

GENERAL ASSEMBLY. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

FIFTH DAY.—JUNE 18, 1876.

The Assembly met at 10 o'clock, and was constituted with prayer, after which Principal Caven rose to make an explanation.

The Rev. J. M. King said that his interpretation of Mr. Macdonnell's statement was not changed, but he felt that that statement did not represent his brother's views as represented by himself.

Rev. Mr. McMillen (Woodstock) moved, "That as it appears from Mr. Macdonnell's verbal explanation of his last statement, that his difficulty is not with the view of the Confession of Faith but with the interpretation of the Scripture, therefore resolved, that a committee be appointed to confer with Mr. Macdonnell, with a view of ascertaining the reasons of his doubts, and of giving him brotherly counsel, and report at a subsequent sederunt.

Rev. Mr. Cochrane moved in amendment, as follows:—"That with a view of framing a deliverance that may meet the views of the General Assembly, the motion and amendments submitted, be remitted to a committee for consideration, said committee to consist, with the mover and seconder, of all additional persons as the Moderator may appoint, with instructions to report as early as a sedurent as possible."

The Rev. Prof. McKnight (Halifax) said he believed he understood Mr. Macdonnell, but the majority of this house did not understand him. (Laughter.) Mr. Macdonnell was himself partly to blame for this misunderstanding, because of the style of language he used.

The Rev. Mr. Middlemiss thought the Assembly should observe the distinction between difficulties and doubts. He and many of them had great difficulties about the things of God; but Mr. Macdonnell decidedly had doubts.

The Rev. Dr. Ure moved in effect that the Assembly, hoping that his doubts may soon pass away, agree to accept Mr. Macdonnell's last statement, and find that no further proceedings are necessary.

Mr. James Croil (Montreal) thought too much attention in this discussion had been paid to Mr. Macdonnell's three first statements, and too little to his last, which he believed was all they should require.

The Rev. Mr. McLennan (Peterborough), in a different form, moved that the last statement be accepted, and spoke at great length in support of his motion.

The Assembly then adjourned till three o'clock.

AFTERNOON SEDERUNT.

The Assembly resumed at three o'clock. The Rev. Principal Snodgrass (Kingston) moved to commend Mr. Macdonnell to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the hope that future study might result in the speedy removal of his difficulties, and to proceed no further in the case.

speedy removal of his difficulties, and to proceed no further in the case. There were hardly to be found in any of their colleges two theological professors who agreed in every particular as to the sense in which the doctrine of future punishment was fundamental.

Professor McVicar rose with another amendment. In his judgment, Mr. Macdonnell was not in accord with the church on the doctrine in question. The first reason was because of the action of the Presbytery, and the second was because of Mr. Macdonnell's words the previous evening, which were reported in full in one of the city papers, and which were that he was not fully in accord with the church.

The Moderator requested the members of the Assembly to refrain from such demonstration.

Professor McVicar continued by stating that he was of opinion that Mr. Macdonnell had not expressed any change of belief from first to last. His impression of the belief was that Mr. Macdonnell was in a position unable to teach anything touching the great doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

The Rev. Dr. Cook (Quebec) asked if there was not ground for doubt and difficulty with regard to the doctrine, that under the divine constitution men should be tormented for eternal ages. He was persuaded that it was merely because they did not consider these matters that they had no difficulties about them.

EVENING SESSION.

The Assembly met at half-past seven, and was opened with devotional exercise and the reading of the minutes.

HEARING THE DELEGATES.

The credentials of Rev. Alex. Somerville, delegate from the Free Church of Scotland, and of Rev. Dr. S. A. Mutchmore, from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, were read.

gates. In the course of his remarks he referred to the uniform interest taken in the Canadian Home Missions by the Free Church of Scotland. Rev. Mr. Somerville was introduced as one of the disruption worthies.

