

British American Presbyterian.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1872.

No. 40

Contributors & Correspondents.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—In addressing you on the subject of the Order of Worship, I am aware that I am treading on dangerous ground. The prejudices of many of our older members are so deep-seated on the question of the form of service, that the mere mooted possibility of the introduction of a change is regarded almost as heresy. Such extreme views unfortunately exist to a considerable extent, and when any one is bold enough to suggest a change, he is too frequently met with the accusation of being an innovator or a ritualist, and his reputation for "carnality" is established. Like most prejudices, these narrow ideas are based on ignorance. Those who insist most strongly on the present order of service, and denounce any departure from it as being un- Presbyterian, are usually most ignorant of the many changes through which the ritual of our Church has passed, of the remarkable elasticity of Presbyterianism, and of its capacity of adapting itself to altered conditions and circumstances. The prevailing popular ignorance of the history of the Church, and of its principles, is truly lamentable. Many seem to regard the form of worship as being in fact Presbyterianism, and entirely overlook those great principles of church government, which are its fundamental strength and glory. A cheap, barn-like structure for a place of worship, execrable music, and an order of public service devoid of everything to attract, are, it would appear, to some the test of a standing or falling church. What would such persons think when they talk so glibly of the great work of John Knox in destroying those magnificent churches which adorned Scotland, of being told that Knox in person went out to save the Monastery of Secon from violence when threatened by the "rascal multitude." He desired, indeed, to purge the churches from altars and images, but as for "Mr. Knox preaching the pulling down of churches," writes Baillie, "it is like the rest of your lies." The First Book of Discipline required, that the churches be with expedition repaired, "lest that the Word of God and ministration of the Sacraments, by unseemliness of the place, come into contempt." It also provides that the churches should have "such preparation within as appertaineth as well to the majesty of the Word of God as unto the ease and commodity of the people." It was not Presbyterianism that provided those wretched structures known as "parish churches," and which, it seems, it is thought Presbyterianism to imitate in this country, but it was, as Melville writes, "the insatiable sacrilegious avarice of earls, lords and gentlemen," on whom the burden of construction fell in exchange for the confiscated ecclesiastical and monastic lands. We find, also, to give one other instance of change, that in the matter of prayer kneeling was the common posture. In 1587, the Glasgow Session enjoined "all persons in time of prayer to bend the knee to the ground;" and again in 1695, the Presbytery of Glasgow orders all to "humble themselves on their knees in the Kirk in time of prayer." In 1607, we read of the members of the Synod of Perth kneeling when engaged in prayer, and in 1639 we find that the covenanting army twice a day "simultaneously knelt in prayer." It is well known that Calvin's idea was, that there should be a Liturgy, and in its spaces for free prayers. Knox also entertained the same views, of which his Liturgy is a standing memorial. His Liturgy was, during the anti-prelatic period, regularly used in the church. It was only the attempt of the King and his Episcopal friends to substitute the English Liturgy in its place that drove the church into the abandonment of its service. From the violence of these attempts, so intense did the feeling against a Liturgy become, that we read of some who "scandered at the Lord's Prayer and the Creed" (or creed), and the Laird of Lickie, one of the leaders of this party, is reported to have said that the Lord's Prayer "was but a threadbare prayer." The church, however, notwithstanding its repugnance to Episcopacy, repeatedly condemned those persons, and characterized their alteration in the order of worship as "novations," denouncing them as freely and keenly as would now be done to any who desired to see the ancient usages revived. Henderson was, as we read, "passionately opposed to the conceits" of those who abandoned the old Presbyterian forms; and Calderwood, as Wadrow tells us, was "much attached to our old Liturgy and forms." It may, in passing, be added as a word of warning, that the extreme views of these "nova-

tions" rent the Church and prepared the way for the introduction of Episcopacy.

But enough has been said to show that our form of worship is regulated by no Median law, and that it is cast in no stereotyped mould.

