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CANADA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from 3rd page.)

effect that substitutions in the event of Commissioners being unable to attend might be dealt with by an ordinary meeting of Presbytery at any time before the meeting of the Assembly.

Rev. Dr. Topp moved that the recommendation be sent down to the Presbyteries.

Rev. J. McTavish thought a time should be fixed within which the Presbyteries should meet.

After some discussion the motion was agreed to.

An overture from the Presbytery of Montreal for leave to admit Rev. James S. Black, of Nassau N. H., a Congregational minister, as a minister of the Canada Presbyterian Church was read.

A discussion arose which was in progress when, it being six o'clock, the Assembly adjourned.

The Assembly met at half past seven. After devotional exercises, and the reading and confirmation of the minutes.

Rev. Professor McLaren read the report of the Committee on the returns of Presbyteries to the remit on Union. The following Presbyteries agreed to the basis named in the remit *simpliciter*—Montreal by 12 to 8; Brockville by a majority of 1; Ottawa, by 11 to 6; Kingston, unanimously; Cobourg, unanimously; Toronto, by 14 to 8; Simcoe, by 7 to 5; Hamilton, by 14 to 6; Paris, by 12 to 10; Guelph, of the articles of the basis by 20 to 8, and of the whole remit by 18 to 9; Chatham by 10 to 5; Stratford, by 17 to 1; Huron, by 18 to 12; Manitoba, by 5 to 3; Ontario disapproved of Union on the present basis, but recommended it on the first three articles alone; Owen Sound approved of the remit by 6 to 3, but desired the addition of an article on the Headship of Christ, such as would make the Union complete and harmonious—by a majority of 6 to 4, the minority desiring a more definite article on the subject: Durham, by 9 to 5 approved of the remit, with the exception of resolution 8. Bruce disapproved by 8 to 4; and London also disapproved, though the vote was not given. The returns from sessions and congregations showed that 144 sessions approved of the basis and resolutions. One gave a qualified approval; six approved of the basis only and 85 disapproved. Of congregations, 168 approved *simpliciter*, 8 of the basis only, 83 disapproved, and one gave a qualified disapproval. The returns of sessions and congregations in the Presbyteries of Chatham and Ontario had not been received.

Rev. Dr. Topp asked what were the grounds of disapproval. Were they not in most cases a desire for delay?

Rev. Professor McLaren said there were several of that kind.

Rev. Dr. Proudfoot asked how many Presbyteries approved.

Rev. Dr. Topp said 16 approved, two of them unanimously, three disapproved, and one, Ontario, gave a rather peculiar return.

Rev. J. M. King said the report ought to have on the face of it the number of Presbyteries which approved or disapproved.

Rev. A. Wilson thought the report was a very extraordinary one. If it had been known that all these details would be brought out, the votes might be very different.

Rev. R. Uro thought the report entirely out of order. He moved that it be re-committed.

Rev. Dr. Proudfoot seconded the motion. After some discussion on this point,

Rev. Principal Caven moved in amendment that on Professor McLaren summing up the number of Presbyteries the report be received.

The amendment was carried unanimously.

Rev. Professor McLaren stated that fourteen Presbyteries approved *simpliciter* and five technically disapproved, three absolutely and two with modifications.

Rev. J. McTavish asked at what date the report of the Presbytery of Stratford was adopted.

Rev. Prof. McLaren said he had received the report in the regular way.

Rev. J. McTavish proceeded to allude to the proceedings before the Stratford Presbytery, but was ruled out of order by the Moderator.

Rev. Principal McVicar suggested the postponement of the question.

Rev. Dr. Topp moved that the Assembly proceed at once to consider the question—Agreed to.

The report of the Union Committee was then called for.

Rev. Dr. Topp said the Committee was appointed last year, but in consequence of the remit to the Presbyteries there had not been much occasion to meet. They had met a few days ago, but he would rather not report on that meeting until the matter came up in Conference.

