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Before 1837 there were in Hamilton, then a village of less than one thousand people, several Presbyterian American merchants who had a leading place in the village. Some of them occupied a leading place for many years after that time. There was an American Presbyterian church, the last minister of which was the Rev. Mr. Marsh. The events of the year proved disastrous to the greater number of that little American community. There was nothing proved against any of them, but they came to be regarded with suspicion; and minister and merchants found it best to leave the place. Their church, a strong stone gothic building, still stands, and forms part of the premises of the Gurney foundry on John street. One or two of the congregation who remained were leading citizens of Hamilton all their lives, and staunch in their attachment to our great Presbyterian cause, and great helpers of it.

The Rev. Alexander Gale, from Aberdeen, Scotland, was the first Presbyterian minister who stately officiated in Hamilton. He was called from Lachine, where he had laboured about two years, and was inducted at Hamilton in Nov., 1833. He preached in the court house until the original St. Andrew's church was erected. It was a small frame building, but was thrice enlarged to accommodate the growing Presbyterian population of the young city. In 1844 Knox church was formed, as representing the Free Church, with Rev. Alexander Gale as pastor. In January, 1845, the Rev. Alexander McKid, formerly of Bytown, became minister of St. Andrew's. In 1848 he was translated to Goderich. The Rev. Daniel McKee, a native of Perthshire, succeeded in 1850, and demitted the charge in 1853. In October of that year the Rev. Robert Burnet was inducted. Shortly afterwards, in order to make way for the present elegant stone structure, the original frame church was removed two blocks westward, where it still stands, and is occupied by a small German R. C. congregation. The present edifice was opened for worship in 1857, having cost about \$60,000, of which \$30,000 was in the form of a debt upon the congregation. Circumstances arose in connection with this heavy burden which subsequently led to the closing of the church for a time. Many of the members worshipped with neighbouring congregations, while others built a brick church a few blocks to the westward, which was named St. Andrew's, with Rev. R. Burnet, pastor.

The original St. Andrew's church was reopened in 1873, with Rev. J. C. Smith, B.D., formerly of Belleville, pastor. To avoid confusion the name was changed to St. Paul's, Rev. Mr. Burnet having demitted his charge. The new St. Andrew's church property subsequently reverted to the congregation of St. Paul's by the harmonious reunion of the two congregations. That property was afterwards sold to a congregation of the Reformed Episcopal Church, by whom it is now occupied under the name of St. James' church.

The Rev. J. C. Smith was called to St. Andrew's church, Guelph, in 1877, and early in the following year the present pastor of St. Paul's, Rev. R. J. Laidlaw, was called from the pastorate of the Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian church, Detroit, and inducted March 12, 1878. During Mr. Laidlaw's pastorate this church has enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, and has raised for all purposes the sum of \$83,000; for debt and interest, \$24,400, for new lecture room, organ and other improvements \$14,000, for mission schemes \$10,600, and for current expenses \$34,000. The total debt, as stated elsewhere, is now less than \$16,000.

Knox church is also in a flourishing condition, having a membership of between five and six hundred, with Rev. M. Fraser, M.A., recently of St. Thomas, as its pastor. The same may justly be said of the other five Presbyterian churches of Hamilton. Central church, organized at an early day in connection with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, is the largest Presbyterian church in the city, having a membership of nearly 700, with Rev. S. Lyle, B.D., pastor. It was of this church that Dr. William Ormiston, of New York, was formerly pastor. Mr. Lyle was called from the Presbyterian church of Connor, in the north of Ireland, and inducted Feb. 12, 1878. McNab street church was organized from Knox church in '52, and is now one of the strongest churches in the city, having a membership of between four and five hundred, with Rev. D. H. Fletcher, pastor. Mr. Fletcher was called from Scarborough, Ont., and inducted in his present charge in 1872, and is now the oldest pastor of any denomination in the city.

St. John's church was organized from McNab street church, and has now a membership of about 300 with Rev. T. Goldsmith, formerly of Scarforth, Ont., pastor, inducted eight and a half years ago. Besides its home work, this church has of late years conducted two successful mission schools, one of which is a number of miles beyond the city limits.

