

THE
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SYNODS.

Two of the three Presbyterian Synods in Canada are now in Session, and the meeting of the third is at hand. We deem it an appropriate time to offer a few observations on the uses of Synods, and the best modes of increasing their interest and usefulness.

The Supreme Court of a Presbyterian Church, whether a Synod, or a General Assembly, ought to be the highest expression of the Church's life—of her wisdom, power, and love. Its meeting should be expected and watched with prayerful interest by all within the Church's bounds. Its influence should be beneficially felt in every department of the Church's duty, diffusing a fresh virtue even to the hem of the garment. This is all the more to be looked for in non-established Churches. When there is no connection with the State, and the Church is perfectly uncontrolled in her self-government, very great powers, legislative, judicial, and executive are wielded by the Supreme Court. Very blessed are the results when these powers are exercised in successive years with fidelity, discretion and high consistency. Very sad are the consequences, when a Synod, with large powers and noble opportunities, ties the Church to narrow views of Christian duty, or pursues a weak, capricious, precipitate public policy.

If any Synod lack wisdom, let it ask of God. The higher our sense of the duties incumbent on our Supreme Court, the deeper our conviction of the unspeakable value and absolute necessity of prayer in the Synod—fervent, fraternal prayer. In every Synod this is acknowledged, but it is not common to find a Synod bathed as it ought to be in devotional feeling, and awed by the felt presence of the Holy Ghost. Many earnest men ask year by year, what can be done to increase and elevate the devotional element in the great Annual Convocation of the Church? The remedy sometimes proposed is to allot a larger proportion of time than is usually given to devotional exercises, and to insist more rigorously on a punctual attendance of members on the exercises with which every "sederunt" is opened. We presume to think that a more judicious advice may be given. A Synod, being a Court of the Church under obligation to transact a large amount of business in a limited number of days, cannot give