

THE ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE.

SPEECH OF REV. GEO. DOUGLAS, D.D.

Mr. President, I greatly fear that the time of the Conference has expired, and I hardly know whether it will not be an infliction upon you if I make any extended observations on this occasion. (Cries of "Go on.") Well, Sir, in responding to the words of welcome pronounced by yourself, words which own the wisdom and sanctity of age, I count myself happy in being permitted to bring greetings from some 1200 young ministers with their flocks, and to present them this day before the great historical Conference. Although we be but little among the thousands, yet we thank God that He has given us a place in our Land of the Lakes and of the North Star, and that He hath opened for us a door of respectful opportunity in the immediate future. This great empire throughout all its history has been sending out its intellectual and moral light over all the earth. The history of the great Republic to which my honored friends belong is on the ascendant, advancing with ever increasing power, and combining its influence with that of this great mother land. The history of the Dominion of Canada, which indeed forms part of this great empire, and which I think, Sir, is perhaps more loyal to England's Queen than England itself—the history of this Dominion is but within the horizon, nevertheless it is full of prophecy and of promise of noble development. It is difficult, Mr. President, to rise to a conception of the greatness of that material heritage, that field for high endeavor which God has given us. Ay, Sir, from the sunrise side of our Dominion, where the bold Atlantic tosses her created billows against the granite heights of Newfoundland to the sunset side, where the broad Pacific tells to the beach her sweet dreams in sweet low murmurs, faint and low, we have a distance exceeding by a thousand miles that between the City of London and the City of Montreal in which we dwell, and still, Sir, from the imaginary line that separates us from the great Republic, we stretch away literally to the very ends of the earth. Rich in undeveloped resources in our older provinces, the amazing development of our great Lone Land tells that our Hyperion of hope is throned in the empire of the flaming West, whose virgin soil will yet tremble to the tread of freborn millions comprehending thousands of the sons and daughters of our British Methodism. Now, Sir, this is the great material foundation which God hath given us, and on which we are building, thus raising the temple of Canadian Methodism, which we believe will be a home and an asylum and blessing to coming and far-off generations. Already, Sir, God hath given us a full measure of encouragement. Though confronted with the most richly endowed, the most aggressive and conservative type of Romanism on the face of the earth, making our Province of Quebec the Thermopylae of conflict on the Continent, though we came after the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, yet, Sir, this Conference will be glad to learn that one out of every six of the entire population pay homage to the teachings and to the instruction of Methodism. (Applause.) We lead the Protestant denominations for strength in this Dominion of Canada; and, Sir, we are thankful to say further, that the united Methodism of the Dominion has made its selection and adheres to the old theology so finely presented. We are thankful to say that though not insensible to the conflict of thought that is abroad, to the questioning and unrest of the scientific atheism of this land, the transcendental and pantheistic philosophies of New England, and the so-called higher criticism—we are thankful to say that that system of truth which was formulated here, which was propounded in this centre, is our theology, our reconciliation of God's ways with which we confront all the assaults of adversaries. And, Sir, we have planted ourselves upon this ground, and we have made our solemn election in this matter. We rejoice that this formula of religious thought is rapidly becoming the most controlling form of religious belief in the Dominion, and indeed, Sir (as our reverend bishops can bear testimony), over the entire American continent. From the flowery lands of the Saskatchewan and the Assiniboine to the glades of Colorado, from the frozen regions of Labrador to the cane brakes of Arkansas and the ranches of Texas, from the misty mists of Fundy to the crystal peaks of the Sierra Nevada, there is not a city, there is not a town, there is not a village, there is not a neighbourhood, where the influence of John Wesley's theology is not felt as a force in our moral regeneration. This, Sir, I say with thankfulness before this great Conference. And while the Methodism of the Dominion holds this theology in its integrity, it is our labour to incarnate it in symmetrical Christian character. We recognize with you, Sir, that our great mission is to build up moral manhood and to evolve that most precious of all things in the universe of God, holiness of character in its integrity. I will not despise the fact, Sir, that amidst the cry for culture and aesthetic development of manhood we are old-fashioned enough to desire that old type of Christian manhood that marked the early Methodism in all its enthusiasm and power. In common with you here, and in the United States, we are confronted with the emasculating forces of the world; yet in the face of much false teaching, and in the face of temptation to luxurious self-indulgence, we ring out the cry of penitence and ascetic renunciation of the world. Against the materialistic tendencies of the age which would relegate out of the

Church and out of the world all supernatural religion, we continue to take our stand by Divine communication to the souls of men, and sing, and thank God, experience that

"The Spirit answers to the blood, And tells us we are born of God."

