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[Whole No. 228]

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

(Continued from third page.)

#### THIRD DAY.—MORNING SEDEBUNT.

The General Assembly met again on 10th June, 1876, at ten o'clock, and the sederunt was opened with devotional exercises.

#### REPLIES TO COMMUNICATIONS.

On the motion of Rev. Dr. Proudfoot, the Moderator and the late Moderator were appointed a committee to answer the communications submitted to the Assembly on the opening day by the latter gentleman.

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

An overture from Rev. Dr. Bell, Rev. Dr. Proudfoot and others was read, setting forth that it was customary in many branches of the Presbyterian Church, and a desirable practice to celebrate the communion of the Lord's Supper during the meeting of the General Assembly, and suggesting that it be celebrated in connection with this Assembly on Sunday.

Rev. Dr. Bell moved that arrangements be made by the Moderator and ex-Moderator for the celebration on Sunday.

Rev. Dr. Gordon seconded the motion. He thought that blessed results would flow from such a celebration.

Rev. Mr. Laing said he knew that he would be taking an invidious part to seem to oppose the proposition of Dr. Bell; but he thought more time should be allowed to prepare for the ordinance. There was a difference of opinion existing, particularly in the branch of the Church to which he belonged, as to the desirableness of the custom of having a celebration of the Lord's Supper at the meeting of the Assembly. He moved that the overture lie on the table, and then it could be taken up at a future time.

Rev. Mr. McNabb seconded the amendment.

Rev. Dr. Proudfoot thought such a celebration a proper and fitting thing, and he did not see why they should not, when they met to consult together about the cause of Christ, be in the highest possible state of preparation for it. Those who were not fully prepared for it could stay away and no notice would be taken of their absence. At a future time the question of the propriety of making it a permanent institution might be openly discussed.

Rev. Mr. McMillan (Woodstock) was surprised that any one should object on principle to such a celebration as the one proposed. The only difference which there had been in the Canada Presbyterian Church with regard to its desirability was in reference to details.

After a somewhat lengthy discussion, carried on by Rev. Messrs. Robb, Campbell, (Montreal), King, (Toronto), Dr. Waters, McTavish, and others, the motion was passed.

#### ROLLS OF PRESBYTERIES.

Rev. Mr. Laing presented the report of the committee appointed to prepare a constitution of rolls of Presbyteries. It recommended that they consist of—

1. The names of pastors with charges within the bounds, including colleagues and assistants who are to be successors.
2. Names of Professors in Theological colleges and halls within the bounds, appointed by the Assembly.
3. Names of ordained ministers within the bounds, employed in the work of the Church, and holding their appointments directly from the Assembly.
4. Names of ordained ministers who are employed by Presbyteries as missionaries under engagements for a period each of not less than twelve months.

#### FOURTH DAY.—12th JUNE, 1876.

The Assembly met again this morning at eleven o'clock.

#### COMMITTEE ON HOME MISSION REPORT.

The Moderator nominated the following gentlemen a committee on the reports of the Home Mission Committees:—Rev. W. T. McMillan, G. Waters, Principal Snodgrass, Robt. Campbell (Montreal), Tolmie, Falconer, McQuarrie, John Gray, McDonald, Bertram, and Prof. Bryce; Messrs. James Croil, Hugh Young, J. J. Bremner; Rev. Mr. Campbell, Convener. In accordance with suggestions he added the names of Rev. Drs. Cochran and McGregor, Dr. Boulter, M.P.E., and Walter McKenzie.

#### NEW PRESBYTERY.

An overture was read asking for the erection of a new Presbytery, consisting of all the congregations in the County of Lanark, together with the congregation of Hillley and the mission station of Falmerston. An extract from the minutes of the Presbytery of Brockville in favour of the proposed new Presbytery, and one from those of the Presbytery of Ottawa in opposition were read. The overture was referred to a committee.

#### BRANTFORD LADIES' COLLEGE.

A memorial was read from the President of the Board of Directors of the Brantford Young Ladies' College requesting the Assembly to name out of the qualified stockholders of the institution twelve persons, of whom six should be chosen at the approaching annual meeting as Directors for 1876-77. They also requested that the Moderator be appointed Honorary President and Visitor of the College.

Rev. Dr. Cochran gave a history of the College, and in the course of his remarks stated that the charter required six of the nine Directors of the institution to be Presbyterians, while the other three might either belong to other denominations or be Presbyterians also. There were about a hundred pupils in the College last year, of whom about sixty were boarders. The staff numbered twelve. A week ago twenty-two young ladies graduated.