Erskine church was organized from Central church in 1880, with Rev. T. Scouler, pastor. From being but a mission a few years ago, this young church has rushed up rapidly to be an important congregation of nearly 300 members, who have erected and are now occupying a new church and lecture room that would do credit to any congregation.

Wentworth mission church, an off-shoot from St. John's, was organized within the past year, and has now about 80 members, ministered to by the Rev. A. K. Caswell.

In addition to these churches a mission Sabbath school has been opened in the western part of the city by the McNab street congregation, and promises to become the eighth Presbyterian church of the city at no distant day.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. WEDNESDAY.

THE proceedings, as usual, began with divine service. At the hour of beginning service, 8 p.m., St. Paul's church was crowded to the doors. The retiring Moderator, Rev. Principal McKnight, preached an able and impressive

SERMON

from the text, Matthew xiii. 25. "Then said He unto them, therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Dr. McKnight first showed that ministers were scribes of Christianity, and said they had in this verse their instruction for preaching. There were some people who demanded that in preaching all should be old, and others who demanded all should be new, but they had the Master's word that they should bring forth things new and old. They could not add to this, but it might be profitable to observe its application. He divided the subject under three heads, things old, things new, and things both new and old, and proceeded.

I. THINGS OLD.

Since it is said under this head that the preacher must tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love. The story was not old when the words of the text were spoken; it was not yet fully framed, for Calvary was yet future. But it was old in promise, even then. It is an old world story now. It has come down to us through the mists of centuries—has been told from father to son through sixty successive generations. The preacher must set forth law and Gospel—must speak of sin and judgment and redeeming grace. God commendeth His love to us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He died for our sins and rose again for our justification. In the tenderness of His compassion, as in the beauty of His holiness, He is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. Other foundation can no man lay. It is the Rock of Ages.

II.—THINGS NEW.

1. New methods of presenting the truth—teaching by parable was an innovation. Not that the use of parables was unknown to the ancient Hebrews, but the parabolic method of Jesus was a conspicuous departure from the custom of the scribes. Metaphor, simile, parable and allegory afford a boundless field for the exercise of sanctified ingenuity in searching out acceptable words, and giving an air of novelty to old truths. The familiar facts of nature shadow forth the laws of the kingdom of grace, and although we may hesitate to affirm that the laws of the two realms are identical, we need not hesitate to recognize a fundamental similarity between them, inasmuch as the same supreme mind is author of them both.

2. New methods of presenting the relation of different truths to one another. Take, for example, the relation between creed and life, or between faith and holiness. The ordinary strain of evangelical preaching half a century ago was to this effect: Salvation is wholly of grace. The sinner, by believing in Jesus, obtains forgiveness of sins, escapes hell, and when he dies goes to heaven. For these blessings—peace with God here and hope of heaven hereafter—he ought to be grateful, and gratitude to Christ who suffered and died for his salvation, should urge him to do the will of Christ and walk in His steps. A godly life is thus a fitting corollary to the exercise of faith and hope. Now all that is good and true so far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth. Consecration of the soul is a mere pendicle to faith in Christ, but enters into its very essence. He is named Jesus for He saves His people from their sins and not merely from their punishment. To take hold of Him as Jesus is to take hold of Him as our deliverer from sin—its fascination, its debasement, its defilement, its tyranny, as well as its doom. He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. When we accept an interest in His work, we accept the purposes for which He wrought it. We surrender ourselves to Him to be saved from sin here and now. We say to Him Rabboni. In other words, true faith implies repentance, or, as some old writers put it, it accepts a whole Christ—Christ in all His offices—Christ to rule in us and over us, as well as to die for us. The Gospel has its categorical imperative as well as the law, though the yoke of obedience is lined with love. To serve Christ, and find our happiness in serving Christ, is not a mere optional expression of our gratitude to Him for saving us. It belongs to the very nature of the salvation for which we come to Him. To withhold this service is breach of covenant; it is failure to be saved.

