

The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

REPORT OF THE ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE.

The Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, appointed by the General Assembly, constituted in Montreal on the 16th June last, to mature measures for a next Assembly, met in St. Paul's Church on the first of September, and after deliberating for eight days, concluded its proceedings at a late hour on Wednesday evening, the 8th inst. The subjects which engaged the attention of the Committee were varied and important, having reference to the following matters, viz., Ecclesiastical Procedure, Parliamentary Legislation, Synodical Functions, and Missions, Missionary and other schemes, Education for the Ministry, Extension of Students, Admission of Ministers from other Churches, Amalgamation of Ministers' Widows, and Orphans' Fund, Agency, Periodicals, Clerkship of the General Assembly, Mode of Electing the Moderator of the Assembly. Upon these and other subjects the Committee had instructions to consider in detail and to report to the next annual meeting of the General Assembly such recommendations as might appear to the Committee to be of practical importance and utility.

THE PERSONNEL

The Committee being composed of the representative men of the four Churches recently united, formed, it is needless to say, such a combination of brain power as is seldom found possible to concentrate upon given subjects. The whole number appointed by the General Assembly was thirty-eight, of whom sixty-six were ministers. There were in actual attendance fifty-one members, including twelve laymen. They came from the four Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, implying a journey, coming and going, of between fifteen and sixteen hundred miles on the part of several of the members. The colleges were strongly represented—Drs. Cook, MacVicar, Snodgrass, and Caven, the Principals respectively of Morin College, Quebec; the Montreal College; Queen's University, Kingston; and Knox College, Toronto, were present, as were also Professors Gregg and McLaren from Toronto, and MacKerras from Kingston. Of Doctors in Divinity and Law there were, in addition to the named Principals, Doctors Taylor and Rankin, of Montreal; Topp, of Toronto; Hall, Walkerton; Bayne, Picton; Proudfoot, London; Waters and Bennett, St. John, N.B.; Patterson, Nova Scotia; Buchanan, of Brantford; and McNish, of Cornwall.

The Rev. Dr. Topp, the Convener of the Committee, presided over its deliberations. The Rev. P. G. McGregor, of Halifax, and the Rev. John Gray, B.A., of Orillia, Ont., acted as Secretaries. The late Church of Scotland in the Maritime Provinces had one representative present, the Rev. George M. Grant, M.A., who is, however, acknowledged to be a host in himself. In addition to the above named, the following were also present:—Messrs. William Reid, M.A., D. J. Macdonell, B.D., J. G. Robb, M.A., John M. King, M.A., and John Smith, of Toronto; Robert Campbell, M.A., of Montreal; Daniel M. Gordon, B.D., and Jim Moore, of Ottawa; James Patterson, Kemmingford; Kenneth MacLennan, M.A., Peterboro; Peter Wright, Quebec; D. H. Fletcher, and John McCall, Hamilton; John Laing, M.A., Dundas; Thomas Edgewick, Tatamagouche, N.S.; John MacTavish, Woodstock, Ont.; J. K. Smith, M.A., Galt; Thomas MacPherson, Stratford; James Middlemiss, Elora; William Fraser, Bondhead; Robert Uro, Goderich; Robert Torrance, Guelph; John Scott, Bruce; J. Burton, Belleville; R. H. Hadden, Toronto; Alex. Young, Valleyfield; J. Hastie, Prescott; and James Fowler, Bass River, N.B., Ministers: And Messrs. Hon. John McMurrie, Toronto; Edgar Stevens, New Brunswick; Robert Hall, Carleton Place; George Hay, Ottawa; Adam Gordon, M.R., Port Perry; Thomas McCrae, Guelph; John C. Thomson, Quebec; Warden King, John L. Morris, David Morris, John Stirling, and James Poil, of Montreal, Lay Elders.

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS.