Rev. Mr. Somerville said he had been commissioned to come all this distance to congratulate the Assembly on the happy union which had lately taken place. He felt it better to abstain from referring to the state of religious parties at home, lest he might say anything which might jar with any who were present, or any whom he left behind.

The Moderator said he had great pleasure in conveying to the delegates, on behalf of the Assembly, their cordial thanks for the admirable, eloquent, and interesting addresses which they had delivered.

SIXTH DAY.

MORNING SEDERUNT—JUNE 14th. This morning's sederunt was opened at ten o'clock with prayer. After the minutes had been read, the Rev. Mr. Sedgwick, who had the floor when the discussion ceased yesterday afternoon, continued his speech, and moved that the Assembly allow the matter to drop in the meantime.

The Rev. Dr. Murraysaid that that was not what Mr. Macdonnell had said. Mr. Thompson said he understood him to say so.

the Church in Canada upon being now united. (Applause.) That union was a triumph not only for earthly but also for heavenly rejoicing, and even the Lord Jesus might smile complacently upon it, because His prayer before leaving the earth was that His Church might be one.

The Moderator said he had great pleasure in conveying to the delegates, on behalf of the Assembly, their cordial thanks for the admirable, eloquent, and interesting addresses which they had delivered.

AFTERNOON SEDERUNT.—THE MACDONNELL CASE.

The Assembly met again at three o'clock. Rev. Mr. Inglis (Ayr) said he had heard a great many very philosophical speeches, but he asked those who had made them to recollect that the Assembly was not a body of philosophers.

Rev. Mr. McGillivray thought they were drifting away from the point to which they ought to be steering. Mr. Macdonnell had said he regretted what he had said in that sermon; he had said he did not hold any view contrary to the Church, but that he had some difficulty.

Rev. J. M. King found it impossible to sit in the Court and hear the situation laid down in the way in which the previous speaker had laid it down. The situation really was that Mr. Macdonnell had not come to a doctrine at variance with the Church, but he was unable to hold the doctrine of the Church in the sense that the Church holds it.

Rev. Mr. Thompson said Mr. Macdonnell had placed his position at the time of the preaching of the sermon as one of suspense, and it was a question whether he had receded from that attitude. Mr. Macdonnell could not honestly accept the doctrine of the Confession, and the question was whether on that doctrine or all doctrines a minister could preach in the Canada Presbyterian Church, while holding views differing from the doctrines accepted by the Church.

Mr. Macdonnell—I have never stated that I held views contrary to the teaching of the Church. (Cheers.) I have stated that I held no view on this point contrary to the teaching of the Church. (Applause.)

Mr. Thompson—Does he hold the views of the Church? Mr. Macdonnell—That's another point; I was correcting a mis-statement of my speech.

Mr. Thompson said the fact was Mr. Macdonnell did not hold the views of the Church, and he asked whether it was right that a minister could take the same stand on other doctrines. They would have men preaching in the Church who were not in full accord, and the Assembly would be sanctioning that proceeding.

help saying that his people would not be pleased with the Church if the Assembly allowed any such action to pass. His idea of the Church was that it was to be so broad as to take in all the truths of God's Word, and so narrow that it would exclude every known error.

Rev. Mr. Whimster felt that the duty of the Church was to be valiant for the truth, love one another, and bear one another's burdens. He proposed a long motion to the effect that the matter be referred to a committee, that further proceedings be postponed for a year, and that Mr. Macdonnell be required to define his position regarding the doctrine of future punishment to the Assembly at its next meeting.

The Rev. Professor Mowat, of Queen's College, Kingston, made a vigorous appeal on behalf of the retention of Mr. Macdonnell. He greatly blamed the Presbytery of Toronto for the notoriety of this matter, inasmuch as they had the opportunity of settling it at their first meeting by simply admonishing Mr. Macdonnell for the sermon he preached.

The Rev. Mr. Dickie, of Berlin, advocated moderation. In the course of his remarks he protested against personal arguments which had been brought into the discussion.

