

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1878.

## THE VERDICT.

IT is, we are rejoiced to say, the unanimous verdict of all who were members of the General Assembly held at Hamilton, or were spectators of its proceedings, or who have been attentive readers of the reports in the daily papers, that the Assembly was most harmonious and satisfactory. The spirit exhibited throughout all its sessions was delightful to witness. If there was diversity of opinion in regard to several important matters, there was one desire to reach safe and sound conclusions and to preserve the most friendly relations. It is questionable if in any one of the Synods and Assemblies that have recently been held either in America or Great Britain, there was anything to excel the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, in point of the ability of its speakers or of the substantial unanimity of the whole. This Assembly has done much to set forth the thoroughness of the union of the four churches that have become one in name. In itself it was an outward and visible emblem of the union that prevails throughout the Canadian Church. It is a guarantee that the old lines are rapidly disappearing, and we have in it an earnest of the triumphant progress of the Church in the years that are to come.

We have already commented at length upon the work which has been done on behalf of Home Missions as reported by its Conveners, Drs. Cochrane and MacGregor. Since our last issue the report of Foreign Missions has been received and adopted. It may be called the two-fold report of the Foreign Mission Committee proper, and of the Juvenile Committee. Their returns show that there is a growing interest taken in this work by all the congregations. The great enterprise of our Church in India and China is being prosecuted with zeal and liberality. If the income of the Church for this undertaking be still too straitened, that is hardly to be wondered at when we consider the depressed state of commerce. But it is satisfactory to know that the contributions as a whole show an increase over previous years. We are glad that the Foreign Mission cause has kept its

own during the past year, and we are satisfied that the year upon which we have entered will be one of marked activity and liberality in support of this work. The report of the Juvenile Committee was one of much interest and promise. Viewed in reference to the double aspect of this special department, viz., the aid it gives to Foreign Missions, and the education of the young in the matter of missionary enterprise, nothing could be more satisfactory than the results which have been gained. It is cause for rejoicing that the benevolence of the Sabbath schools is thus swelling the main stream of the benefactions of the Church. But what shall we say of the effect upon the young themselves? It is securing the valuable result of making the Presbyterian Church thoroughly missionary in its spirit and character. The day is coming when our youth, who are being educated into this work, will compose the membership of the Church, and then there will no longer be anything heard of those refusing to give who do not believe in Foreign Missions when we have so much to do at home. The Sabbath school missionary box is an invaluable factor in the benevolence of our Church, and upon it depends far more than the swelling of contributions. For educated thus to give, it cannot but be that missionaries will go forth from our Sabbath schools to undertake for the Master in the foreign work of the Church.

The report of Principal McVicar upon French Evangelization is also highly satisfactory and promising. This is a cause which, in common with the general work of Home Missions, appeals to our patriotism. The French speaking people in the Dominion is an important element of our population. They are hereditarily Roman Catholic, and yet as the young generation take the place of the old, their attachment to the Church of Rome is being lessened, and the influence of education and literature upon them is being greatly increased. From the number of conversions which have taken place amongst the priests and the French speaking people in the lower provinces, a work is being done that calls for gratitude to Almighty God. It is an encouraging work. This enterprise is promising for the future. It needs to be prosecuted now with more than the ardour and earnestness which have marked the past. The appeals for aid to this cause cannot be disregarded, and will not we are satisfied be set aside. The future of French Evangelization is secured, and the committee going back to their sphere with the endorsement of the General Assembly, will feel strengthened and encouraged to prosecute their cause with the utmost zeal and hopefulness. The various other schemes reported upon at this Assembly are in an efficient and promising condition.

The important question of Hymnology is now settled, and we venture to say settled according to the general mind of the Church. We respect the opinions of such gentlemen as Dr. Robb, Mr. Wilson and others. They are conscientious men. They have at heart the best interests of the Church. At the same time, were their views to prevail, it would necessarily entail a long period of keen contention, and foster and encourage the very evil which they are seeking most strenuously to resist. They cannot now prevent the use of Hymns in public worship. They ought

not to prevent a movement which is intended to secure this most desirable result of the best and most orthodox hymns being sung. It seems a matter of common sense, if not of necessity, that the Church should legislate upon the subject. It is promising for the future that a large and influential committee has this matter in charge, which has been instructed to prepare a collection, and to submit it to the various Presbyteries. This committee will be largely confined in its selection to the hymn books now in use, and there cannot be much discussion upon the adoption of those which may be named. And it will doubtless exercise a discriminating taste in regard to any hymns which may be proposed to be added from other sources. There is consequently now the prospect of the Church obtaining a book which will be adopted by the next General Assembly, and which will pass into speedy circulation amongst those congregations which are in the habit of using hymns in public worship. The churches which do not use hymns will of course be free to pursue their own way, in the employment of the Psalms of David exclusively, or in addition to these of the version of paraphrases and the five hymns.

It is gratifying to the many friends of the Rev. Dr. Fraser, lately of the Formosa mission, that substantial justice has been done to that gentleman. He is approved by the General Assembly as a Christian man, and his fitness for the work of a missionary is earnestly commended. He needs the condolence of the Church in his many afflictions, and he now goes forth armed with the sympathy and prayers of the Assembly. That Dr. Fraser has a great future before him we cannot for a moment doubt. With his acquirements as a medical missionary, and with his knowledge of the manners and customs and language of the Chinese, he is fitted for this special work as few men can be. And with the experience he has had of actual work, we are sure he will live to prove himself a nobler soldier of the Cross in heathen lands than he has ever been. We bespeak for Dr. Fraser the sympathy, prayers and benevolent aid of the Church at large.

We cannot conclude without saying at the risk of repeating ourselves, that we regard with grateful delight the Assembly at Hamilton. We pray that the spirit which animated it will show itself throughout the entire Church. It is our earnest prayer that its work may have an untold influence upon the activity, zeal and benevolence of all the congregations; and our only wish is that the next Assembly may prove its superior in regard to the ability of its members, and to the interest and value of its proceedings.

## THE MODERATOR.

THERE is another verdict which is quite as unanimous as that to which we have referred in our article, and that is that the Rev. Dr. Jenkins proved himself to be an excellent Moderator. Uniting firmness with gentleness, he was able to control the Assembly without any self-assertion of authority. His decisions on point of order were given promptly and were accepted by the House without discussion, or were sustained in every instance of appeal. He received the delegates