
Rev. J. A. Macdonald

began to play the prelude. What a strange, gloomy Scotch place it was! And when the kist o' whistles began to drone in the rear of the kirk, what unco vibrations chased themselves up and down the spine of reverend young Macdonald! Never had he heard a pipe organ before; nothing but cabinet reed organs and precentors. This was a wicked instrument and he liked it.

Into the pulpit came a pale-faced man in a black gown who, as he worked through psalms and pipe-organing old St. Ann up to his sermon, caused the raw-boned young preacher in the gallery to crane over the rail. Never had Macdonald heard such a sermon; not so much the words as the ideas. That preacher was accused of being a heterodoxist; the first freethinking parson Macdonald had ever heard. And because that too was a bit wicked, he liked it.

That was the most momentous Sabbath J. A. Macdonald had ever known; when he stood on the verge of the unorthodox, hobnobbing with heresies.

After attending college at Edinburgh, Macdonald found himself, a young resounding Demosthenes—also with a slight hesitancy of speech—pastor of Knox Church, St. Thomas, Ontario, a railway town. No Canada Southern train rushing through St. Thomas ever flung the miles over its boiler with finer ecstasy than Macdonald chucked behind him the verbiage of a grand sermonising discourse. People drove for miles to hear him go up and down the Jacob's ladder crowded with angels; now and then having for a triumphal text, "Blessed are the meek." Beginning with a zephyr-like conversation, minute by minute he pulled out stop after stop in his pipe-organ discourse, until with all the diapasons and tubes resounding the sermon became a grand kist o' whistles, the congregation were dumb-founded with awe, and the minister visiting a sick lady on Monday told her what a glorious time he had in the pulpit yesterday.

Piously he continued to read the *Globe*, sometimes