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss moved, seconded by Rev. Dr. Topp, "That the General Assembly having had laid before it the returns to the remit of Union with certain Churches sent down to Presbyteries, Kirk sessions, and congregations by the last Assembly, and also a report from the Committee on Union with the said Churches, and finding that a majority of Presbyteries has expressed approval of the same, there seems to exist considerable difference of opinion in the Church in reference to Union on the terms of the remit; yet believing that notwithstanding this difference, and which the remit had in view is attainable—with a view to the attainment of that end—agrees before proceeding further to resolve itself in one Committee of the Whole for the purpose of a free and friendly conference on the subject, and with the special object of sustaining how Union may be obtained on terms most generally if not universally satisfactory to the Church." He said that they must all agree that if this object were to be gained, it was desirable to carry it out in such a manner as to offend the feelings of those members of the Church the least. The object of the motion was to induce the Church to pause before agreeing to Union on the terms of the remit. Many thought it possible that the Church of Scotland would not object to the exhibition of the distinctive principles which were in question but he now thought it very improbable. He had also little hope of the difficulty being removed by their obtaining a basis such as that of the Australian Union. He and those with whom he sympathized would be only too glad to obtain such a basis. There was however, another course, namely, to agree to union simply on the basis of the Westminster standard. All the difficulties which has arisen in the Church of the Scottish Reformation had arisen out of circumstances which did not exist here. (Hear, hear.) They all admitted that, and it reduced their difficulties to the minimum. He made his motion believing that light would be likely to break upon the Church in a friendly conference. He was as strongly opposed to union as any one but his object now was not to prevent union, because that was hopeless, but to prevent evil, to prevent a union which would cause division.

Rev. Dr. Topp seconded the motion because he respected the motions which had prompted it. He hoped the result of the conference would be a harmonious agreement on the important subject. (Cheers.)

Rev. Principal Caven would not oppose the motion, but he did not approve of the manner in which they were about to approach the subject. It was only an extreme desire on his part to reciprocate the Christian sentiments of Mr. Middlemiss that led him to agree to a motion which assumed that the returns were unsatisfactory, and that the basis should be amended.

Rev. Principal McVicar suggested that the resolution should be simply one to go into Committee of the Whole.

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss consented to make the alteration, and the resolution was carried.

The Assembly went into Committee of the Whole.

The Moderator called Rev. Mr. McTavish to the chair.

On the suggestion of Rev. Mr. Moffat, Rev. Mr. Smith, of Grafton, engaged in prayer.

Rev. Dr. Topp said he approached this subject now with very different feelings from those with which he would some day show, as how he had some reason to hope that they would be able to come to some decision in reference to these protracted negotiations on the subject of unions, and they would all be glad if they found that they had been led by a way they knew not into a harbour of peace. (Cheers.) He thought that it would be unwise to review all that had been said or written and printed in the press on this subject, for the matter was one of such great importance to Presbyterianism in this great Dominion that it would be very unwise to fan the flame of controversy into life itself. If they could agree to a basis of union which would state the truth, and allow them to maintain their principles, he thought they should leave other matters to be dealt with by the United Church. The great bone of contention had been, it appeared, the doctrine of the headship, but as that doctrine was fully set forth in the Confession of Faith, by agreeing to the confession they agreed to the headship. At a Committee meeting held the other day, a proposal had been made the following preamble should be inserted before the basis of Union:—"The Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, the Canada Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in the Maritime Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces holding the same doctrine and government and discipline, believing that it would be for the glory of God and the advancement of the cause of Christ that they should be united, and thus form one Presbyterian Church in the Dominion, independent of all other churches in its jurisdiction and under authority to Christ alone, the head of His Church, and the head over all things to His Church, agree to unite on the following basis, to be subscribed by the Moderators of the respective churches in their name and their behalf. (Cheers.) He believed there was every reason to believe that this preamble would be agreed to. (Renewed applause.)

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss believed that if union were carried out the terms of the remit would have a mischievous result. He was hopeless of any material modification. This preamble was something, but if they could have dropped it from the basis the fourth article, and the third, fourth, and eighth resolutions it would do much further towards uniting them. He believed there really was no unanimity of sentiment, and therefore he was hopeless of agreement in reference to that great and important principle. He, however, saw light in going into union on the basis of the Westminster standard. This would commit them to nothing wrong and would admit nothing objectionable or offensive into the constitution of the Church as some of them believed this remit would do. If the union took place in this way it must be on the basis of the standard pure and simple, without explanation. The present remit instead of burying old controversies revived them.

Rev. R. Uro asked Mr. Middlemiss to state in what he considered a difference existed in reference to the spiritual independence of the Church.