Rev. Mr. McTavish moved that the prayer of the petitioner be granted, and the following gentlemen be nominated in accordance therewith, viz.: Messrs. William Watt, Robert Henry, Alex. Robertson, Banker; Robert Russell, William McIntosh, Dr. Nichol, Thos. McLean, Charles B. Heyd, Alexander Robertson, Brant Avenue, Wm. Grant and Adam Spence. Carried.

Rev. Dr. Cochran moved that the Moderator be the Honorary President and visitor of the College for the year. Carried.

#### RECEPTION OF MINISTERS.

Applications for leave to receive the following gentlemen as ministers were read, viz.: Mr. D. J. McGregor, of the Methodist Church, from the Presbytery of Grimsby; Mr. Wm. Armstrong, of the American Presbyterian Church, from the Presbytery of Stratford; Mr. Ouriere, late a priest of the Roman Catholic Church at Amiens, France, from the Presbytery of Montreal. The applications were referred to a Committee on the Reception of Ministers.

#### DELEGATES FROM OTHER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

The Moderator announced that the Rev. Dr. Mutchmore, delegated from the Presbyterian Church of the United States, and the Rev. Alex. N. Somerville, delegate from the Free Church of Scotland, were in the Assembly, and invited them to seats on the platform.

#### RECEPTION OF A STUDENT.

An application was read from the Presbytery of Lindsay to receive Mr. Joseph A. Andrew as a student for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Rev. Mr. Murray, in supporting the application, stated that the gentleman on behalf of whom it was made was a minister of the Methodist Church, in connection with which he had done good work for a period of six years. He was willing to undertake mission work in any difficult part of the field, and he desired to enter the Presbyterian Church as a student in theology of the second year.

Rev. Principal Snodgrass asked why it was asked that the gentleman should be admitted as a second year's student. He thought the rule which Principal Caven had laid down, that if any time was taken off it should be at the end of the person's course, was a very good one.

Rev. Mr. Murray said that it was thought that as the gentleman had had experience in another church, they might admit him as a second year's student in theology.

On motion of Rev. Dr. Waters, the application was referred to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers, with instructions to make a special report thereon.

#### ROLLS OF PRESBYTERIES.

The consideration of the report with regard to rolls of Presbyteries was resumed. The first recommendation was adopted. Rev. Dr. Paterson moved in amendment to the second clause, that the second class of members of Presbyteries consist of professors of theology in colleges and halls connected with this Church.

Rev. Mr. Wilson (Kingston), said he would have pleasure in seconding the amendment if it provided in addition that those professors should be ministers of the Presbyterian Church.

One o'clock having arrived while the amendment was under consideration, the debate was adjourned.

#### OBITUARY NOTICES.

The Moderator appointed a Committee on Obituary Notices. The Assembly adjourned.

#### AFTERNOON SEDEBUNT.

The Assembly met again at three o'clock, and after prayers and the reading of the minutes,

#### HEARING OF DELEGATES.

On motion of Rev. Dr. Cochran it was decided that the delegates from the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, and the United States should be heard to-night.

#### THE MACDONNELL CASE.

The next item of business taken up was the dissent and complaint of the Rev. David Mitchell and others against the decision of the Presbytery of Toronto in the case of the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell. After the case had been formally put before the Assembly,

Rev. Dr. Payne (Pictou), moved that the reference be sustained.

The Moderator said that as he was a member of the Presbytery of Toronto it would perhaps be better that he should not occupy the chair while this case was under consideration.

On motion, Rev. Mr. Macpherson, of Stratford assumed the Presidency of the Assembly in the meantime.

Rev. David Mitchell, as one of the appellants, said:—Mr. Moderator, and fathers and brethren.—The duty I have to perform on this occasion will be found after a few remarks to be a very simple one, and I am glad of this for many reasons. I feel that my ability certainly does not lie in the direction of addressing a court like this, and upon such a grave subject as may be involved in the discussion. I may say here that the appellants at the bar—of course I except Mr. Macdonnell, as he appears on his own account—are entirely in agreement with the majority of the Presbytery as to the view which we entertain regarding the sermon out of which this matter has been evolved. Indeed, I may say for Mr. Macdonnell that he also has expressed himself frequently as very much of the same mind as we are. We are also in entire agreement as to the truth of the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment. We have, I think, shown ourselves to be one in the desire—while conserving the truth of the standards of our Church—if possible to preserve the gentleman so well qualified naturally, and by the grace of God, we believe, for the office of the ministry in the