The subjects appointed by the General Assembly for consideration having been announced by the Chairman, it was agreed to take them up consecutively for discussion, and that when the Committee should receive such explanations as the members were able to give of the practices heretofore followed by the respective Churches previous to the Union, that then it should be committed to sub-committees to consider in the light of the information thus obtained, and having also the mind of the whole Committee upon the various subjects—the different matters in detail, and to embody their conclusions in a report to be submitted to the General Committee, and by it to be reconsidered, clause by clause, before its adoption.

For example, in regard to the question of establishing a Ministers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund for the United Church, statements were made by parties officially connected with the several pre-existent funds, setting forth their respective capitals and other sources of revenue, their modes of administration, the number of annuitants, the amounts paid to each, etc. With such data the Committee were in a position to discuss the merits of each, and arrive at certain conclusions. With these for their guidance, the sub-committee proceeded to formulate the outline of an equitable plan for the United Church. This form being considered by the General Committee, and amended, was finally adopted, and ordered to be sent up to the General Assembly in the form of a recommendation.

THE RESULTS.

It follows, necessarily, that the work of the Committee was simply of a preparatory nature. It had not the power to make a single enactment. But, taking for granted that its membership fairly represented the mind of the different sections of the Church, it will be found that important and valuable service has been rendered by the carrying out of practical measures, and thereby facilitating the transaction of business at the next meeting of the assembly, when there will, in all probability, be proposed a constitution so large as to be otherwise unmanageable for overruling the amount of business that will be brought before it. The following are understood to be some of the more important recommendations of the Committee:—

I. That the mode of electing the Moderator of the General Assembly be by an open vote of the members composing the court at its first seditant. (In the Church of Scotland branch, use and wont had vested the nomination of the Moderator in a so-called College of the ex-Moderators. In the C. P. Church the Presbyteries had the privilege of nominating).

II. HOME MISSIONS.

That there be one Board of Management for the whole Church, consisting of forty-five members, of whom one third shall belong to the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, and the remaining two-thirds to the other Synods of the Church, including Manitoba; that the Committee be correspondingly divided into two sub-sections for the transaction of business within their respective districts, empowered to act separately, but to report jointly to the General Assembly.

That the Fund to be administered by the Board shall consist of two parts:—(1). The Home Mission Fund proper, for the support and extension of mission stations throughout the Dominion; (2) the fund for supplementing organized congregations unable of themselves to provide fully for the maintenance of ordinances.

That the support of Manitoba College shall in the meantime be a charge on the Home Mission Fund.

That congregations not self-supporting, but able to pay at least \$400 annually toward stipend, and at the rate of \$4.50 per communicant, or \$6 per family, may be supplemented by the Board: and that the minimum stipend, exclusive of manse, from all sources, shall be \$700 in all such cases. (This recommendation is to the effect that separate collections should be taken up throughout the Church annually for the Home Mission Fund, and for the supplementing of small congregations, and that no settled minister in the Church should receive a smaller stipend from all sources than \$700). In cities and towns this sum may be exceeded at the discretion of the Committee. The amount of supplement shall in no case exceed what is necessary to bring up the stipend to \$700, and in all cases it must be proved to the satisfaction of the Presbytery of the bounds that a congregation has contributed for stipend to the extent of its ability.

III. FOREIGN MISSIONS.

That there shall be one central fund for the support of foreign missions to which all the congregations and mission stations shall be required to contribute annually, and one Board of Management annually appointed by the General Assembly. In the meantime, however, it is deemed expedient that the fund be divided into two sections:—(1) Ontario, Quebec, and the North West; (2) the Maritime Provinces. (This, in consideration of the fact that the Churches of the Maritime Provinces, at the time of the Union, were committed to a very successful system of foreign missions, established a number of years ago, in the South Sea Islands, the West Indies, and elsewhere.)

MINISTERS', WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.