3. New elements of truth. The Christian revelation is now complete, and it might seem out of place to suggest the possibility of substantive additions being made to our knowledge. But the Scriptures have to be interpreted; and the cross lights thrown by science and revelation on each other may lead to a juster apprehension of both. As regards interpretation, whilst the main outlines of saving truth stand forth bold and clear, so that he may run that readeth them, there are large portions of Scripture that are more or less obscure, and require for their exposition all the resources that exegetical science can command. From the application of these resources no startling revolution need be apprehended. Yet the contrast between the present and the past, as regards the volume of interesting and edifying thought gathered from the study of the Scriptures, justifies the expectation of still further gain for the future. Compare the Evangelical literature of to-day with the Christian writings that have come down to us from the second century. The authors had the same books of the New Testament in their hands that we have. These books were written in their mother tongue, so that they did not need to toil over grammar and lexicon, and the usage of contemporary literature, as we do. Yet the study of these writings, as a whole, is extremely disappointing. We come to them expecting at least a firm grasp and coherent statement of the leading principles of Evangelical religion. But the expectation is scarcely realized. The leading facts of the Gospel history—those enumerated in the Apostles' Creed—are distinctly affirmed. But their doctrinal significance seems to be imperfectly appreciated, or, at least, we fail to obtain those models of skill in exposition and of comprehensiveness of doctrinal statement that we should have expected to find in the writers of the primeval Church. For historical purposes they are invaluable. Every genuine addition to them is worth its weight in gold. But their interest depends on their antiquity. Apart from that, and viewed simply as presentations of religious truth for the edification of the reader, the Christian literature of the second and third centuries is hardly worth reprinting. The controversies of the intervening ages have cleared the air and brought into relief the points of vital moment, so that a modern exposition of the way of life presents a distinct and conspicuous advance on anything we have from the pens of apostolic or post-apostolic fathers. The Church has made real progress in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and there is no obvious reason why that progress should be arrested at the present stage. One idea may be specified as coming into unwelcome prominence. The history of revelation is the history of an educative process. God revealed Himself to men as they were able to bear it. The idea of progress is not novel. The germ of it is contained in the initial statement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that God in sundry portions and divers manners spoke to the fathers by the Prophets. For its further expansion we must look to the science of biblical theology, meaning thereby not the theology of the Bible as a whole, but the theology of the several books as compared with those of earlier or later date. Allusion was also made to the progress of physical science. We have been indebted to astronomy for larger

conceptions of the power of God; the microscope has given us further illustrations of His wisdom. Science is pushing its researches in all directions with unwonted success. Theology will reap the benefit. There need be no fear that the word and the works of God will contradict each other.

4. New applications of truth. The Christian principles of equity and humanity have already been brought to bear with effect on some large problems, as those of slavery and the position of woman. The increasing magnitude of industrial and commercial enterprise creates new problems that await solution. The tyranny of capital has to be abolished without destroying the freedom of the workman. Many other questions await the further exercise of Christian thought and Christian effort, as the abolition of war, the management of pauperism, the suppression of intemperance. It gives the charm of freshness as well as serviceableness to the teaching of the Christian scribe, when it deals immediately with the needs and dangers of the age. And this service lies within the proper scope of the pulpit, for the Gospel is given to mould our lives here as well as to prepare us for the great hereafter.

III. THINGS OLD IN ONE ASPECT AND NEW IN ANOTHER.

Take a single instance. Death is old for the race; new for the individual. No saying is more trite than "Man is mortal," yet it causes each individual sad surprise when death strikes down one near and dear to himself. The shafts of death had laid low some among their own number. Carrying out the lesson of the text and remembering that the end of each might be nearer than he knew, let them work while it was yet day.

At the conclusion of the sermon the congregation joined in singing, "Lead, Kindly Light," which brought the service to a close.

After the calling of the roll by Dr. Fraser, Dr. McKnight returned thanks to the Assembly for the kindly treatment accorded to him in the discharge of his duties as Moderator. In reviewing the changes that had taken place in the membership of the court he paid a high tribute to the memory of the late Dr. McGregor, Agent of the Church in the Eastern section, Dr. Thos. Ross, ex-Principal Dalhousie College, Halifax, and Rev. J. McLeod, missionary in Trinidad. He called upon the Assembly for nominations for the Moderatorship. It was moved by Rev. R. Campbell, of Montreal, and seconded by Rev. S. Lyle, of Hamilton, that

REV. J. K. SMITH, OF GALT,

be Moderator. There being no other nomination, Mr. Smith was declared Moderator amid applause.