After a brief speech by the Rev. Jas. Bennett, of St. John, N. B.

The Rev. John Smith, of Bay-st. Church, counselled the utmost freedom of speech in discussing the matter, even though it might take a week to come to a finding. He contended that the acceptance of Mr. Macdonnell's statement would be equivalent to allowing of a qualified subscription to the Confession of Faith, and he thought the hanging up of the case for a year would indicate to the country that the Assembly itself had doubts on this important question.

After a short speech by the Rev. Mr. McLean, of Belleville, the Assembly adjourned for recess, it being one o'clock.

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British American Presbyterian, 102 BAY STREET, TORONTO.

FOR TERMS, ETC., SEE ENCL. PAGE. C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Editor and Proprietor

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters and articles intended for the next issue should be in the hands of the Editor not later than Tuesday morning. All communications must be accompanied by the writer's name, otherwise they will not be inserted.

British American Presbyterian, FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 1876.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, held this year will be memorable for the debate which occurred connected with the reference of the Presbytery of Toronto to the matter affecting the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell. The business of the Supreme Court had, to a large extent, to give way to the consideration of the proceedings of the Presbytery connected with the minister of St. Andrew's. It was felt on all hands that a discussion involving vast interests was forced upon the Church. Not only were the members of Assembly under the conviction that a crisis had come demanding serious attention; but the people throughout the country were looking earnestly for the solution of a difficult problem. The interest was not confined to the Presbyterian denomination. The mind of the Church in all its branches was deeply excited. No better evidence of this can be furnished than that presented by the immense audiences which filled to overflowing a building of such dimensions as the Knox Church. Even during the day the seats were fully occupied. The evening sessions were literally crowded to suffocation. The interest of the public grew from day to day in intensity. It was a magnificent spectacle to witness a number of highly educated men exhibiting such moral earnestness of purpose in regard to what was felt to be a great and vital point. We referred in a late number to the value of debate in Church Courts, little thinking then we were on the eve of one of the most memorable discussions which has ever taken place in Synod or Assembly. And it is with considerable satisfaction we now direct attention to the great debate in several of its leading aspects.

lucid and powerful statement of the reference by Principal Caven, and though he was obliged by the apparently injudicious speech which Mr. Macdonnell delivered on the first night of the debate, to resign next day from the position he had taken, his address remains as an admirable expression, not only of the Principal's clearness and force of intellect, but of the loving tenderness of his heart. Rev. Mr. King, who, for the same reason, was constrained afterwards to withdraw from the support of Mr. Macdonnell, delivered an address that did credit both to his head and heart. Professor McLaren showed himself to advantage as a powerful and conscientious defender of the faith. Dr. Proudfoot was at once generous and conservative as to the truth in the motion he made adopting the view of the reference of the Presbytery, though he also was afterwards obliged to withdraw in favour of the ultimate finding of the court. Principal MacVicar, from the moment he commenced speaking to the close of his able address, advocating the unsatisfactoriness of Mr. Macdonnell's statement, was listened to with profound attention. Many other speakers on the same side, who occupy less prominent positions in the church, delivered able and thoughtful speeches, which made lasting impressions upon the House. On the other side, there was a very considerable display of forensic ability. Many amendments were made that looked in the direction of dismissing the matter of the reference, either immediately or at no distant date. Professor McKerras revealed much legal acumen in the questions he put to Professor McLaren, and also in the temperate address he delivered at a later stage. Principal Snodgrass took a calm view of the matter, and put it in a forcible and judicial manner before the Assembly. The great speech on this side was that of Professor McKnight, who delivered an address of wonderful analytic power that dissected the mind of Mr. Macdonnell in such a way as to call forth the admiration of all who listened to it. It was all the more remarkable that Mr. Macdonnell, with his known fondness for nicety of expression, could see his way to accept this speech as a fair analysis of his mental condition. The motion of Dr. Ure was that around which rallied all the strength of those who were favourable to a lenient view. Dr. Ure carried conviction with him when he stated that he himself had once been assailed with similar doubts and difficulties, and having been kindly dealt with, he now stood on solid ground. We cannot even refer to the many speeches delivered by other gentlemen on this side, which were of more than average ability. It is sufficient to speak of the gladiatorial spectacle presented by Rev. G. M. Grant, of Halifax, and Rev. J. G. Robb of Toronto. They were well matched in every way. Mr. Grant made an able speech, full of common sense, temperate in tone, with a considerable admixture of humor and eloquence. The reply of Mr. Robb was a fine specimen of controversial talent. He followed Mr. Grant minutely into every statement, and succeeded in making a most telling impression upon his audience. In many points of view the finest speech of all was that delivered by Mr. Macdonnell at the close of the debate. He was evidently drawn out of himself by the sympathetic audience. He held the entire assemblage spell-bound during upwards of an hour. He succeeded in removing many unpleasant impressions produced by previous speeches both in the Presbytery and the Assembly. It was a speech of undoubted ability, which did more to pave the way for an amicable settlement than any address which was spoken in his favour.