That one Fund be created for the whole Church; that respect be had to the provisions contained in the Act 88 Vic., 61, passed during last session of the Legislature of Quebec, to the effect that no widow or orphan of a minister, who had formerly belonged to the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, shall receive a less annuity from the fund of the United Church than would have pertained to them, in terms of the scale in force at the date of Union, if the Churches had not united; that the terms on which ministers be admitted to the benefits of the Fund be, as follows:—The payment, by each minister applying for admission under thirty-five years of age, of \$8 annually; and from thirty-five to forty years of age \$10; forty to fifty years of age, \$12 annually; application by parties over fifty years of age to be subject to special consideration; that the ministers of the late Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Canada to continue to pay, as heretofore, \$12; the ministers of the late Churches in the Lower Provinces, \$8, and the ministers of the late Canada Presbyterian Church at the rates first mentioned, \$8, \$10, and \$12 annually; that, saving the above provision in favor of the Church of Scotland in Canada, the payments to widows and orphans be in all cases equal, namely, \$150 per annum to each widow, with the additional annual sum of \$20 for one child, \$36 for two children, \$50 for three children, and \$10 for each additional child. In the case of orphan children, the annuity will be the same as to a widow until the annuitant or annuitants have reached the age of eighteen years for girls, and twenty-one for boys.

AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS.

That there be instituted one fund for the payment of retiring allowances, to be supported by annual congregational collections throughout the Church, donations and bequests; that ministers retiring from active service, with the consent of the General Assembly, after ten years' service be entitled to an annuity of \$100, and \$10 a year for every additional year's service, up to forty years' service, if the fund admit.

COLLEGES.

In addition to the revenues derived from their endowments, it was ascertained that the following sums are requisite to maintain the undermentioned colleges in their present state of efficiency, namely:—Knox College, Toronto, requires \$11,000; the Theological Faculty of Queen's College, Kingston, \$2,000; the Montreal College, \$6,500; and the Theological Hall, of Halifax, \$5,000 annually.

The opinion was very generally entertained that the United Church should aim at the permanent endowment of all its Colleges as soon as possible. In the meantime it is recommended that the deficit of revenue for the said colleges be provided for by the General Assembly.

vided by congregational contributions, under the authority of the General Assembly, and, to this end, that the territorial system be adopted; that the Synod of the Maritime Provinces be the constituency for the support of the Theological Hall at Halifax, that the territory bounded by the Maritime Provinces on the east, and by the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Railway on the west, be assigned for the support of Montreal College; and all the territory west of said railway for the support of Knox College, Toronto, and the Queen's Theological Hall, at Kingston. In the event of it being judged necessary to augment the equipment of the said colleges by the appointment of additional professors under the above system of support, it was conceded that Morrin College, at Quebec, be entitled to an equitable consideration.

CLERKSHIPS, AGENCY, AND PERIODICALS.

(1) The Rev. William Reid, M.A., of Toronto, and Professor MacKerras, M.A., of Kingston, and the Rev. William Fraser, of Bondhead, be appointed joint clerks of the Assembly, the two first named with a salary of \$250, and the last named \$150, per annum, exclusive of incidental expenses. (2) That two agents be appointed, for the management of the financial affairs of the church—their respective duties to be hereafter defined—one in Toronto, the Rev. William Reid, M.A., and one in Halifax, the Rev. P. G. McGregor, each with a salary of \$2,000 per annum. (3) That one periodical be published monthly under the authority of the General Assembly, as the official record of the Church; that it be published in the city of Montreal, and that Mr. Croil be the editor; that it be supplied to congregations at the rate of \$25 per 100 copies, free of postage, and to single subscribers for 60 cents, per annum; that a committee be named to make arrangements for commencing the issue of the periodical on the first of January, to be named the *Presbyterian Record* with an edition of at least 30,000 copies; and that the same committee be charged to report on the feasibility of establishing and maintaining a monthly periodical suitable for circulation in the Sabbath Schools of the Church.

ECCLESIASTICAL PROCEDURE.

A report was also read and adopted defining the questions to be put to ministers, elders, and deacons at their ordination and appointment; prescribing the formula to be signed by ministers at their induction, the terms of the Barrier Act, the form in which Church records, reports, and like official documents are to be engrossed, with other matters of detail which do not require to be specified.

