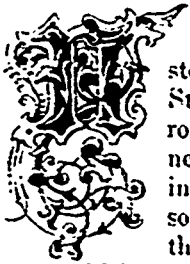


THE PRESBYTERIAN.

MARCH, 1866.



EARLY six years ago, the Synod held at Kingston ordered the Session of St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, to remove, without unnecessary delay, the musical instrument which had for some time been in use in that church. The grounds upon which this decision was come to were expressed in the resolution which was moved by the Rev. Dr. George, and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Mann, and were: First, the want of warrant in the New Testament for the use of musical instruments in public worship. Second, that the practice of the Church in Apostolic times, and for hundreds of years thereafter, gives no countenance to their use. Third, the uniform practice of the Church of Scotland, since the Reformation, as well as that of other Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, was against it. Fourth, that instrumental music, in the service of the sanctuary is both unnecessary and pernicious; and, Fifth, that its continuance in one, or introduction into other congregations, would be exceedingly offensive to many office-bearers and members, and would likely be productive of painful heart-burnings and serious divisions. To this finding the minority entered their dissent. Next year the injunction was renewed. The following year (1862) the question was reconsidered, and the Synod resolved not to interfere with the arrangements of the Kirk Session of Toronto, but issued "an injunction to Presbyteries to take order that no changes of any kind be introduced into the exercises of public worship in any congregation which are likely to distract its peace and harmony." The question again came up in Montreal, in 1863, on an overture, praying that the principle acted upon the previous year be extended—leaving it to individual congregations to decide for themselves—but reserving to the Synod, through Presbyteries, the right to prevent the intro-

duction of instrumental music when it is likely to disturb the peace and harmony of a congregation. This overture was rejected:—the Synod not being prepared, apparently, to give any further instructions—the finding of the year before being considered sufficient. Since then, the question has not been again before the Synod.

The action of the Synod, which, in part, agrees with that taken by the Church of Scotland, disposes of the argument that the use of instrumental music in public worship is unscriptural, otherwise the Synod of our Church and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland must be looked upon as faithless to the trust committed to them. They do not appear to have thought New Testament teaching opposed to the use of instrumental music nor the threatened innovation as opposed to Apostolic example. But, in truth, we can scarcely see how any rule for our guidance in this respect could be looked for in the practice of the Apostolic Church. That there is nothing displeasing to God in the use of instrumental music as an auxiliary to his people, in their public worship, is evident from the Temple service, with its trained choirs of instrumental performers, leading the praises of the congregations at the great festivals to which the chosen people gathered themselves. Nor was this an innovation creeping in with the decadence of the spirit of true religion among the Jews, when pomp and ceremony took the place and assumed the position of true piety, and when for the sincere worship of Our Father was substituted a mockery of showy ceremonial. On the contrary, the very passage which records the wonderful deliverance at the Red Sea, when the Lord divided the waters, so that the people passed over dry shod, records also that Miriam took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances, and sang the response to the noble song of Moses. And looking from this entrance of God's chosen people, on the long and