THE MACDONNELL CASE. The General Assembly, by its vote on Tuesday night, adopted its committee's report on the reference from the Presbytery of Toronto, which declared the statements of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell to be unsatisfactory, and required him to report to the next General Assembly whether he accept the teaching of the Church on the subject. This decision relieves all parties from a disagreeable difficulty. The Presbytery of Toronto, whose proceedings in this matter have been so satisfactorily vindicated by the Supreme Court, will find itself more free than ever to go forward with the great work which they have at heart in building up the cause and kingdom of Christ within its bounds. The congregations throughout the country, which have been so deeply excited by the discussion raised in connection with this case, will be satisfied and delighted that the General Assembly has authoritatively re-affirmed the Standards of the Church, and especially the doctrine of the eternity of the future punishment of the wicked involved in the proceedings of the various Courts. The Secular Press may desiderate for many reasons the absence of a discussion so exciting in its nature; but the community, we are certain, will feel relieved by the cause celebre being withdrawn from their view. We are sure we state the mind of all parties, when we express our delight that this protracted discussion has been brought to a satisfactory termination. With such a decision, the doctrine of the Church has been amply vindicated. No one can henceforth call in question the mind of the Church, not only as to the particular doctrine involved, but as to the Confession of Faith itself. It is in this way that Providence makes even apparent evils subserve good ends, by thus emphasizing some great and vital truth. In the midst of the activities of the age in which we live, men are apt to lose sight of eternal verities. They become absorbed in the things of time. The earnest convictions with which they commenced their life-work as to the relation of present duties to the eternity which lies beyond, become dulled through the cares and anxieties of business and of domestic life. The proceedings in reference to Mr. Macdonnell will, indeed, be most valuable, if, in any way they become means to this end,—of forcing upon the public attention, the awful considerations connected with the future, and with neglect of the salvation which is so richly provided by Jesus Christ. But we value the judgment of the General Assembly for this special reason, that it illustrates the authority that is vested in Church Courts, and the responsibility laid upon them of asserting and defending the truth, as well as dealing with matters connected with the work and government of the Church. Previous to the disruption in Scotland, it not unfrequently occurred that even Parliament awaited the action of the General Assembly before proceeding to some special legislation. In this country we have at this moment a spectacle far grander than that. The people of the Dominion have looked earnestly and eagerly to this General Assembly for the settlement of an exciting question; and we venture to say that with the decision of Tuesday evening they will be amply satisfied. The action of the Assembly is a vindication before the world of the Presbyterian Polity and Government. In no other Church that we know of, could such a finding have been so quickly and thoroughly reached.