There being no further business the members united in singing the last three verses of the 122nd Psalm, commencing with the lines:—

"Pray that Jerusalem may have Peace and felicity,
Let them that love thee and thy peace Have still prosperity."

After which the chairman engaged in prayer, and closed the proceedings with the Apostolic Benediction.

It only remains to be added that the proceedings were conducted throughout in a business-like manner, and that nothing could exceed the fine spirit and temper which prevailed. The discussions were characterized by marked ability, and a tone of earnestness and conciliation which not seldom rose to magnanimity. A frank and fearless expression of opinion was honestly given—predilection for particular systems was pronounced, but of the old dividing party lines not the faintest trace could be seen. Had the members of this Committee done nothing more, they might justly feel proud that they have solved a problem hidden for generations from the wise and prudent, and proved, beyond contradiction, the essential unity of the great Presbyterian family.

Presbytery of Whitby.

A special meeting of the Presbytery of Whitby was held in the Second Presbyterian Church, on Monday, September 16th. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the resignations of Messrs. Ballantyne, of Whitby, and Calder of Orono and Kendal. Commissioners from both congregations were heard. The above mentioned ministers were also heard. In the former instance much time was occupied in the consideration of the reasons which had compelled Mr. Ballantyne to put his resignation in the hands of the Presbytery. It appeared that negotiations had for some time been going on towards a congregational union of the two Presbyterian Churches in the town—St. Andrew's and the Second Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Ballantyne is at present the minister. In view of this fact, and as the matter was ripe for accomplishment, Mr. Ballantyne resigned his charge. The Presbytery agreed to accept it, the resignation, to take effect on the fourth Sabbath of October. The following motions will, perhaps, set forth more fully the mind of the Presbytery in the matter, and which were adopted: Moved by Mr. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Kennedy, "That Mr. Ballantyne's resignation be accepted, and in accepting said resignation, the Presbytery charitably take it for granted, that the two congregations for the union of which he has tendered and pressed his resignation, will act toward him in a generous spirit and measure, such as will be worthy of Christian brethren, whom the Lord has blessed in temporal things as in spiritual." In addition the following was moved by Mr. Kennedy, and adopted as the sentiment of the Presbytery: "It is with real regret that the Presbytery part with the Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, who, during the few years of his connection therewith, has proved himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth to the people of his charge, and efficiently aiding in the transaction of the business of this court. His scholarly acquirements, gentlemanly learning, and exemplary Christian spirit and conduct, have commended and endeared him to his co-Presbyters as well as to the congregation to which he ministers. The Presbytery feel thankful to the Head of the Church for the good work he has enabled Mr. Ballantyne to do for the Second Presbyterian Congregation of Whitby. He found it facile and struggling, but by his able and faithful labors he has raised it to comparative strength, and to actual independence. His resigning the pastorate of such an attached and grateful people, is a sacrifice laid on the altar of union that illustrates the unselfishness peculiar to Christianity, and cannot fail of its reward. The Presbytery have no doubt Mr. Ballantyne will soon be sought by some of the vacant churches, and feel confident that wherever he may be called to labor, he will prove himself in the future, as in the past, an able and faithful preacher, and an affectionate and successful pastor." The Presbytery then entered upon consideration of Mr. Calder's resignation, when, on representation by commissioners from his charge of the undesirableness of his leaving, he signified his intention to withdraw it. The Presbytery having no other business before them, was closed with prayer by the Moderator.—WALTER R. ROSS, Pres. Clerk.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

Dr. J. W. Dawson, Principal of McGill College, Montreal, one of the most prominent of the opponents of the Darwinian theories, read an interesting paper on the subject at the science meeting at Detroit recently. The conclusion was as follows:

Can we formulate a few of the general laws, or perhaps I had better call them the general conclusions, respecting life, in which all Paleontologists may agree? Perhaps it is not possible to do this at present satisfactorily, but the attempt may do no harm. We may then, I think, make the following affirmations:

1. The existence of life and organization on the earth is not eternal, or even coeval with the beginning of the physical universe, but may possibly date from Laurentian or immediately pre-Laurentian times.