In common with many others, particularly with those who reside in large towns, where so many inducements are offered—and that too effectually—to withdraw the younger members from our communion, I feel that some modification in the form of service is imperatively called for. It has always appeared to me that the element of devotion enters too little into our service. There is too much sermon, and too little worship. The prayers seem usually to be offered without any regard to the divinity in conjunction, regarding "fearfulness" of words, and as a consequence, the further command as to the "choice" of words is equally overlooked. When departing from the divine model, we do not improve on it, and too often the prayers we listen to are rambling, sermonizing, and repulsive. Brevity and frequency seem to be requirements of Scripture, while prolixity and rarity seem to form the ecclesiastical ideal. Of our music, generally, the less said the better. It is simply disgraceful. The louder the voice of the leader, the greater seems to be his qualification in the popular opinion, and stentorian shouts take the place of grave, sweet melody. Now, what is the consequence of all this? They are only what might be expected. The younger members, who are better educated than many of their parents, in common with others who in secular matters are accustomed to see things managed with taste, and propriety naturally looking for the same qualities in the conduct of ecclesiastical matters, are disappointed by their absence, and repelled from our communion. Not only so, but there are many persons who, without any very decided convictions, feeling that the Presbyterian form of Church government is the best, yet do not connect themselves with this Church on account of the form of worship. I have heard it said that the departure of such was of little moment, but I am of a very different opinion. The loss of our adherents is of the utmost consequence. Believing as I do that the Presbyterian Church has in every country maintained the purity of doctrine in a pre-eminent degree, I deeply regret that persons should ever remove themselves from its communion, and place themselves in connection with a church where the whole counsel of God is not so faithfully proclaimed. It must be remembered that in losing a member we may lose his children, and that they may not be so instructed in a knowledge of the truth in after years. I am thankful to say that, as a rule, the children of our church are well instructed in a solid knowledge of the truth, and regret to know that this is very far from being the case in other churches and bodies where their information, as well as that of older members, is of the most superficial character. Now, if all this can be prevented—assuredly it can be—by a little attention to the outward form, the sooner the matter is rectified the better.

As an example of how varied was the old form of Presbyterian worship, I subjoin the order as given in the Book of Common Orders:—

1. Prayer.
2. Scripture, Old Testament.
3. " Now "
4. Psalm.
5. Prayer.
6. Psalm.
7. Prayer.
8. Sermon.
9. Prayer.
10. Lord's Prayer.
11. Creed.
12. Psalm.
13. Benediction.

In many quarters attention is being given to this subject, and as it may be interesting to your readers, I also give you the form observed in one of our congregations in London (Eng.):—

1. Short Invocation.
2. Psalm.
3. Prayer.
4. Reading Old Testament.
5. Psalm.
6. Prayer.
7. Reading New Testament.
8. Hymn.
9. Lord's Prayer.
10. Sermon.
11. Prayer.
12. Singing, Dismissal.
13. Benediction.

In conclusion, I urge on our members the necessity of reading more largely during

service from the Scriptures. In promiscuous congregations, I know that a very large proportion of those present never open their Bibles, or hear anything of God's Word, except in church on the Lord's day. It cannot fail to be noticed, that however listless and restless persons may be during the sermon, there is invariably attention and quietness during the reading of the Word of God.

Apologizing for trespassing so much on your columns, I am, &c.,

BARRISTER.

Toronto, Nov. 6, 1872.

A WORD FROM THE WEST.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Enclosed I send you two dollars, to pay you for a year of your paper. I have been trying to get a few more subscribers, but it seems the people think a local paper is all they can pay for. I think the cause is traceable to something else. A paper like the PRESBYTERIAN is capable of doing a great deal of good in the Church, if taken and read; and surely Church members who profess to be Christians ought to do a little more than those who make no profession to help on the good cause by taking your excellent paper. Want of means is sometimes given as an excuse, and yet the same parties spend the price of two papers for a year on tobacco and strong drink. I think there ought to be more self-denial among Christians. I am glad of the interest you take in Sabbath Schools, by publishing the notes on the Edinburgh Union Lessons. I see also mention made of uniform lessons for all denominations—a thing I would like very well to see, I take great interest in Sabbath Schools; but we are only in the backwoods. I do not know how many subscribers you have, but I hope you will not lose in a temporal point of view. More especially, I hope it will be the means of doing good. May the Lord prosper the work.

Yours truly,

G. C.

Cruckshank, Nov. 1, 1872.

A NEW COLLEGE.

Where there's a will there's a way.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—At the opening of Knox College, a few evenings ago, the Rev. Professor Cavin, in pleading for a 'New College,' was understood to say, 'that if a few wealthy gentlemen would lay their heads together, they could accomplish the object without feeling themselves much the poorer.' Now, second to none in a desire for a College that will prove an ornament to the city, a credit to the Church, and a comfort to the occupants, I do demur to the respected Professor's *modus operandi*. Have the poorer members of the Church no interest in the College? and are they not in duty bound to assist? And are they not as willing, to the extent of their several ability, as the rich? Most certainly; and why deprive them of the gratifying privilege?

