

Almanac table with columns for month, day, and various astronomical and meteorological data.

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Religious Miscellany.

THE NEW BIRTH. Yes, all is plain to me, I love, my new found guest! Sweet peace, and sweetest rest! What shall I do, what say,

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE.

SECOND DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION. According to previous arrangement the Conference met at 3 o'clock. After devotional exercises and the reading of the Minutes of the morning session, the debate was resumed on the question of alternates.

Rev. W. J. Hunter had moved a resolution to the effect that the brethren who were designated alternates should be received as members of this General Conference.

Rev. A. Sutherland was the next who caught the eye of the President, and there was an entreaty to the floor of the Conference. He said at the commencement of his speech that he was disposed to be thankful that he had not been educated for a lawyer, and therefore he had not the skill of those gentlemen who could raise doubts and quibble on points of law until somebody was lost in confusion.

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tion was lost, as only 66 voted in its favor, while 90 voted against it, consequently, the alternates were not received.

A conversation then took place as to when it would be most convenient to receive the representatives from other Conferences. It was finally decided, that an open session of the Conference should be held on Tuesday evening next, to receive those honored brethren, viz:—Bishop Peck, of the M. E. Church, United States; Rev. Gervase Smith, M. A., of the British Wesleyan Conference; J. H. Robinson, of the Methodist New Connexion Conference; and J. Gardner and M. Benson, of the M. E. Church, Canada.

The President also reminded the Conference that a Reception Tea Meeting was to be held in this Church on Friday evening. Certain gentlemen had already been appointed to make the welcome speeches; these were John Macdonald and R. Wilkes, Esq.; also Dr. Ryerson, &c.

The Conference should, he thought, appoint some of its own members to reply to those addresses of welcome, all of which, most of necessity, be brief. The suggestion of the President was accepted, and the following members of Conference were so appointed, viz:—Rev. D. Savage, Dr. Douglas, Hon. Judge Wilmot, Hon. Mr. Shannon, Hon. J. T. Rogers, Hon. Dr. Wood to preside.

At 9 a.m. the President took the chair and gave out the 34th hymn, after the singing of which the Secretary of the Conference read the 56th chapter of Isaiah, and Rev. A. Harburt read the Conference in prayer.

The Minutes of the previous session were read and confirmed.

Hon. Judge Wilmot read the report of the Committee which had prepared the document to be inserted in the General Conference Journal, authorizing the formation of the present Conference, with some slight alterations was adopted.

Dr. Allison presented the first report of the Nominating Committee, of which Rev. J. Elliott is Chairman, and Dr. Allison Secretary. The Committee recommended that there be the following committees:

1. A Committee on Discipline to consist of twenty-one members. After some discussion on the question of alternates, the resolution relative to the Committee on Discipline was adopted.

2. Committee on Missions, to consist of 24 members was next appointed.

3. Education Committee to consist of 21 members.

4. Committee on Publishing Interest and Book Room to consist of 25 members.

5. Committee on Sabbath Schools to consist of 25 members.

The Nominating Committee asked permission to sit again, which was granted.

On motion, the Conference resolved that the first name on each of the Committees shall be the Convener.

THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION. Conference was again in session at three o'clock. A hymn having been sung the Rev. W. H. Poole led in prayer. The Minutes of the former session were read and confirmed.

In accordance with a motion adopted at the former session, the Rev. John Ryerson was introduced to the Conference and made a short speech which moved many to tears. The venerable man is now 70 years of age, and has long held a conspicuous place in the Methodist Church, in which he has often been entrusted with positions of great responsibility and trust.

He stated that he was a member of the first Conference ever held in Canada, of which, with one exception, he was the only surviving member. Mr. R. entered the ministry in 1820, when there were many hardships to be endured, and there were no elegant churches, only some very plain meeting houses, and of these there were only twenty-one.