2. The introduction of new species of animals and plants has been a continuous process, not necessarily in the sense of derivation of one species from another, but in the higher sense of the continued operation of the cause or causes which introduced life at first. This, as already stated, I take to be the true theological or Scriptural as well as scientific idea of what we ordinarily and somewhat loosely term creation.

3. Though thus continuous, the process has been uniform; but periods of rapid production of species have alternated with others, in which many disappeared and few were introduced. This may have been an effect of physical cycles reacting on the progress of life.

4. Species like individuals have greater energy and vitality in their younger stages, and rapidly assume all their varietal forms, and extend themselves as widely as external circumstances will permit. Like individuals, also, they have their periods of old age and decay, though the life of some species has been of enormous duration in comparison with that of others; the difference appearing to be connected with degrees of adaptation to different conditions of life.

5. Many allied species, constituting groups of animals and plants, have made their appearance at once in various parts of the earth, and these groups have obeyed the same laws with the individual and the species in culminating rapidly, and then slowly diminishing, though a large group once introduced has rarely disappeared altogether.

6. Groups of species, as genera and orders, do not usually begin with their highest and lowest forms, but with intermediate and generalized types, and they show a capacity for both elevation and degeneration in their subsequent history.

7. The history of life presents a progress from the lower to the higher, and from the simpler to the more complex, and from the more generalized to the more specialized. In this progress new types are introduced and take the place of the older ones, which sink to a relatively subordinate place, and become thus degraded. But the physical and organic changes have been so correlated and adjusted that life has not only always maintained its existence, but has been enabled to assume more complex forms, and older forms have been made to prepare the way for newer, so that there has been on the whole a steady elevation, culminating in man himself. Elevation and specialization have, however, been secured at the expense of vital energy and range of adaptation, until the new element of rational and inventive nature was introduced in the case of man.

8. In regard to the larger and more distinct types, we cannot find evidence that they have in their introduction been preceded by similar forms connecting them with previous groups; but there is reason to believe that many supposed representative species in successive formations are really only races or varieties.

9. In so far as we can trace their history, specific types are permanent in their characters from their introduction to their extinction, and their earlier varietal forms are similar to their later ones.

10. Paleontology furnishes no direct evidence, perhaps never can furnish any, as to the actual transformation of one species to another, or as to the actual circumstances of creation of a species, but the draft of its testimony is to show that species come in per saltum rather than by any slow and gradual process.

11. The origin and history of life cannot, any more than the origin and determination of matter and force, be explained on purely material grounds, but involves the consideration of power referable to the unseen and spiritual world. Different minds may state the principles or different ways; but I believe that, in so far as Paleontology is concerned, in substance they must hold good at least as steps to higher truths. And now allow me to say that we should be thankful that it is given us to deal with such great questions, and that in doing so deep humility, earnest seeking for truth, patient collection of all facts, self-denying abstinence from hasty generalizations, forbearance and generous estimation with regard to our fellow-laborers, and reliance on that Divine Spirit which has breathed into us our intelligent life, and is the source of all true wisdom, are the qualities which best become us.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ITEMS.

SIGNOR GAVAZZI has purchased, at his own expense, an old monastery near Florence, Italy, for a Protestant mission.

MR. GLADSTONE:—"Please 'm, is the Church of England worth preserving?" Britannia:—"Worth preserving? Dear me, William, don't you know it's been in a pickle this over so long?"—Punch.

A MEMBER of the Free Church of Scotland has promised, with the aid of a few friends, to clear off the debt upon the Highland Churches and mansees, amounting to £7,000.

A MEMORIAL, with more than 120,000 signatures, has been sent to the Queen against the practice of the Ritualists, praying her not to sanction the eucharistic vestments, or the facing of the East.

AN association has been formed in England for the "purpose of preventing the franchise from the encroachment of women," in other words, of laboring against female admission to the right to vote.