And, Sir, I rejoice especially to express my conviction that there is a growing sympathy on the part of our rising ministry and with that distinct truth which slumbered in the quietism of the Port Royalists of France, and the Molinos of Spain, and which in evangelistic beauty and vigor it was the glory of early Methodism to give to the Church and to the world. I am thankful to say that I believe we have made as beautiful in holiness as Jane Cooper, the memory of whose character moistened the eyes of Wesley twenty years after she had gone to enrich the heavens; and mistons as consecrated as Hester Ann Rogers, who wept and worshipped in this sanctuary; while there is a growing conviction that the mission of Methodism is to spread still Scriptural holiness over the entire world. (Applause.) Yes, Sir, we have come to this great Conference that we may catch a high and holy inspiration to live and labor and witness for sanctification that is entire, for a love that is perfected by grace divine. It is, Mr. President, the anxiety of Canadian Methodism to solve the difficult problem, and I confess that for one I have come here to be instructed, —to solve the difficult problem how to develop a ministry consonant with the demands of the age in the breadth of its culture, in the depth of its scholarship, in its sympathy with the great living issues of the day, while the ministry shall retain that evangelical simplicity, that earnestness of appeal that has made the ministry of Methodism all over the world a force potential to command the intellect, to move the emotional nature, and to build up a regenerated manhood. Mr. President: We want ministers like the untutored colored brother who said he would first explain the text and then apply the text, and then go on to the lightning and thunder. (Laughter.) We want men who can wield the polished logic of Wesley, the thunder of Whitefield, and the searching unktion of Fletcher; while at the same time they can take hold of the current science of the age, and harmonize it with the deepest intuitions of Christianity. And we trust this Conference will not close without wise, suggestive, inspiring words to guide us, but shall go over the seas to develop a ministry that shall promote the enthusiasm of Methodism onwards to coming generations. Manifest, Sir, are our shortcomings over which we mourn, but we rejoice to say that in the Dominion of Canada we are not despised as a people of a noble ancestry in the domain of missions. This day, in Greenland seas, our missionaries are following our fishermen among the Arctic ice; this day they are following in the trail of the Indian in the Great Slave Lake and through the waters of the Mackenzie; this day they join hands with the missionaries of American and British Methodism in the isles of Japan and the Chinese seas. Sir, while we are loyal to every institution of Methodism, our chief enthusiasm gathers around the missionary cause, and the Church to which I have the honor to stand connected, rose in its might and wiped out the responsibility of our exobrother that we might go forth free-handed and in our labor to spread the glad Evangel of our Christianity. It has been already asked why we come to the mother Church from all over the globe—why we gather in this created centre. Why? that we may catch a higher inspiration, that we may light our altar fires with a nobler consecration, and go to our different fields of labor to live and to die for Christ. We remember, as my honored predecessor, the Bishop, intimated, the great traditions of this land; we remember that God has made this land the theatre of the grandest triumph of Christianity. We remember that when Rome was changed from brick to marble; when her power culminated in an imperialism never surpassed; when the eloquence of Cicero still lingered in her halls, and the songs of Virgil resounded in her palaces—we remember that Christianity came to these tribes—these Celtic, these Norse, these Saxon tribes—that it assimilated them, that it combined them, that it consolidated them, that it built them up into that Anglo Saxon race that today commands the resources of the financial and intellectual world. We remember that this Christianity woke the lumbering intellect which blossomed into that transcendent genius that will forever walk the inner sanctuaries of the soul and flash the torchlight of its revealing into the innermost chambers of emotional and imaginative life. We remember that it uplifted the genius of liberty, and the proud Plantagenets and the haughty Tudors and the powerful Edwards and the weak and fickle Stuarts went down before it, while freedom of conscience and of worship became triumphant. We remember the brilliant array of men that have trod this soil, whose light and heat have gone out over all the earth. We remember the man whose name we bear, whose dust lies behind us, whose heart as we heard this morning, was "strangely warmed" not far from where we stand, who became a reformer in temperance a hundred years before the Maine Law and the Kansas Constitution were framed, whose great soul was fired with the enthusiasm of missions while it was as yet an Utopian idea, whose fires many tongues could not quench, who, being dead, speaks today in ten thousand tongues, who more than any man that ever lived has woken this sin-cursed world into melodies and jubilee of song, whose line has gone out into all the earth, and his words into the end of the world.