ADDRESS OF THE MODERATOR.

After thanking the Assembly for the very cordial manner in which it had conferred honour upon him, Mr. Smith felt sure that the forbearance, courtesy and co-operation of the Court would be extended to him. He thought the Assembly on entering upon its work had reason to feel encouraged. As God had blessed other Canadian Churches during the past year so he had also blessed the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Union had been successful. Our work is going on in beautiful harmony. Much as we have done in the past more remains to be done. Among other things he urged that it should be earnestly coveted that family religion should become more deep, and that deep-toned piety and warm-hearted Christian sympathy should pervade the homes of the Church. The Church should also strive to get a firmer, more loving grasp of the young, and keeping them interested in its work and general Church labour. The Church should arouse itself to bring within itself the non-churchgoing element unfortunately to be found everywhere.

ANSWERS TO LOYAL ADDRESSES.

Advices from the Queen's Secretary and the Governor-General's Secretary to the loyal addresses passed at the last Assembly were read.

DAMAGES TO MISSIONARY CHAPELS.

Dr. McKnight announced that he would lay on the table correspondence between Rev. Mr. McKay, missionary to Formosa, and the Chinese authorities, relating to the claim presented by the former for damages to ten or twelve missionary chapels by the mob. The result of the correspondence, he explained, was that Mr. McKay succeeded in securing \$10,000 as reparation for the damage done.

SOME LEGACIES CONSIDERED.

Dr. McKnight also explained that in the case of the legacy of James Pearson it had been represented to the Assembly that while the legal claim of the Assembly was clear, the money should not be taken because of the circumstances of the case. A special committee was appointed, and recommended that the legacy should not be taken, and he as Moderator gave effect to that view. The legacy of Andrew Morrison was still in abeyance owing to some technical difficulties. Rev. Alex. B. McKay moved a vote of thanks to the retiring Moderator for the manner in which he had filled the chair and for his eloquent and able sermon.

The vote was seconded by Rev. Prof. McLaren and unanimously carried.

THURSDAY.

Applications were read from various Presbyteries to allow certain ministers to retire from Presbyteries, asking leave for the reception of certain ministers into the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and also from students asking for license to preach or to be received as students of certain years. On motion these applications were referred to Committees to report at a later seshment.

TERM SERVICE IN THE ELDERSHIP.

An overture was read from the Presbytery of Hamilton and London recommending the Assembly to consider the advisability of establishing a term service for elders for a term not exceeding five years.

Rev. S. Lyle in an able speech moved that the question be sent down to Presbyteries to report back to the General Assembly. Mr. J. C. Munro seconded the motion, basing his views on experience. The discussion was continued by Mr.

Walter Paull, Montreal, Mr. W. Cole, Mr. R. C. Smith, Mr. N. McQueen, Mr. D.W. Beadle, Mr. J. C. Eckford, and Mr. Hodgkin.

Mr. R. Murray, of Halifax, thought that the Church was not prepared for the question, and moved in amendment, seconded by Mr. J. Brown, Toronto, that the Assembly see no sufficient cause to take any action with regard to the tenure of office of the elders of the Church, therefore resolve to dismiss the overture. A vote was taken resulting in 118 for the amendment to dismiss the overture and 84 in favour of the motion.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

Principal McKnight was in favour of sending down to Presbyteries a remit allowing the inferior Courts to exercise discretion in the matter. Principal Caven moved "That a Committee be appointed to prepare a report in accordance with the views expressed on this subject by the majority of the Presbyteries of the Church, to be submitted to the Assembly at an early seshment." Rev. Dr. Caven's amendment was carried unanimously, Principal McKnight's motion being withdrawn.

THE HYMNAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. W. B. McMurrich presented the Report of the Hymnal Committee. The Report showed that a tonic-solfa of the Church Hymnal had been published at 70 cents a copy, which was a price a good deal lower than expected, but the sale was low, consequently there was little encouragement to publish a tonic-solfa edition of the Sunday-school hymnal. The Committee had made a contract with Mr. C. Blackett Robinson to publish the hymnals, the plates being the property of the Committee. The Committee had a balance from last year of \$1,199.63. receipts for the year, \$5,172.19. There was a balance this year over expenditure of \$439.70.