ONE of the curiosities of English ecclesiastical law is, that while a clergyman of the Established Church may preach in the streets, in a theatre, or in a music hall, he may not preach in a place of worship belonging to Dissenters.

ARMIES of rats have destroyed, for several years successively, the crops of the Toungoo Karens in Burmah. Churches and schools established by the Baptists have been broken up. The Government has opened relief works.

IN one of the French departments there is a "Society for the Protection of Birds Useful to the Farmer." All nests found are reported to the society and protected by it. In the past year the society protected 214 nests, from which came 904 birds.

IN England, in the Diocese of the Bishop of Oxford, at a place called Clower, there is a conventual establishment, entitled the "House of Meroy." In that institution, says the editor of the *Rock*, "the practice of Auricular confession is carried on in the strictest privacy."

THE Legislature of the Cape Colony, South Africa, has passed the bill abolishing State aid to religion. The bill, however, provides for the continuance of existing grants to Churches during the lifetime of the present incumbents, and for five years to their successors.

A FOREIGN contemporary says:—"In France one-fourth of the boys and two-thirds of the girls—altogether, nearly one-half of the juvenile population—are being instructed by the nuns. The result is that more than thirty per cent. of the population are unable to read or write."

OLD Catholicism is spreading in Italy. In a meeting held at Naples it has constituted itself as a denomination, under the name of "Italian National Catholic Church." About three thousand members were represented. The Archbishop (*in partibus*) Panelli has been elected bishop of the new Church.

THE Ritualists of England are more pronounced than ever in their Popish observances. The festival of Corpus Christi, which is thoroughly Romish, the *Christian World* says, has been celebrated with special pomp, and in a way most fitted to outrage all Protestant feelings. At St. Albans prayers are offered for the dead.

LADY FLORA HASTINGS has gone over to the Church of Rome. This young lady is a cousin to the Marquis of Bute, and eldest daughter of the recently deceased Countess of Londonderry. She is just twenty-one years of age, and has been spending the winter in the Isle of Bute, where her guardian, the Marquis of Bute, and Lady Bute have been residing.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury is no "infidel," certainly not "worse," for he "provides" for his own relations. To a near relative of his wife he has just given a "living" worth more than \$4,500 a year, to a cousin, another living; a third clergyman, who married his cousin's daughter, another, with \$8,000. This last gentleman is also the archbishop's chaplain.

THE English Presbyterian Presbytery of London met lately, and received a memorial from the session and congregation of St. James' Church, Wood Green—which congregation has just severed its connection with the Established Church of Scotland—asking to be admitted into the communion of the English Presbyterian Church. A committee was appointed to confer with the session.

THE English papers are busy discussing the probable effect of the "Public Worship Regulation Act." The *Home* says that "it will be nothing unless it introduces cheapness and expedition into ecclesiastical suits." The *Morning Post* thinks that "the gravity of the situation cannot be over-rated. It is a call to all concerned to reconsider their position, and to take their stand only on ground that is worth defending. If they can consent to moderation, the one (party) being careful not to give offence, and the other not to take it, the Public Worship Act will be a dead letter."

THE Primate of England (alias the Archbishop of Canterbury, alias Mr. Tate) has been sharply rebuked by one of his clergy, Rev. Mr. Ashley, for censuring Mr. Moody's inquiry, or "after-meetings," as conducted by incompetent persons, and as amounting to confessionals. As a personal participant in them, he denies the charges. This is the way he talks to his superior: "Doubtless the counsel even at these meetings is often crude and unwise, and perhaps flippant. But, my lord, are all who profess to have had the 'regular call' to the cure of souls—in other words, all ordained ministers of our Church—qualified to guide the anxious and heavy laden? He would be a bold man indeed who would venture to affirm it. I will make bold to assert that there are hundreds (may I not say thousands?) of clergymen who, in spite of the 'regular call,' are nothing better than 'blind leaders of the blind.' Nay, I will be bolder still, and will venture to assert that the most inexperienced assistant at one of these after-meetings is a safer guide of the conscience than any Ritualistic or Catholic clergyman."