Presbyterian Church, (Hear, hear). And if the appellants have, as they hope they have, at all come near the majority of the Presbytery of Toronto in the matter with kindness and Christian courtesy in dealing with Mr. Macdonnell throughout the entire proceedings, I may say we are as one as to the ends and aims and the motives that actuate us at this moment. The appellants, however, while they do not differ from the majority of the Presbytery as to the essentials of the doctrine, find it necessary conscientiously to take a different course from them in dealing with the case. They felt—at least I felt—at the very beginning of these proceedings that if we could have seen which way to enter upon the case on its merits, and dismiss it with admonition or otherwise, that would have been a wise and beneficial termination of the case—I mean, beneficial in so far as the result which instantly followed appeared in the case of the great discussion that has been going on in the public prints ever since. I myself felt strongly that there was danger connected with sending a brother back almost to his school-books to learn his tasks and report himself as in entire agreement with the standards on some future occasion. We differed then on this point. I may say also that the appellants differ from the majority of the Presbytery in their view of the actual amount of divergence from the standards of the Church shown by Mr. Macdonnell in his sermon, and in his subsequent written statements. I also feel that the appellants take a somewhat different ground from the majority, I think, on their appreciation of the genuine honesty and integrity of the brother whose name is involved in these proceedings. I felt, and I have stated over and over again that—after the many expressions of regret which fell from our esteemed brother's lips in reference to the sermon, that his promise to abstain from saying anything contrary to the received doctrine of the Church in regard to future punishment, and from his constant effort to fulfil his promise—as I know well during the intervening period—the Church Court was safe in leaving such a matter as this in the hands of Mr. Macdonnell himself, and that Mr. Macdonnell would, by the impressions made upon him through the proceedings which had taken place, and by further study, be very likely at some reasonable period to report himself as in harmony with his brethren. As I felt equally strongly that though Mr. Macdonnell could not see his way to report himself in entire agreement with the Presbytery, in reference to the standards of the Church, he was too honest a man to remain in the Church to whose standards he could not give an honest and loyal adhesion. But, my brethren, since this dissent and complaint was taken by myself and others to the proceedings of the Presbytery, having reference to the last statement as printed in this paper, a very great change has taken place in the situation of affairs, and to my own great joy and satisfaction, I find myself not in the minority, but in the majority of the Presbytery of Toronto. Mr. Macdonnell, in his extreme desire to do everything in his power to remove the difficult question from this Court, and to enable this Court to proceed to the important business that is really its legitimate business, prepared another statement, and when that was read it was found that the majority of the Presbytery—a very large majority—were favorable to the reception of this new document. I do not say that the Presbytery was prepared to accept the statement as satisfactory; but I say that the Presbytery was led to accept the statement on the hope that the results to which I have already referred would appear in after time. Now, Mr. Moderator, had it not been for the reference of the dissent and complaint by the Synod to the General Assembly, I believe that the Presbytery of Toronto would, by a majority at all events, have accepted this last statement, and the matter would not have come before this venerable Court. It is a technical difficulty that brings us to-day to your bar. Of course, we might have been brought up on this question by a renewed dissent and complaint by the minority. I do not, of course, wish to say one word that would take away from the rights or powers of any single member of the Presbytery from dissenting from the decision of the majority. It is this technical difficulty that brings us here to-day, and I have, therefore, to make a request to the General Assembly—that I and those who are represented at the bar along with me—that the appellants, in one word—be permitted to withdraw their dissent and complaint, (Hear, hear). We do this because the Presbytery has referred the case to the consideration of this House, and in this new aspect I am quite well aware that the practical result of what we are now doing is that the sentence of the Superior Court becomes the final ruling in the case now before us. We are, therefore, practically giving in to the majority of the Presbytery. But we do so convinced that our rights will be maintained by the very fact that it is now referred to such a large, intelligent, and influential a body as the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. We leave it in your hands, confident that the object which the appellants had in view by their proceedings will be reached in a more satisfactory manner than in any other way. We feel confident that the General Assembly while doing everything to conserve the doctrine of the Church to maintain, and to emphasize it before the world, will yet show that kindly forbearance which I doubt not will result in the preservation of our brother to the Church. With these views, Mr. Moderator, which I feel very earnestly, I now sit down, preferring respectfully this request that the appellants at the bar be permitted to withdraw their dissent and complaint entire, and allow the reference of the Presbytery of Toronto to come immediately and directly before you.