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss said the doctrine of this Church was set forth in the present basis, but he believed that there were ministers who considered that in cases of irregularity there was an appeal to the civil court, that the Church was bound to carry out its regulations to the responsibility to the civil power. In answer to a further question.

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss referred to the three resolutions passed in Edinburgh on this subject in connection with the *Cardosa* case, and his letters to the B. A. Presbyterian for his views.

Rev. Mr. Uro asked Mr. Middlemiss if he thought any ministers in the other Church believed that a minister could appeal to the Civil Court for the restoration of his charge, beyond claiming damages for injury to his character for deposition.

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss replied that he was not aware of such a claim.

The Committee then reported progress, and ten o'clock having arrived the day closed.

MORNING SILENCE.

Friday, June 5.

The Assembly met at 10 o'clock.

After devotional exercises, reading and confirmation of the minutes, and adoption of the report of the Committee on bills and overtures.

The Assembly again went into Committee on the Union question, Rev. Principal McVicar in the chair.

Rev. Mr. Middlemiss postponed any further remarks he might wish to make.

Rev. Principal Caven expressed his pleasure at seeing the Assembly disposed to approach this subject in such a spirit. Whatever views they might hold in reference to the question of Union, they must regard this as an important crisis in the history of Presbyterianism. With reference to the other Church in this country, the great question was now settled, and they found themselves, in regard to any practical work and in spirit one Church. They were homogeneous. He would like to see the basis perfect, but there were such difficulties that it was impossible to draw up a perfect literary document. Each of the four Churches negotiating had preferences for certain forms of expression, and he thought all they should aim at should be an expression of the convictions of enlightened, liberal Christian men. The present basis contained very little more than the standards pure and simple. His reason for considering that there was an insuperable objection to Union upon the basis of the standards pure and simple, for saying that its adoption would drive him and others who had the voluntary principle out of the Church, was that he could not agree to all the expressions in the Confession of Faith in reference to the power and functioning of the Civil Magistrate. The American Church had re-written the 23rd chapter of the Confession, or they could not have united upon the standards pure and simple. If they adopted Mr. Middlemiss' suggestion, they would not only prevent Union, but they would read the Church. The great difficulty was in reference to the great doctrine of the headship of Christ. He affirmed that if they believed that this doctrine was at all tampered with in the basis, not a man in the Canada Presbyterian Church would agree to adopt it. They were all at one in this matter, and there were not two parties among them, one holding the doctrine of the headship and another latitudinarian or Erastian views. Some of them thought this doctrine was fully conserved in the basis, and others thought it was not. The difference was then simply about the wording of the document. If they differ about the doctrine, then sound the tocsin of disruption, but to talk about disrupting the Church because they differed about a document was preposterous. The second article of the basis accepted the Confession of Faith, which certainly contained the doctrine of the headship of Christ. Was it a sensible thing not to be satisfied with this? The Congregationalists said, "Why are you not satisfied with the Scriptures?" They replied that there were passages in the Scriptures about which men differed, and which required a plain technical statement. But to require confession upon confession was to bring the standards of the Church into disrepute. Surely the preamble now proposed would satisfy the brethren who were not already satisfied. With regard to the fourth article, he said it was a total mistake to imagine that the article was a copy of an article drawn up by Dr. Cook before the disruption. It was put into its present shape by men who had never heard of Dr. Cook; in fact it was drawn by him self. (Cheers.) The article was designed to set forth clearly the spirit of Church Catholicity. It was the glory of the Presbyterian Church that while it had a perfect Church organization it recognized the character and standing of other Christian Churches, and that while it avoided latitudinarianism it was thoroughly Catholic in its spirit. (Cheers.) This article he contended was one of the most honourable to the Church. The rev. gentleman took his seat amid loud cheers.

Rev. Dr. Gordon asked for an explanation of the words, "fraternal intercourse with other Churches."

Rev. Principal Caven said it was purposely designed to be general, not ecclesiastical or official.

Mr. Gordon asked if it was intended to send and receive delegates to and from all other members of the Presbyterian family.

Principal Caven said it specified Churches having the same doctrine, discipline, and Church government as their own. (Cheers.)

Rev. J. Ross said if they swept away the basis adopted in 1861 they destroyed the union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterians.