The Report was, on motion, received and adopted.

HOME MISSION REPORTS—EASTERN SECTION.

Rev. Geo. Bruce, St. John, presented the H. M. report for the Eastern section, of which the following is a summary:

During the year seventy-five labourers were employed by the committee, of these twenty-seven were regular preachers, seventeen being ordained ministers and ten licentiates. Forty-eight were catechists; of whom thirty-eight were theological students, eight at students, and two young men recommended by presbyteries as possessing gifts and graces which qualified them for successful mission work. This is the largest number ever engaged in work under the direction of the committee. Eleven ordained ministers are now located in mission fields. With regard to the three Nova Scotia fields there is nothing new to report. Rapid progress cannot be expected in any of them, as the population is increasing very slowly, if at all. The ministers in charge of them, however, have done their work faithfully and successfully. In St. John Presbytery eight ministers are located in mission stations. The work done by the catechists last year was very satisfactory.

FINANCES.

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Balance on hand May 1st, 1885: \$400 00. Receipts for the year: 4,350 54. Expenditure: 4,750 54. Balance on hand May, 1886: 4,718 49.

In 1884-5 the receipts were \$505.93, or \$705.39 more than last year. This decrease may be accounted for by the special effort made on behalf of the Augmentation Fund. As the expenditure for 1886 will necessarily be greater than in the past the committee hope that the contributions will be more liberal.

The report closed with a touching reference to the death of their late secretary, Rev. Dr. McGregor.

Rev. E. D. Millar seconded the report. He congratulated the Church on the success of the Augmentation Fund in the East this year. He believed that this Church owed a special debt to the convener, Rev. E. A. McCurdy, of New Glasgow, for the skill and patience which had characterized his work.

Rev. Dr. Cochran presented and moved the adoption of the report of the

HOME MISSION COMMITTEE—WESTERN SECTION, including the Augmentation Committee's report. The following is a summary:—

The Augmentation Fund shows a deficit this year of \$6,651 98. The visible gains for the year may be said to be the advancement of two congregations so as to become self-sustaining, the advancement of two mission fields to the status of augmented congregations, and the organization of fifteen new mission districts with thirty-two preaching stations. There have been completed five churches, begun during the previous year, and nineteen new churches have been built. A church-mansie was erected, a manse bought, and another built. Of these twenty-two new structures, the Church and Manse-Building Board assisted to erect thirteen.

STATISTICS.

Connected with the Synod are seventeen augmented congregations, having fifty-five stations and a Sabbath attendance of 4,907. There are 817 families, not including the young men connected with these families. Reckoning them at two for a family, the figures would be 1,191. The communicants number 1,221. There are twenty-two Sabbath schools, and an attendance of 1,183. Work was done in sixty-nine mission fields having 282 stations, and a Sabbath attendance is given irrespective of whether the service is weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Connected with these stations are 3,050 families and 1,863 communicants. Returns from ninety-nine Sabbath schools show an attendance of 2,706—many of the schools are kept open during the summer, and hence no reports are sent. These congregations own eighty churches and sixteen manse. To present a statement showing the state and strength of our Church in the country the statistics of self-sustaining congregations are added. The congregations and mission fields would number ninety-six stations, 351 Sabbath attendance, 18,167 families, 5,119 communicants, 4,769 (approximately), Sabbath schools 4,145, Sabbath school attendance 5,727, churches 87, manse 20. These do not include Indian mission buildings.

MISSIONARIES.

During the year there were employed in the supply of mission fields and augmented congregations forty-five ordained ministers, thirty-two students, and twelve catechists, or a staff of eighty-nine in all. If to these are added the inducted pastors of self-sustaining congregations, professors of Manitoba College, and missionaries to the Indians, the staff will be one hundred and twelve, of whom fifty-seven are ordained.

The increase of our mission fields will render a necessary an increase in the number of missionaries this year. Already there are on the ground forty-six ordained mis-