Rev. Prof. McLaren—I have just to say that, so far as the request preferred by Mr. Mitchell is concerned, I presume the representatives of the Presbytery of Toronto have no wish to make any objection. We could not be supposed to have any objection to Mr. Mitchell or any other gentleman falling from a dissent and complaint from the finding of a Court. But I may be allowed on behalf of my brethren, to express surprise that a gentleman who was about to prefer a request of the kind should have professed it with a speech of the nature of that to which we have listened. I may say that I do not feel inclined to review that speech, as it is unnecessary for any practical purpose; but I will simply say that a very large number of the statements and representations contained in it are not of a kind which the Presbytery of Toronto would be at all inclined to endorse. Therefore, while we have not the slightest objection to the withdrawal of the dissent and complaint, we wish to express our disapproval of the manner in which the case was represented by the dissent and complainant at your bar. I will not say now what I was going to say on behalf of the Presbytery; I will take an opportunity again of doing so.

Rev. Principal Caven—I agree with what Prof. McLaren has now said. As representing the Presbytery, I am very glad Mr. Mitchell has seen his way to withdraw; but I think it was not well for him—it was not a thing we had reason to expect—to so put the case as to leave the impression on the mind of the Assembly that the Presbytery by its first action was in accord with his previous action.

Rev. Mr. Mitchell—I certainly did not intend to convey that impression. I meant that I am in the majority of the Presbytery as it now stands before the Court, and not that the majority are formally in accord with my former position.

Rev. D. J. Macdonnell—Without going for a single sentence into the merits of the case, I wish to make substantially the same request as that which was made on behalf of the other appellants by Mr. Mitchell, viz., that in view of the subsequent action of the Presbytery I be allowed to withdraw my dissent and complaint. (Applause, and cries of "hush.")

The Court assented to the withdrawal of the dissent and complaint.

The Moderator then took the chair again, and the reference from the Presbytery of Toronto in the same case was taken up.

After the extracts from the minutes of Presbytery being read,

Mr. Robb, referring to those of the meeting at which Mr. Macdonnell's last statement was considered, said that they had not been approved by the Presbytery, and that the characterization of the majority as "a large majority" had consequently not been approved of. The Presbytery of Toronto consisted of about forty members, and a vote of three to fifteen could not be characterized as giving a large majority.

The Moderator remarked that of course there had not been another meeting of the Presbytery since that one, and therefore there had been no opportunity to approve of the minutes of it.

Rev. Prof. McLaren said the Presbytery of Toronto had upwards of forty clerical members and of course an equal number of elders. On the occasion on which the vote in question was taken there were fifteen voted for the motion, which was carried, and three against it; and there was a very considerable number which did not vote at all, a fact which was not stated in the record. He considered that fact of some importance to members who were among the non-voters. He happened to be among that number himself, so he wished to have the matter right.

Rev. Principal Caven then came forward and proceeded to speak in support of the reference. He gave a full history of the case from the commencement; and stated at length the reasons of the Presbytery for the various steps they took with regard to it, and the views of the majority respecting the various statements which were submitted to it by Mr. Macdonnell. He thought the majority would have been prepared to accept the last one if it had been open for them to do so; but they had reason to believe that it was the purpose of brethren who were not satisfied with it to have complained, in that case, to the General Assembly, and had hence thought it was better simply to send the statement up to the Assembly with a modest expression of their conviction that it was a proper basis for the settlement of the case. He had himself severely analyzed that statement, and could not help saying that he did not see anything in it which did not leave Mr. Macdonnell as fully bound as any one of them in regard to the maintenance of the discipline of the Church.

Rev. J. M. King followed. In the course of his remarks he said it was not enough that Mr. Macdonnell should promise not to speak on the subject in future, but it was deemed by the Presbytery that they should have a full statement from him that he was entirely in accord with the Church in a doctrine like that of future punishment which was accepted by all the Protestant Churches and by the Roman Catholic Church. Their aim had been to preserve the integrity of the doctrines of the Church, and at the same time to preserve to the Church one whose ministrations had been very quickening. They had not really believed that they would have absolutely to part with Mr. Macdonnell. There had been no disposition at any part of the proceedings to push matters to an extremity. He (Mr. King) trusted Mr. Macdonnell's last statement was a satisfactory basis for the settlement of the case. He looked upon it as an expression of adherence to the doctrine of future punishment by one who had naturally no objection to the doctrine of the Confession of Faith. It differed from the previous statement

materially, inasmuch as that the former statement secured for Mr. Macdonnell the right of interpreting the Confession as he thought proper.