Yes, Mr. President, millions, I believe some twenty millions, sit this day under the shadow of that vine and fig-tree which the right hand of the ministry of Methodism planted in this consecrated spot. We remember this, and as we shall go forth to our Continental homes we trust to go with a higher confidence in the divinity of our Christianity, to build up a Christian civilization, to secure the redemption of humanity, and to lift them to the skies. Oh! Mr. President, I have stood on the high banks of the Lower St. Lawrence and watched the closing of the day. It opens with promise, it closes with shadows as the dew weeps for the departed day; but over the river the departing sun sent up its silvery light, which silvered into amber, which ambered into gold, and goldened into purple, which filled the heavens until every cloudlet became a chariot—festeoned with purple, and burnished with gold; and then began the triumphant march away and away to the orient gateways of the moon. Gloriously, like the departing day, has the Conference begun; and the unktion and inspiration of its opening will abide with us. I believe it will advance in usefulness, and will become historically influential. When the shadows fall, as they will do at its close, when we clasp hands that will be parted for ever upon earth, it will be only for a little, to mount the chariots of God, and then away and away to the everlasting gateways of the morning. Wesley, with thy thousands of sleeping saints around us, and the millions that lie in these islands—Cane, with thy ten thousands in our Dominion of Canada; Asbury, with thy millions in the great Republic; John Hunt, with thy dusky sons from the far-off isles of the South; Leigh and Waterhouse and Draper, with your sons from beneath the Southern Cross, the sable sons of Africa. They look on us to-day—may we catch their spirit; may we emulate their labors; may we follow their example till the isles shall fly to the continent, till the valleys shall leap up to the mountain, till the world shall wake for the Divine Lord. We thank you, Mr. President, on behalf of the great mother Church for the welcome you have tendered us. We trust that blessing will attend you in the subsequent pilgrimage of life, and that this great Conference will be a new epoch from which Methodism and the world shall rise and go forth conquering and to conquer. (Applause.)

BREVITIES.

A shot that hits is better than a broadside that misses. Don't disparage your fellow laborer's work. Leave that to the devil who will not neglect it. When a good resolution is formed, beware of the tempter—he is then always the nearest. There are many men whose tongues might govern multitudes if they could govern their tongues. If there is any great or good thing in store for you, it will not come at the first or second call.—Emerson. To marry a rake to convert him is risky business, and takes a mighty smart missionary.—Humorist. J. G. Holland writes as follows in Mrs. Hayes' album: "Women only can make wine drinking unfeasible, and heal the nation of its curse." A young girl generally loses her freshness by mingling with fashionable society, as a bright stream does by mingling with the sea. "It's the little bits or things that fret and worry us," says Josh Billings, "We can dodge an elephant, but we can't fly." "There are two boating associations here," says a Japanese student home, "called Yale and Harvard. When it rains the members read books." Ralph, who was just seven, ran to his mother exclaiming: "Mamma, Eva McCall says, 'I am' instead of 'I is.' She does not know much 'bout 'rithmetic, does she?" Just as soon as any conviction of truth becomes central and vital, there comes the desire to utter it. Sacrifice is gladness, service is joy, when such an idea becomes a commanding power. Two Iowa farmers have been at law for a long while over the ownership of some calves that long since became beef. The costs already incurred amount to \$2,300, and the end is not yet. "What shall I tell people who ask whether you are engaged?" said a young lady at the dinner-table to a somewhat eccentric theological student. "Tell them that you don't know," was the reply. The man who doesn't get as mad and run as fast to get his cow out of his neighbor's corn field as he does to get his neighbor's cow out of his own, hasn't got the answer to the golden rule.—Glasgow Times. "As for me," says Mme. Z. whose husband is a member of the French Senate, "I always do my shopping when the Senate is discussing the Appropriation Bill. Then, you see, my husband is accustomed to such large figures that my bills look small to him." A Scotch preacher who found his congregation going to sleep one Sunday, before he had fairly begun, suddenly stopped and exclaimed: "Brethren, it's nae fair; gie a mon half a chance. Wait till I get along, and then if I'm nae worth listening to, gang to sleep, but dinna gang before I get commenced. Gie a mon a chance." A skeptical editor of the Springfield Republican once said to a Baptist minister: "Mr. —, how do you reconcile the teachings of the Bible with the latest conclusions of science?" "I have not seen this morning's Republican," said the minister. "What are the latest conclusions of modern science?" A young lady graduate read an essay entitled "Employment of Time." Her composition was based on the text, "Time wasted is existence; used is life." The next day she purchased eight ounces of zephyr of different shades, and commenced working a sky-blue dog with sea-green ears and a pink tail on a piece of yellow canvas. She expects to have it done by Christmas. People are inclined to look upon religion as cheap, and earthly goods as expensive. If they can go to heaven on a free pass they would like to go, but not otherwise. A man will work most slavishly all day to get money enough to go to the circus, and when Sunday comes he might exert himself to spend a few minutes in church, and then place a nickel on the collection plate.—Catholic Columbian.

