William Armstrong, D.D., Ottawa, to be Moderator of the General Assembly. Mr. George Hay, Ottawa, seconded the motion, and there being no other nominations Dr. Armstrong was unanimously elected.

Dr. Milligan, before retiring, said he wished to say in his last breath as Moderator that as a son of Queen's he welcomed the Assembly to Grant Hall. During his year of office he had travelled 9,000 miles.

Dr. Armstrong, in accepting office, said it was with him a principle never to seek or to shirk responsibility. While there were no burning questions before the Assembly this year, there were the important departments of missions and education. In connection with the latter, Queen's College would receive special consideration.

Dr. Milligan read a communication from Major Maude expressing the King's acknowledgments through the Governor-General of the address of loyalty presented last year. Dr. Milligan also referred to Earl Grey's personal interest in the great work being done for Canada by the Presbyterian Church.

A communication was read from Rev. R. H. Warden, D.D., expressing regret at his enforced absence and requesting that Rev. J. W. McMillan, Winnipeg, and Rev. John Sommerville, D.D., be appointed assistant clerks of the Assembly.

Dr. Milligan spoke of the financial genius and fine spirit of Dr. Warden as an influence in the Assembly. A committee will be appointed to express the Assembly's loss by his absence.

Retiring Moderator's Sermon.

Dr. Milligan's theme in his sermon was "The Eternal and Destiny-determining Word" and his text Hebrews iv., 12, "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The writer of the epistle, said the preacher, is in this portion of it warning those who have become Christians against falling away from their privileges and obligations in Christ Jesus. He tells them they are face to face with a new and great Providence, from which they must not turn away, as their fathers did when they came to the frontiers of the promised land, lest evil come upon them, as it did upon their fathers. The ground of this warning the writer makes the word of God, which amid all changes of time and place is in essence the same.

Let us consider the word of God as set forth in the text, that we may be helped more adequately to realize what it is, and how it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction of error, and for discipline in righteousness. In it God's word is represented as living. Living here stands for what is opposed to obsolete or antiquated. It is a word out of which men do not grow as they do out of childish things. It belongs to what is bound up in the beginning, middle, and end of men's lives.

It stands, therefore, for what is perpetually existent. It is expressive of forces and relations existent in the nature of things. In this sense, in the physical sphere, gravitation is a living word of God, which is as strong and real today as in the remotest past. It stands for forces and laws or modes of action imbedded in the system of things, ordained of God for the accomplishment of His purposes. Whatever else may wither as the green herb, the living word endureth forever.

The Indispensable Word.

The word of God, is therefore, indispensable to man's well-being. It is, in its sphere, like seed to the sower and bread to the eater. It is represented in Scripture as a necessity to man's life. Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. It is manna that never becomes stale. In fact, it stands for not the seen and temporal, but the unseen and perpetually present forces, of whose presence the seen are at once the evidence and effect.

To know this living word is to prophesy what the seen will always be, whether that seen be the seed of Abraham drawing back from Canaan or failing to follow Christ, of whom the law and the prophets did testify. Like the essential properties of matter, extension and impenetrability, the living word of God constitutes the very essence of spiritual existence. It entered into the lives of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and Paul, and imparted to them achievement and significance.

A perpetually existent element when it comes in relation to the life of a people alters that life as geographical and scientific discoveries abundantly show. The discovery of America has changed the currents of history. Electrical science has brought electricity into man's life, producing far-reaching results, social, commercial and otherwise.

Great potentialities lie in the living words of the living God. Could He, the Ruler over all things, speak other than such mighty, all-commanding words? He speaks and things are. When He

gave His word to Israel it was to make them a people unto Himself, abundant in life, worthy of the name, and through them to bless all people.

The Word a Disclosure.

Prophetic teaching is a disclosure of God's word rather than its fulfillment, that word being unveiled by the prophets which in the nature of things is and when manifested is seen to be the glory of God. As God's messengers in physical things are scientists, such are the prophets in things spiritual. These each in their sphere interpret the living word, the perpetually existent realities which live and move and have their being in God.

This living word of God is, then, not a tissue of mere verbalisms or the recurrence of events in the same external settings. These external feature of His living word are like the grass which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the sea. Tongues may cease, but not the living word they embody. Psalmists, and prophets, and evangelists still live, men hearing them in all lands in their own tongues wherein they were born. God's living word does not depend for its truth upon any mere form of either words or events.

It is too abiding in its own nature and right to require any such protection for its security. On the contrary, it gives to every form of word or occurrence its law. It is true regarding it that

"Of soul the body form doth take,
Fo soul is form and doth the body make."

The living word of God gives to every form of speech or event its character, because it represents eternal powers and relationships. It is the heavenly treasure that imparts fullness or emptiness to every earthly vessel. Say not, then, that the form's days were better than these. Every age is significant, for God is in it. His living word through all generations bears witness to His severity towards the forward and His goodness towards those who keep His law. Hence God's word because living is powerful, or active, or energetic.

Perpetually Operative.

It is not only perpetually existent, but also perpetually operative. It is either a savor of death unto death or of life unto life. It is either for or against men. Put it in a napkin and it brings disaster, place it in the bank and it yields unspendable gain. God's living word is possessed of such energy that it never leaves men as it found them. The children of Israel refused the living oracle's God gave them for their guidance, with the result that Jehovah turned and gave them up to serve the host of heaven. Moses told the Israelites that to observe all the words of God's law was no vain thing for them, that it was their life to do so. God has so organized His universe that those who honor Him He will honor, and those who despise Him shall be lightly esteemed. Jehovah, our God, is a jealous God. There are certain relations which in their very nature exclude indifference or lukewarmness, such as the parental or filial. In these who is not for is against. In those to be indifferent is to be unnatural, untrue to the nature of things, opposed to the living word of God, and, therefore, doomed to meet its aggressive energy.

Jeremiah tells us Jehovah put His words into his mouth and set him over