Rev. Principal Caven said they had nothing to do with any body which they considered to have departed from the doctrine, discipline, and government which they held. (Loud cheers.)

Rev. Dr. Topp asked what difference there was between Mr. Ross' present position in regard to other Presbyterian Churches and the position he would hold in the United Church. (Cheers.)

Rev. Mr. Ross could not see the relevancy of the question, as the article bound them to ecclesiastical relations with the Church of Scotland.

Rev. Dr. Topp pointed out that the Church now held ecclesiastical relations to that Church to the same extent as the United Church would hold. (Cheers and cries of No.)

Rev. Mr. McKinnon argued that the fourth article was of no use at all.

Rev. T. McPherson, Moderator, defended the fourth article against Mr. McKinnon's remarks. He could not agree with Mr. Ross, that they could put themselves out of all relationship to the Church of Scotland. They held the same relationship now as the United Church would. If a minister of the Church of Scotland came to them now and accepted their standards was it conceivable that he would be rejected? With reference to Mr. Middlemiss' statement that there were ministers in the other Church who held different views from those of this Church on the subject of the headship of Christ, he remarked that he did not believe it. There were ministers in that Church whose views on that subject were different from those of Mr. Middlemiss, but Mr. Middlemiss' views ought not to be put forth as those of this Church. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. J. McTavish said he stood before the Court with a feeling of great responsibility. They had reached a crisis—there was no doubt about that. With the fourth article in the basis he could not go into Union; but if the fourth article and some of the resolutions were struck out, and the preamble inserted, he would, accept it. He could not accept a basis he did not agree with. If they could get no other basis, and were determined to go into Union, let them go on. His course then was clear. But he hoped some other course might be found.

Rev. J. M. King said that the doctrine of the headship of Christ was in the Confession; the Church was bound by it.

Rev. Professor McLaren said his motion was to send the basis down to the Presbyteries for consideration.

Rev. J. M. King read the resolution which sent the basis down for consideration of the one point of the headship of Christ. He proceeded to say that he could accept the fourth article without difficulty, but could so fully sympathize with the difficulties of others that he would be willing to do anything to meet them.

The Committee rose, and reported progress.

Rev. Mr. Reid read an announcement that the ladies of the Ottawa Ladies' College invited the members of the Assembly to visit them to-morrow evening at eight o'clock.

AFTERNOON SILENCE.

The Assembly resumed at 3 o'clock.

After devotional exercises and the reading and confirmation of the minutes, the Assembly again went into Committee on the question of Union.

Rev. Dr. Proudfoot expressed his pleasure at seeing so much harmony in the Conference. He was also happy to see that the difficulty with reference to the headship had been got over, and he asked those brethren who objected to notice how much had been given up to them in this respect. It was this obstacle which generated all the heat of feeling, and now that it had been taken out of the way they ought to be able to look at the fourth article, the only remaining obstacle, with great coolness. Too much importance was, he thought, attached to this fourth article, and he pointed out that the United Church would be perfectly independent of all Churches, and would make its own alterations in reference to the admission of ministers from other Churches. He reminded the Court that now, while the ministers of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland were received by this Church without any difficulty, those Churches would not receive ministers of the Canada Presbyterian Church without special reference to the Supreme Court, and the sister Church stood in a still more humiliating position with reference to the Church of Scotland. He opposed the withdrawal of the fourth article, said that more attention ought to be paid to the warm feeling which prevailed the country in favour of this Union, pointed out that if the remit last year had contained the preamble, the reception of the remit would have been most enthusiastic in all the Presbyteries—(Cheers)—and concluded by urging that the present favourable opportunity should be seized for the consummation of the long expected Union, which would be of the greatest benefit to both Churches and to the cause of Christianity in the land.

Mr. H. Young moved that the speakers be limited to ten minutes. (Cheers.)

After some discussion the motion was withdrawn.

Rev. Professor Gregg said he agreed with Rev. Principal Caven in reference to the basis of Union, but he was not so well pleased with the resolutions. He thought the proposed name of the new Church was not a good one, but that was a small matter. He objected, however, to the resolution by which the Assembly would acquiesce in the proposed disposal of their temporalities by the other Church. He did not object to the disposal, but to any expressed acquiescence in it. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. Mr. McTavish agreed with Professor Gregg, and also objected to the 3rd and 4th resolutions.