In reviewing the past he could not but exclaim, What hath God wrought! Truly the little one has become a thousand. He rejoiced to think that some at least of those funds in the foundation of which, and to the maturing of which he labored hard, had become of considerable magnitude, so that the present race of preachers were in much better circumstances than their fathers had been, that he intended to convey the idea that ministerial support was by any means what it should be.

Though he could not labor as he had done once, he took as much interest in everything that pertained to the church as he had ever done in his life. As a matter of course, his stay upon earth could not be very long, but the future had no gloom for him, he was joyful through hope, and he had no doubt that he would soon be welcomed to heaven, by Case and others who had gone there before him. He prayed that all this Conference might meet him in the better world.

In conclusion, he exhorted the young men, especially, to be faithful, and prayed that a rich harvest might fall upon the Church than they had ever experienced.

The Nominating Committee presented their report No. 2, in which they recommended the following Committees in addition to those already announced:

6. On Church Property, 11 members.

7. On Course of Study for probationers 8 members.

8. On Itinerary and Ministerial support, 20 members.

9. On the adjustment of Circuits jointly occupied by the Wesleyan and Methodist New Connexion Churches, 16 members.

10. On Superannuation Fund, 20 members.

The Nominating Committee recommended that all hymns of peculiar metre should either be omitted or else the people be taught to sing hymns of such metres.

Rev. E. H. Dewar was glad to hear this discussion, as it was well known that he had at different times referred to it in the *Guardian*. True, some of his views had not been universally endorsed, but several of the Methodist journals on the other side had given expression to similar sentiments. He thought that for the present, at least, they should have a supplement published.

Dr. Rice was of opinion that this was a grave subject, and he thought it well to compare the hymns in the British Conference, the discussions of which he had read with profound interest, and he was of opinion that, if that discussion could be published for the benefit of the Methodists of this country, great good would follow.

Hon. S. L. Shannon moved a resolution for an evening prayer to be held on the 10th inst. A hymn having been sung the Rev. W. H. Poole led in prayer. The Minutes of the former session were read and confirmed.

A grand Conference Missionary Meeting will be held some evening next week.

Rev. E. H. Dewar stated that he had received a letter from Rev. G. Young, from which he understood that Mr. Y. would be here about the 26th.

Rev. A. Sutherland presented a memorial from the trustees of Great St. James Street Church, and one also from the trustees of Ottawa City, Centre Circuit, relating to the extension of time of ministers on circuits.

Rev. C. E. Eby presented a memorial relating to the German Missions, which was referred to the Committee on Missions; also one for the publication of a German Journal was referred to the Publishing Committee.

Rev. J. A. Williams moved a resolution recommending the Nominating Committee to appoint a Committee on Sabbath observance.

Rev. J. Gray moved for the Nominating Committee to appoint a committee on official correspondence.

On motion of Rev. J. Lathen an interesting discussion took place respecting the Hymn book now in use in the Wesleyan congregations. Mr. L. said that he loved the said Hymn-book, but as there was now much discussion both in England and America, it was proposed to give the Bishop an opportunity of saying farewell.

Bishop Peck said that he was much interested in the subject, and he felt special interest in the fact that at this General Conference there was a practical proof that some of the branches of the Methodist family at least, were disposed to come together, and he trusted that the example thus set, would be followed by others who bear the honored name of Methodism.

We are aware that the present hour is pregnant with interest in reference to the world's future. We are surely to be greater and stronger, now that we are gathered into one ecclesiastical body; and we know that the public mind is to be most healthily affected by this union. Everywhere he hears congratulations in reference to our union; and any little difficulties which may yet exist among us will soon disappear, and soon we will think it most incredible that we were ever anything else but one.

This General Conference presented a very pleasing appearance, as in its midst are representatives from the parent body in England, from the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and South, and also from what has lately constituted two separate bodies in Canada, but henceforth to be one; heart beating to heart, and with a holy chivalry we are going forth to conquer the world.