It is true that the late Rev. Dr. Walsh got some twenty rich men to contribute twenty thousand pounds sterling for the new College of Edinburgh, but the effort in a measure cost him his life, and we cannot afford any such sacrifice; besides, there is no need for it. Rev. Dr. Guthrie, in his Mansie scheme, nupwed upon his brother, and fixed his minimum subscription at five pounds, but added, that "if even the poor widow wishes to have sixpence worth of an interest in the home of her minister, God forbid that I should stand in the way;" consequently clubs were formed, the five pounds collected, and handed to the Dr. through a representative. The labour of that scheme cost him too many months' absence from duty, besides 2s. 6d. to a man for shooting a horse that some miscreant had thrust into a pond and left floundering in the water, remarking that the owner could not be an noncontumacious!

The following is a better example for us: Shortly after the disruption in 1813, a bill of forty thousand pounds sterling of law expenses was handed in, with a prompt demand of payment, and a chuckle that it would extinguish the infant cause; but not so easy. Those at the helm of affairs divided the sum among the Synods, and they sub-divided among the Presbyteries, and they among the congregations, which then amounted to the ruinous (?) sum of 'ONE SHILLING AND NINEPENCE' TO EACH MEMBER!!! which was collected on an early Sabbath, and the big bill footed in a few days thereafter, the people rejoicing in the privilege of contributing it. Even the above

is susceptible of improvement in our case. Say that a new College will cost \$100,000. There are 50,000 members in the Church, which gives only \$2 to each on an average, but it is not meet that the rich should be saved and the poor burdened.

Now, Sir, at the risk of a charge of Modern Erastianism, (see Record for Nov., 1870) I venture the practical suggestion, let those whose duty it is get a rough estimate of the cost, and divide and sub-divide it as above in proportion of \$1 to \$100 for each member. Appoint an early day for the simultaneous election of the same, and past experience convinces me that the result would be such that the new edifice could be commenced with next spring. I am not to be understood as confining the subscriptions to the above sums, for if any one like the Dr's widow desires to have a large interest in our College, "still there is room." In Montreal the building of their new College is already begun, and why should Toronto be lagging behind, when so small a sacrifice will accomplish so desirable an object?

It may be that those who hinder many a good cause with their *but's* and *if's* may object to the above method, as partaking more of the nature of a *tax* than a voluntary contribution. Be it so. More human law sanctions the levying of an equalized tax for the support of the commonwealth and individual societies, and shall the Divine law be impotent to levy what is necessary for the maintenance of His glory in the world—the spiritual and eternal good of His people? There ought to be no necessity for any such thing as a tax in the Church of God, for Christianity is supposed to elevate its subjects to a platform much higher than all earthly things, consequently all its obligations are to be discharged from a motive far above that which the legal screw requires therefore, if we are up to the right mark, the idea of a tax would be turned into the experience of a delightful privilege. Others may urge that I have laid down false promises, inasmuch as there is a greater diversity in the position and condition here than in Scotland. Granted, but that is more than counterbalanced by the difference of circumstances. Here all the schemes of the Church are established, and though from the widening of the several fields, calling loudly for increased liberality, are in working order. Not so there. From four to five hundred ministers, and over one hundred Chatechists to provide for; some six hundred churches and nearly as many schools and mansees to build, as well as the Home, Colonial and Foreign Missions to sustain; compared with which the building of a College would be a mere gnat; and upon the principle that '*many little's make a mickle*,' the thing is not only practicable, but so easy as not to require even the poorest member to go to bed without his supper!

Should any be so perverse as to ward off the responsibility with the cry of, 'Wait till the Union question is settled,' my reply simply is, Union or no Union, Ontario must have a magnificent College, and if it is not got forthwith, the failure will only publish to the world, notwithstanding our loud professions, the spiritual apathy that reigns in our midst.

PLEBEIAN.

HOME MISSIONS.