The hour of six o'clock having arrived, the discussion and the Assembly were adjourned until the evening.

The Assembly met again at 7:30.

Rev. Mr. King continued his address, advocating at considerable length the acceptance by the Assembly of Mr. Macdonnell's last statement. He thought that sufficient ground for accepting it could be found in a comparison of it with any of the previous ones. He was of opinion that they should not hold out for a distinct disavowal by Mr. Macdonnell of the objectionable views which might have been implied in his sermon, when they had received such a statement as the last. Let them be satisfied if they got a document which, construed as any ordinary document would be construed, secured them the adherence of Mr. Macdonnell now to the doctrines of the Church on the point in question. There had been great feeling excited in regard to this case—not, indeed, in the Presbytery and the doing of any good by Presbyterian ministers in this city was thereby rendered a matter of great difficulty. He hoped the Assembly would bring the case to an early and peaceable settlement; by so doing they would do much for the welfare of the church in Toronto. (Applause.)

Rev. Dr. Proudfoot expressed his opinion that the wide publicity that had been given to the proceedings of the case made it unnecessary for the Assembly to occupy much time in its settlement. He thought that in settling the case the Assembly should not lose sight of these points. They should plainly recognize the diligence, and faithfulness, and kindness, of the Presbytery in the whole matter of litigation. The doctrine involved in the whole discussion was one that had produced a very great deal of excitement, not only in Toronto, but throughout the whole extent of the Church in this Dominion. There was another point, and that was that they should be careful to conserve the interests of Mr. Macdonnell, at the same time preserving the integrity of the Church standards. He therefore presented to the Assembly a motion which might perhaps help to bring the case to a successful issue. The motion was that the General Assembly, recognizing the forbearance, wisdom, and faithfulness of the Toronto Presbytery in dealing with the case, and also attaching very great importance to the fundamental doctrine involved in it, in view of the nature of the doctrine itself, and its connection with the whole system of revealed truths, especially the portion of it relating to the supreme desirableness of the remedy and the urgent necessity of its application in the present life—and in view of the fairness in which it is stated in the Bible and in the Confession of Faith on which the recent auspicious union of the church was based, declares itself explicitly that Mr. Macdonnell's statement that "notwithstanding the difficulties I have regarding the eternity of future punishment, I continue my adhesion to the doctrine as implied in my adhesion to the Confession of Faith," accepts this explanation of the whole case.

Rev. Mr. Muir (Huntingdon), rose to a point of order. Were they to sustain or reject the reference?

Rev. Dr. Proudfoot said that motion had been carried.

Rev. Professor McKerras said it had not. He had noticed at the time that the motion was not carried.

Rev. Mr. Muir said that if Dr. Proudfoot would preface his motion with the statement that they sustained the reference he would have great pleasure in seconding it, so that they could send Mr. Macdonnell home happy in his mind, send him home to his congregation to continue his usefulness in his congregation, and to be an ornament to the Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Mr. Ball thought that a simpler matter for decision than that now before the Assembly had never been submitted to a Church Court. They were perfectly satisfied, he presumed, as to the correctness of Mr. Macdonnell's views, if Dr. Caven had expounded them correctly. Mr. Macdonnell had been present in the Assembly all the afternoon and evening; let him now stand up, and in one single sentence say that Prof. Caven had expressed his views correctly; and then the work was done. (Hear, hear.)

The Moderator remarked that they had a motion before the House, and they must deal with it in the meantime.

Rev. Prof. McKerras said that Mr. Ball was asking the Assembly to take a course which was out of order. Mr. Macdonnell had given in a statement; that was in two sentences, and he (Prof. McKerras) thought they ought to be able to understand them, being as they were in plain English.

Rev. Prof. McLaren said he rose with a very deep sense of responsibility to move an amendment to the motion which had been presented, a motion which, in many respects, he regarded as exceedingly satisfactory. He could not ask anything clearer in its doctrinal communications than the motion which had been so well put by Dr. Proudfoot; and he (Prof. McLaren) therefore felt that in asking the General Assembly to pause before adopting that resolution, he was assuming a very considerable responsibility. As a member of the Presbytery of Toronto he (Prof. McLaren) had been thoroughly at one with the Presbytery of Toronto up to the stage which they reached when the last statement was recommended by the Presbytery to the General Assembly; and even when the last statement was given in he had felt, after listening to the lucid and voluminous exposition which Prof. Caven had given them—an exposition very similar to that which he had given that evening—that if Mr. Macdonnell would rise and say in a single word in the Presbytery that he

(Continued on fourth page.)