Never did Methodism put on such noble mien; and we look on kindly at the smaller branches of this great family, trusting and hoping that the day will come when they, with us, will be one in all that constitutes a United Methodism. But these things do not come so much by legislation as they do by a larger effusion of the spirit of our common Master upon us.

And when the more abundant blessings shall come they will long for closer union with us. May the time soon come when we will all be one! In the meantime he had a dream on his mind—he would call it a dream—and it was, that we were capable of receiving a larger infusion of the true Methodist spirit calling us to the formation of a cosmopolitan gathering—making us all one great Ecclesiastical body. He thought we were grandly old fashioned over here. Our preaching was very pointed, with the grand old Gospel, and our responses were so fervid and hearty, that we seemed to be all soul. He admired our soul-saving methods of preaching the Word of God, and our inspiring union in the service of sacred song. He asked, for what purpose is God raising us up among the churches, and making us the largest of all unendowed Protestant organizations, but that he might make us the honored instruments in bringing much glory to Him. Again, he felt himself honored in being among us. He would whisper a thing—he would venture to whisper it—he seemed to him that we must have been sorely perplexed in making choice, among so many able men, of our President; and now that we have put the right man in the right place, he assured us that, at their next General Conference in the United States, they would gladly hail our representative among them. It was fitting that you, addressing the Chair, should at your age, and after your long services to your Church and your country, live long enough to enjoy this honour, and bear this burden. You were not ready to die until you saw this union consummated. God spared you to see and to share this blessed Union. May He bless you and make you a thousand fold! And may we all at last share the Union that will be indissoluble in the kingdom of His glory.

The venerable Bishop was deeply affected during the delivery of his address, and at the close the Conference cheered him again and again.

Rev. Dr. Sargent in brief terms expressed his endorsement of the Rev. gentleman's remarks.

Dr. Douglas moved and Dr. Pickard seconded a resolution, which was unanimously adopted, to the effect that the Conference should be held with profound satisfaction the eloquent words of fraternal greeting which the Rev. Bishop Peck of the M. E. Church of the United States, has just addressed to us, we cordially reciprocate those expressions of Christian regard, and fervently pray that God's choicest blessings may continue to rest upon the church and country which Bishop Peck so worthily represents; the Conference also expresses its obligation to the Bishop for the rich evangelical sermon which he preached on Sabbath evening in the Metropolitan Church. The Conference adopted the resolution by a rising vote.

On motion of Rev. J. Bondland, the Conference proceeded to ballot for a Vice-President of the General Conference. At the first ballot, there was no election, as none of the candidates received a majority vote, though Dr. Douglas and Dr. Rice were the highest on the list. On the second ballot being taken, it was found that 106 votes had been cast, 70 were therefore required to elect a candidate for the Vice-President, and Dr. Douglas received 69, Dr. Rice 37, and a few others received a few votes.

Dr. Douglas was called to the platform and thanked his brethren who had made him a servant of servants. He trusted that he was profoundly grateful, but the extreme kindness of the Conference had unfitted him for making a speech. He trusted that nothing would occur to disable their beloved President, so that his (Dr. Douglas's) duties would not be onerous. Again he thanked all those who had voted against him, particularly with those who had voted for him, but he was sincere when he declared that he wished his long-tried and true friend, Dr. Rice, had stood where he (Dr. Douglas) stands.

Rev. J. Potts announced that the Rev. G. Young was in the Conference, and he moved that he be called to the platform. The Conference soon sanctioned the motion and Mr. Young ascended the platform amid cheers, and in addressing the Conference, he said his feelings were very peculiar, as he now saw what he hoped, but could not expect to see. He was glad to see the Conference consisting, as it does, of so many representatives from the east, west, north and south. He related some coincidences between the first Conference he attended and the present one. He felt somewhat tired, as he had had a tedious journey of nearly a week's travel, 250 miles of which was by an old-fashioned stage, when he had a lot of discharged American soldiers for fellow passengers, and they were not the most desirable companions. Again he thanked them, and expressed the hope that they would soon have their brother McDougall among them.