To the Editor of BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I was peculiarly pleased with the article in your last week's paper by the Rev. Mr. Bruce. The church needs to have papers laid before it of just such a description; and it needs a much larger amount of information in reference to what is actually being done. The great mass of the members of the Canada Presbyterian church literally know nothing about the mission work either attempted or accomplished. If our missionaries ever send in any reports of their labours, I feel certain that they are not made public, at least I never see any them, and I am in as far a way of meeting with them if they really are published, as the most of the Presbyterians in the Province. I expected that more of the missionaries would have availed themselves of your columns to bring their various fields of labor more prominently before the church. It is not in the nature of things possible that we can be interested in, or be willing to support liberally labours of the nature, extent and necessity of, which we know next to nothing. I have no craving for sensational, highly coloured narratives of missionary work or travel, but surely there ought to be something every now and then worth a paragraph or two.

A MEMBER OF C.P.C.

A SUGGESTION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—In looking over the Financial Returns of the congregations of the Canada Presbyterian Church for the past year, I was struck with the disproportionate appropriation of the monies contributed to the schemes of the church by some congregations. I do not mean to assert that congregations have not the right of appropriating their contributions when they deem proper, but I submit that it is an understood fact in our church, that some of the schemes are more important than others, and that to those more important schemes a higher appropriation should be made. It is not to be apprehended from this, that any one of the schemes is unimportant, nevertheless it cannot be denied that the church has taught us to regard the Home Mission, College, and Foreign Mission as the most important schemes. This then being the case, congregations should make an equal, or a nearly equal appropriation of the monies to the three schemes above specified. It would be so far as I can judge, both unwise and unfair, to make of any one of these a pet scheme at the expense of the others. Were all the congregations of the church, for instance, to appropriate the one half of their aggregate contributions to the schemes of the church to the Home Mission,—what would become of the College? What of the Foreign Mission. If you look to the contributions of the congregations of the Presbytery of Chatham, you will see this mode of appropriating their funds carried out. With a fractional exception, one half of the total contributions to the schemes of the church in that Presbytery, is appropriated to the Home Mission. Why the people of that Presbytery have fallen into such intense love with that scheme to the comparative neglect of the others, I cannot tell; unless it be the result, either of the labours of a very influential deputation sent thither by the Assembly's Home Mission Committee to plead their cause, or of the justly great prominence given to those Presbyteries who contribute most liberally to that scheme, by the excellent reports of the committee as read by the convener at the Assembly, and the consequent eulogy passed upon such Presbyteries.

Of course when the annual report of the Home Mission Committee was read at the late Assembly at Hamilton, the Presbytery of Chatham with their great contributions was held up for the imitation of others.

Now, Mr. Editor, let it not be for a moment understood that I differ from those, yourself among them, who believe that the Presbytery of Chatham deserve great credit for the admirable working order into which they have put their machinery and the success which attended their efforts, but I protest against such appropriation of monies.

A friend of the College and F. M.

SLANDER.—The air is full of it. We have lived through several political campaigns, but this surpasses them all in personal abuse and unscrupulous accusation. We are amazed and horrified at what we read and hear. Our public men are either the most unscrupulous villains on earth, or partisan excitement is leading men to frightful lying. In either case our moral condition is deplorable.

A LIVE BOOK.—The Bible is very old, but is as fresh and youthful as ever. Where is there a live book on science, of fifty years' standing? But the Bible grows young as it grows old. The better people understand it, the more they love, trust and are benefited by it. It is a book of our day, adapted to our times; its teachings cannot be improved, its influence is greater than ever before. It is a live book.

PULPITS.—One evidence of Christian progress is the abolition of pulpits and the introduction of platforms. It indicates that ministers and people are coming together. It does both parties good. It makes ministers more manly, and laymen more devout. When choirs are superseded by congregational singing, or made leaders of the whole congregation, another important step will have to be taken.

RELIGIOUS PAPERS.—They are powerful agencies. The pulpit scarcely excels them. They are crowded with thought, alive with suggestion, pungent with reproof, instructive, entertaining, comforting. Through them the best thinkers, ablest men, wisest leaders, most earnest workers, visit tens of thousands of families weekly, instructing, inspiring, enabling them. They are more potent than books, because more widely read; more varied, versatile, personal and fresh. Week by week they come, new and lively; line upon line they teach; as friends from afar they are welcomed. For two or three dollars they afford more solid, first-class reading than twenty dollars will purchase in books, and the stream is never stagnant, but flows like waters from mountain springs, fresh and sparkling. These weekly sheets are loved from the tree of life.