In answer to Rev. Mr. McLeod.

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Rev. Dr. Topp explained that the resolutions could be altered by the Church, and were not binding in the way that the basis was binding. The Committee had merely expressed their satisfaction that the other Churches were satisfied with their own settlement of the Temporalities Fund.

Dr. Dixon, of Kingston, agreed with Prof. Gregg, and believed the resolution would bind the United Church to continue the payments now made out of the Temporalities Fund, even if the original fund was lost. He saw no difficulty in the fourth article, or, now the preamble was inserted, in reference to the headship.

Rev. Dr. Topp said the fund was still to be administered by the Temporalities Board and was not to come into the Church at all, so the fund only would be responsible for the payments referred to.

Rev. A. Wilson said the Union could not be consummated for at least another year. He advocated another remedy to the Presbyteries. He considered that the fourth article bound the Church to receive ministers from the Churches referred to, and the regulations could only refer to the mode of admitting them. He thought the Church ought to be entirely independent of all other Churches.

Mr. Taylor, of Toronto, said that under the eighth resolution the ministers could have no possible claim against the United Church, should the Temporalities Fund become deficient, so long as it was in the hands of the Present Board, which was incorporated by Act of Parliament. He expressed his desire, however, that the resolution should be blotted out, and that no recognition of the existence of this fund should appear on the resolutions.

Rev. D. Gordon of Harrington, said he had never set himself in antagonism to Union, but expressed several objections to the present basis.

Rev. Dr. Thornton corrected some of the statements made by Mr. Gordon, and expressed his regret that the eighth resolution had not been expunged.

Rev. J. M. King moved the following resolution:—

The Committee of the Whole having entered into conference on the subject of Union with the negotiating Churches, and having heard the preamble in the terms on which it is proposed to adopt the articles of the basis and having approved the same, rejoices to find that by its terms one great obstacle to Harmonious Union has been removed; but inasmuch as it appears that the fourth article of the basis presents a serious difficulty to many brethren of the Church, agrees to request a conference with the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, now in session in this city, with a view to secure if possible its consent to the removal of this article from the basis, so as to preserve the integrity of this Church in entering into Union with the negotiating Churches; it being believed that the object contemplated in this article could be secured in a way more generally acceptable."

Rev. T. Wardrop seconded the motion. He remarked that they could not each obtain Union upon the terms they wished, and he believed that this resolution would commend itself to their brethren of the Synod in connection with the Church of Scotland.

Rev. Mr. Warden suggested that the resolution was not in order, as the preamble was not in the hands of the Committee.

Rev. Prof. McLaren thought the difficulty could be got over by inserting the preamble in this resolution. He supported the resolution, and in reference to the preamble said it would have to be sent down to the Presbyteries as the basis had been. He urged the omission of the fourth article, which was either useless or objectionable. He would be willing to agree to Union on the standard pure and simple, but thought it would not be kind to other members to force it on.

Rev. Dr. Topp thought a preliminary resolution for the adoption of the preamble should be passed. He moved that the preamble be adopted and agreed to. Carried unanimously.

Rev. J. M. King's motion was then put.

Rev. Principal Caven said that it was necessary that something should be done with the fourth article, but thought they should not indicate explicitly their objections. He moved 1st, "That the Assembly approve of the first three articles of the basis. 2nd, That in consideration of the difficulties which many members of this Assembly feel with regard to the fourth article of the basis, the Assembly respectfully seek conference with the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, in order to see whether the objects sought to be attained by this article can be gained in some way which will be satisfactory, if possible, to all the members of this Assembly."

This amendment was carried.

Rev. Mr. Taylor moved, "That inasmuch as some members of this Assembly are unwilling to express an opinion upon the mode in which the Temporalities Fund of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland should be disposed of or dealt with, desiring to leave the control and disposition of the said Fund entirely in the hands of the said Church, and therefore feel a difficulty in concurring in the expression of satisfaction contained in the resolution appended to the basis, the desire to confer with the said Church in order to secure the withdrawal of the said resolution."

The motion was agreed to unanimously. The Committee then rose and reported the resolutions, which were adopted by the Assembly.

It being six o'clock the Moderator closed.