Rev. H. F. Bland gave notice of motion relative to the reading of sermons in the pulpit. He considered such a practice as unwise and injurious. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Discipline.

On motion of Dr. Rice, Revs. G. R. Sanderson and G. McRitchie were added to the Committee on the Superannuation Fund.

On motion of Rev. W. J. Hunter, Rev. J. A. Williams and Jas. Gray were added to the Committee on Missions. The names of Rev. J. McMurray and H. Pope, Junr., were also added to the said Committee.

On motion of Rev. J. Hart, Rev. J. Taylor was added to the Committee on the Children's Fund.

The doxology was sung and the benediction was pronounced.

THE PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE. Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D., LL.D., Chief Superintendent of Education by permission of Conference, is at length a President of Conference, and that to a General Conference of all the Wesleyan Methodists (the two sections of them), in the whole of British North America. Notwithstanding his very great abilities and great influence for the period of nearly half a century, it had so happened, in consequence of his important official engagements, that he had never been a presiding officer in any church conference beyond his local meetings, and even that, not very many years. This will be to his disadvantage, and that the rather, because men of genius, and of a philosophic turn of thought, such as he is, have usually less adaptation for handling deliberative assemblies than men who have fewer ideas and theories of their own, and who consequently more implicitly follow precedent and usage, or run into the rut made by those who have gone before. Another difficulty of his position arises from the fact that the machinery of this General Conference is new, and has not yet adjusted part to part; and moreover there is little precedent to guide so as to prevent friction. It is to be hoped that the several members of the body which elected him by such a large majority will do as little to complicate matters as possible. But we are wandering from our subject to theories.

Dr. Ryerson has an almost world wide reputation, and that which is very little said of his history; indeed it has been so eventful as to require a volume to portray it, and so identified with the history of Ontario that he who knows the one must know the other. We may just repeat, in a summary form, what everybody knows, that Col. Ryerson, his father, was a U. E. Loyalist and a British officer during the Revolutionary war, settling first in New Brunswick, and then in Upper Canada, where our subject was born. He is must now be (for he has furnished no data beyond what we ourselves know or imagine) as old as the century, for fifty years ago, last Easter Sunday, he entered on his itinerant career, probably about the age of twenty. How changed are both he and the country since that day. We say that he has changed, physically certainly he has, but we mean advanced or improved; for Egerton Ryerson was not like some preachers who are as finished and able when they begin as when they end. He was full of ideas, and had plenty of words at the commencement, but was timid, often embarrassed, and sometimes confused, wanting in deliberation, and speaking with a rapidity which almost checked his utterance. As a preacher he had his period of maturity when he preached often with great ability and power, but his many non-pastoral occupations and engagements of later years, joined to his increasing infirmities, have been against the maintenance of that power and finish in preaching which characterized him in the hey-day of his evangelical and pastoral career. But writing, i. e., enforcement of great controlling ideas with the pen, have, since the year 1826 or '27, when he first touched his lance against the deterring assertions and arrogant claims of dominant churches, this, we say, is his principal forte. How many battles he fought;

ference adopted the resolution by a rising vote. Bishop Peck, acknowledging the vote, said that the next General Conference of the M. E. Church would be held in May, 1876, and he confidently expected that a delegation from the Conference would be present.

The Rev. Thomas Sargent, D.D., of Baltimore, was introduced to the Conference as belonging to the M. E. Church, South. He submitted a letter from Rev. Dr. Summers, whom he designated as the Archbishop of the South. We are permitted to make a few extracts from the letter. Dr. Summers says: "I am glad that you go to Toronto. I want you to represent the Southern Church to our Canadian brethren. They do not know us. Let them know that if they are Wesleyan Methodists, so are we. You know how intensely Wesleyan I am, and that is the reason I am where I am. Let them know that we stand where Wesley, Coke and Ashby put us in 1780, necessary modifications being granted. I have no official authority to solicit the sending of a fraternal messenger to our next General Conference, but you can assure the brethren that one would be received with genuine Southern Methodist cordiality. We want to learn many things from our Canadian brethren. We heartily pray that the present unity movement may be a grand success. Dr. Sargent in his usual genial strain, addressed the Conference, and was listened to with great attention, though occasionally interrupted by cheers, and at the close of his address the Rev. Asahel Harburt moved, and Rev. W. H. Poole seconded, the following resolution:

"That the Committee on Official Correspondence be instructed to prepare an address to the General Conference of the M. E. Church, South, and express the hearty desire of this body to open and establish fraternal intercourse both by letter and exchange of representatives with the southern branch of the great Methodist family."

The Conference adopted this resolution by a rising vote.

The Rev. R. J. Foreman was permitted to go home for the purpose of attending a funeral of the R. S. of his circuit. The session was closed with the benediction.

SIXTH DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION. At 3 o'clock the President gave out a hymn which was sung, followed with prayer by the Minutes of the morning session were read and confirmed.

The report of the Committee on Discipline was resumed by Rev. J. A. Williams reading the clause which relates to the time of holding General Conference. The Committee recommended that the first Wednesday after September 15th shall be the time. Different suggestions embodying amendments were made, some named October others August, and some even thought that March would be a suitable time. Various reasons were assigned in favor of the dates chosen, and it was a matter of some difficulty to find a date which would suit farmers, the legal profession, merchants, and the professor of colleges; but at length Judge Deacon moved as an amendment to the Committee's proposal, that the time should be the first Wednesday in September, which was carried. The next General Conference will therefore commence on the first Wednesday in September, 1879.

The next clause of the Committee's report referred to the first business of the General Conference, the election of a President by ballot, without date, from the Ministerial Delegates, which was adopted.

The Committee recommended the election of a Secretary or Secretaries in a similar way, but the Rev. E. H. Dewar moved as an amendment that the clause shall read, a Secretary and two Assistant Secretaries, which was seconded by W. H. Gibbs, Esq. A lively discussion took place on the motion and amendment. A rising vote was called for, the amendment had 65 votes, and the motion of Mr. J. Macdonald stated that some had not voted, and as this was contrary to the rules of order, the vote was taken again, when the amendment was carried a second time, there being 70 for and 65 against it.

A pleasant episode here took place. The President announced that the Rev. E. Holmes was required to leave the Conference to perform his marriage ceremony, but he proposed the Conference would not object. Leave was granted. As there was a large assembly of the fair sex in the galleries at this time, they gave evidence by their smiles that they were particularly interested just then.

The Committee recommended the election of a Vice-President in the same way as the election of a President and Secretary which was approved.

The restrictive rules, 1, 2, and 3 were read, and the Committee recommended that they be retained. Some thought that No. 3 might be modified, as it was sometimes found not to be sufficiently flexible to meet exigencies as might arise; but to this it was replied, that there were other rules which would need all possible exigencies, and besides there were notes appended to the society rules, as printed by our Annual Conferences, which would meet the wishes of all. As to the rules relating to the delivery of addresses, they were not to be touched, without endangering the church property, and the deeds were made with the specific mention of the doctrines mentioned. The recommendation was adopted.

The rules 13 to 17 on pages 167, and 168, Minutes of Canada Conference, 1873, were all, on recommendation, adopted. Want of space prevents us giving them in full.

Rev. W. J. Hunter presented Report No. 1 from the Committee on Missions. The following recommendation was adopted. That on Thursday evening next, a missionary meeting shall be held in the Conference Church, the Hon. Judge Wilmot to preside, and Leva, G. Young, G. McDougall, J. Bondland, G. S. Milligan, D. D. Currie, and Dr. Sargent to address the meeting.

On motion of Dr. Jeffers, the Committee on Discipline were instructed to consider the expediency of appointing a Committee as a Court of appeal on decisions of law.