the next General Assembly. Mr. Macdonnell's own admissions as to the practical un-wisdom of preaching the sermon from which these proceedings sprang, constitute sufficient ground for the action of the Assembly. It is a mild decision in itself, and we presume it is intended as an easy method of settling the matter, that will at once conserve the authority of the Church and the interests of the esteemed brother whom they condemn. Though a large and influential minority did the utmost in their power, even to the point of dissenting un-animously from the finding of the Assembly, we think we speak their mind when we regard the decision of the case not in the light of defeat, but rather as securing what concerned them very deeply, viz.: the status and continued ministry of Mr. Macdonnell. The difference between the minority and the majority that appeared in the vote, was felt to be one not touching an essential principle, but one of expediency. The real object which the dissentients had at heart is gained by the Assembly's decision. It gives us pleasure to think of this, especially in view of the future of the recently United Church. Hardly a word as to secession has been broached during the whole discussion, and when such was even breathed, it was promptly rebuked. It is most promising to the Church, that no bitter feelings have been engendered by these proceedings, that no party spirit has been evoked; but that the Church stands one and united to-day as she did, when in Montreal the four sections of which she is composed, declared themselves to be one Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. That the Presbyterian Church in Canada may abide in the bonds of peace and love, and be led by the guidance of God to do a great and lasting work for this Dominion, and for all the kingdoms of the world, is our earnest and most fervent prayer.

From these the speaker passes to the 'Actual Growth' of the American Church as the result of these general and special conditions, and Presbyterianism certainly has no reason to be ashamed of the exhibit presented in this sermon. Briefly it is this. In 1706 the first Presbytery was formed, consisting of seven ministers and a "handful of churches, weak, scattered and undeveloped." In 1788 the first Continental Assembly was held. In 1837 the Church was sent into what was lately popularly known as the Old and New School Bodies; in 1870 they were reunited. Now the church numbers 86 synods, 178 presbyteries, 4,706 ministers, 4,999 churches, 500,084 communicants, and 520,462 Sabbath-school children, and hardly less than two millions of worshippers. In 1874-75 the contributions towards church purposes amounted to \$6,900,000, and for the general cause of evangelization \$2,725,000. "In the light of these statements the career of American Presbyterianism as exhibited in its various branches must be regarded as one of the miracles of modern Christianity. A century ago it was represented by 133 ministers only; its churches feeble and scattered were scarcely more numerous; and its membership cannot have exceeded six or eight thousand. The number, both of ministers and churches, have, during the century, increased more than thirty-fold; even during the past fifty years our ministry have multiplied six-fold, our churches four-fold, our membership eight-fold." Justly does the preacher say, "Such advances is hardly less than miraculous; and as we walk to-day with reverent tread about our beautiful Zion telling her towers and bulwarks, and considering the palaces of her glory, we must be blind indeed if we do not recognize in all this the sure evidence of a divine presence, and exclaim with the prophet of Israel: 'In His love and in His pity He redeemed us: He bore us, and carried us all the days of old.'" Add to this now the Presbyterianism of the South, that of other bodies if not in name, yet in fact Presbyterian; add to all these that of our own land, and it gives us a wonderful idea of the power of the Presbyterian Church in America, its adaptability for rapid growth, and the bright future which lies before that system of doctrine, government, and worship, which we hold and in which we glory.

THE REV. JAMES FLECK, B.A.

Before leaving the ancient city of Armagh, Ireland, the Rev. James Fleck, the newly installed minister of Knox Church, Montreal, was the recipient of costly gifts and flattering addresses, the latter expressing deep regret at his departure. The Ulster Gazette of May 6th gives an extensive report of the interesting proceedings, from which we make the following extracts:—"A Soiree was held in the Second Armagh Presbyterian Church, by the members of the congregation, for the purpose of bidding farewell to their late pastor, the Rev. James Fleck, B.A., (who for seven years faithfully and zealously acted as their minister,) and presenting him with an address, on the occasion of his leaving this city for Montreal. The address was accompanied by a handsome gold lever watch and pencil case. Robert McCrum, Esq., ably discharged the duties of chairman. On the platform were many of the leading gentlemen of the city, and scattered through the happy and joyous assemblage of ladies and gentlemen were many leading clergymen."