BREACH OF PROMISE.

A recent frequent action for breach of promise of marriage the London Telegraph makes a good suggestion. Lord Coleridge recently took occasion to observe that the possibility of obtaining heavy damages in court constitutes as the law at present stands, practically the only protection of women in certain ranks of life, from the misconduct of men; for if very often happens that a woman gives up honestly and affectionately, the best years of her life to a particular man, putting aside all thoughts of marrying anyone else." In the Lord Chief Justice's opinion heavy and substantial damages, however unsatisfactory from some points of view, are really the only compensation she can obtain for the wrong done her. The Telegraph's suggestion is the adoption of a betrothal contract regularly subscribed and registered, or an advertisement in the public press as in Germany, said contract or advertisement to have legal value as proofs, behind which it shall not be necessary for the Court to inquire. Some such device would no doubt act as a check upon many an inconstant or designing love maker, and would enable an injured woman to obtain legal redress without that exposure to ridicule which attends the production of the inevitable bundles of "love-letters" in court—an exposure the dread of which no doubt compels many an ill-used woman to sit down quietly under the smart of cruel and life-lasting injury.—Toronto Globe.

ENTERPRISE.

A St. Louis paper tells of an exhibition of American enterprise not generally known. The committee of Revision of the New Testament arranged that on a certain day the proof-sheets of their labors should be given out in England simultaneously to all publishers, British and American. The English printers would thus have eight or nine days start of the American printers. The Appletons of New York, however, having selected a corps of workmen sent them across the Atlantic and also all the necessary plant, in so quiet a way that their doings and intentions were not suspected. The necessary space and passage for the workmen were secured on a fast steamer for the entire voyage, and the proof-sheets were secured, and the printers were at sea, they commenced their work and by the time the steamer reached New York the revised edition was in type and had been stereotyped, and in twenty-four hours thereafter the perfected book was being issued to the news dealers.

WASHINGS AND WAKEN.

The Japanese authorities have a difficult question to face. It is the custom in Kinkin to disinter and wash the skeletons of the dead on the third anniversary of their decease, but Kinkin was decimated by the cholera in 1879, and it is feared that opening the graves of the victims will produce another epidemic. "Yet," says the Japan Mail, "to forbid the thing by edict would have pretty much the same effect as to make waking corpses a criminal act in Ireland." Oddly enough,

the steamer bringing the issue of the Japan Mail in which the observation is made brought also a late number of the St James's Gazette containing the following paragraph: "A statement made at the meeting of the Tortex Board of Guardians the other day once more shows how desirable it is that some steps should be taken to put a stop decisively to the very objectionable gatherings among the Irish known as 'wakes.' The clerk to the guardians reported that one of the parish officers, while searching for a man who had deserted his wife and family, went to a house where a 'wake' was going on. On opening the door of a room only six feet by twelve in size, a horrible spectacle met his eyes. A number of persons were lying on the floor of the gloomy and narrow den dead drunk, while others not yet reduced to this condition were 'waking' the body, which was propped up between two chairs. The spectacle, said the officer, was one of the most dreadful he had ever witnessed. Such scenes are, however, it is to be feared, but too common in districts inhabited by the Irish poorer classes; and the sooner 'wakes' with all their attendant horrors are suppressed the better."

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