The Chairman in his remarks alluded to Mr. Fleck in the following terms: "I feel it would be had taste in Mr. Fleck's presence to say before him what I know and feel he deserves to be said of him. But this much I can say, I have ever found him and valued him as a cordial friend, a Christian gentleman, and an earnest minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Again and again he has been called outside the limits of this congregation, and most earnestly, and most cordially, and most heartily he has always responded to the call, and in his hands the Gospel trumpet has been sounded by no uncertain sound. I remember well his predecessor here; and when in the providence of God Mr. Henderson was taken away, I felt how hard it would be to fill up the blank made by his removal. And I thought again of the difficulty of getting a man to supply his place. I do not intend to compare the virtues of the two men, for the fruits of Mr. Henderson will live in this city for ever. When, therefore, Mr. Fleck came, I said to myself 'you have chosen the right man.' He came then, and you all have seen how he gained the affection and esteem, not only of the Presbyterians of this congregation, but of all the Christian public in Armagh. I believe he came here with proper and extended views of the church of Christ. I felt he had deepened in him that junction of catholicity that looks on every man as a true worker. The step he is about to take is a momentous one—momentous, indeed, to everyone—but especially momentous to one who is a minister of the Gospel of Christ. To leave the land of his birth, the friends of his early youth, must be very momentous indeed. But to leave this congregation, who love and respect and revere him, and to whom he is greatly attached, must be a trying occasion indeed. One thing I can promise him—he goes from us with the good wishes of not only his people, but the good wishes of the whole of Armagh." The meeting was subsequently addressed by eminent ministers and laymen, all speaking in the same kind and friendly terms of their departing friend. The Rev. Jackson Smyth, brother of Dr.

THE NEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, in course of erection, at Wellington, township of North Gower, is being rapidly pushed on to completion. The building will be of brick, modern style, good finish, and large enough to seat comfortably about 600 persons. A beautiful site near the Church of England has been selected, and when completed—by October—the new church will be a credit to the Presbyterians of North Gower, of whom the Rev. A. C. Stewart is the esteemed pastor. Cost, about \$1,600.

Our Young Folks.

Clarice's Curls. A True Story.

They were like golden threads spun out of sunbeams, and falling over her neck in a shower of light. But the hair dresser, who lived a few doors off, looked at Clarice's curls with a business eye, and saw that there was money to be made out of them.

to-day, and I want some money. O, I want it so! Where are your shears?" But the hairdresser would not make the least snip till he knew what Clarice wanted of the money.

God's Word in the Heart.

There was once a little boy who went to Sunday School regularly, and learned all his lessons well, so that he had a great many Bible verses in his mind.

Giving Without Money.

The poor give more than the rich. This proposition holds goods, as a general principle. Money is by no means the only thing to give in this world; neither do large gifts necessarily contribute more to the happiness of the receiver than the small gifts.

The Dear Departed.

The dear departed linger round Our memory as we dream; The churchyard turf is hallowed ground, Our tears, Love's sacred stream.

God's Way Is Best.

This blessed truth I long have known, So soothing in its hopeful tone, What'er our trials, cares and woes, Our Father's mercy freely flows,

The Value of Truth.

Indifference to truth—all truth, and especially the truth revealed in the Scriptures—is a most unfavourable trait in the character of the professing Christian.

truth of righteousness, as that alone which can exalt them and make them a happy people. In the second place, truth has cost the blood of the saints. Millions of God's faithful witnesses have poured out their blood like water in defence of the truth.

Scientific and Useful.

TO MAKE COOKIES. Take two and a half cups of sugar, one teacup of sour cream, one teacupful of melted butter, a tablespoonful of ground cinnamon, soda and butter.

