

British American Presbyterian.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AT TORONTO, CANADA.

TERMS: \$3.00 per annum in advance. Single Copies 10 Cts. For a list of Agents and Subscribers apply to the Proprietor.

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Table with 2 columns: Description of advertising space and corresponding rates.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 1872.

NOTICE.

We offer the PRESBYTERIAN up to the first of January, 1873, from this date, to all who forward us a dollar.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

Nothing of any great importance has been doing at Ottawa during the week. Legislators are anxious to get home or to the sea-side, and are in a great hurry now as they were dilatory during the early part of the Session.

The death of the Hon. John S. Macdonald on Saturday last has caused some talk, and called forth more or less of exaggerated eulogium. The ordinary maxim about De Mortuis is a good one. We shall say therefore little about the Ontario Premier.

Another prominent man has also during the week passed away. We refer to James Gordon Bennett, the Proprietor of the New York Herald. Born of humble parentage in the neighbourhood of Keith, Scotland, Bennett came, when a young man, to America, and after many struggles and the display of indomitable energy and perseverance succeeded in making the Herald a power in the States, and what he liked even better, a mine of wealth to himself.

would be difficult to say which deserved the praise. The tendency to worship more successively and hypocritically, and to be unduly and unreasonably, we are old-fashioned and "damned" enough not to yield to. Let our columns be what they may, they shall never be prostituted by being made a vehicle for the worship of either the richest or the poorest of successful men who were after all destitute of goodness.

The Washington Treaty still trembles in the balance, though its present prospects are very dark. Horace Greeley's chances for the Presidency are improving, yet we do not believe he will succeed.

The struggle between the German Emperor and the Pope still goes on. Bismarck says his master has no idea of playing the scene at Cambray over a gain, referring as many of our readers know to the Emperor, Henry Fourth, standing bare headed, bare footed, and fasting for three days at the Pope's gate in that town, in order to secure the removal of the Papal Ban from his Empire.

As one of the first fruits of the permission given to congregations by the U. P. Synod of Scotland, to use musical instruments in public worship, Rev. J. S. Taylor, a very respectable minister, of Glasgow, and of long standing, has withdrawn from the U. P. Church.

Rev. Dr. Islay Burns, one of the Free Church Professors, Glasgow, died on the 20th of May in the 55th year of his age. He was a brother to the well known missionary to China, W. C. Burns, whose life has been extensively read in Canada; and a nephew of the late Dr. Burns of this city. He succeeded the Rev. Robert M. McCheyne as Free Church minister of St. Peters, Dundee. In this position he continued twenty years when he was chosen to succeed Dr. Hetherington as Professor of apologetics in Glasgow. The death of Dr. Burns makes a second vacancy in the Glasgow Institution, the other having been caused by the removal of Rev. Dr. Gibson.

LOYALTY TO THE CHURCH.

Is the Presbyterian Church as a whole as much a power in the world for good as it ought to be, and as it might reasonably be expected it would be? Are all our congregational affairs managed with the promptness, energy, and liberality of a people thoroughly and intelligently sensible of the character of the trust committed to them? Are our theological schools as efficiently supported, as they ought to be? Are we prosecuting the work of Foreign and domestic missions as if we really believed in their importance and obligation? At such a time as this when the Supreme Courts of the Churches are sitting, it is very appropriate that such questions should be asked and answered very seriously and very honestly. If there is anything taught plainly in the New Testament, it is that Christians are to live not to themselves; that they are stewards and that a large portion of the stewardship is to be fulfilled through the Church. If a man has intelligently chosen the Presbyterian Church, then it is through that Church that his Christian activity is principally to be called forth. Are we in general showing that this is the fact? Some people say we are slow, and others aver that we are cold, and blame our Presbyterianism as the cause. If we are either slow or cold we must look to something different from our Presbyterianism for the reason, for that tends naturally to concentration, united action, and a good measure of clamminess, and if this is not the case with us so much as it ought to be, it is because our Presbyterianism has a tendency to congregationalism. We are in danger of forgetting the whole body by attending too exclusively to the particular congregation we are connected with. Some on the other hand are afraid of being thought too denominational, and thus are ever tending to indifference and languor. The man that loves his own denomination best, will be most likely to love others warmly also. There is an affected catholicity, which is as hollow as it is contemptible. Loyalty to one's Church is so far loyalty to Christ. The Presbyterian Churches are becoming more and more alive to this, and they have a good way to go before they need fear any error by excess.

HABITUAL DRUNKARDS.

As was naturally to be expected the subject of intemperance is everywhere attracting increased attention. The Christian, the Statesman, the publicist, the political economist, in short every one that has any interest whatever in his fellows cannot help considering very gravely this formidable and widely diffused evil of intemperance, which is everywhere causing so much misery and counteracting every plan for the good of the race. It is not merely those who are total abstainers, though to their arguments and exertions we owe it, that so much thought is being given to the whole matter, but to many others who themselves drink, as they suppose, "moderately," are more anxious about the condition of the "poor drunkard," and are devising measures for the amelioration of his condition and his deliverance from bondage. All this is a token for good. Well-meaning, conscientious people, once led to grapple with the great evil will soon find that they must personally become "total abstainers," if they would accomplish anything really efficient in a field so extensive and so necessitous.

The British House of Commons discusses Permissive Bills. English Bishops get themselves insulted and mobbed for advocating such Bills: many are waking up to the fact that they must give reasons for not being personally abstainers, while every year it is manifest in spite of all protests to the contrary, that those who deal in intoxicating liquors, whether wholesale or retail, are becoming always less respected in the community, and are looked upon as engaged in, to say the least of it, a very questionable occupation. Saints and sinners are alike agreed that the liquor traffic is not one that a Christian can engage in, either with propriety or safety. It is felt to be dangerous, and upon the whole disreputable work, however lucrative many may find it. To make one's livelihood from the vices of the community is not a pleasant thought; and, more and more, really respectable and conscientious persons who may have been trained to such work and been involved in the traffic when the general feeling and opinion was different, are seeking to get free from it and engage in less questionable occupations.

There is a Committee of the British House of Commons at present taking evidence on the best mode of treating habitual drunkards. This also is a sign of the times. Everyone in short feels that something must be done, and that of itself is a hopeful symptom. What is true of Britain and the States is also applicable to Canada. More sensible ideas on the subject are prevailing. Total abstainers have got out of the slough of contempt. No man of sense, be he what he may, thinks now of sneering at them as either fools or knaves. It is thought the right and proper thing, even among toppers, that Ministers of religion, at any rate, should be personal abstainers, though why there should be one law for the pulpit and another for the pew they may not be able to show. They have a sort of vague impression that it looks better. The minister that now "takes a horn," even in "all moderation," is looked upon as not quite the thing. The very persons that drink with him and call him a "good fellow" have more or less a feeling bordering on disrespect, and a kind of vague, half-formed conviction that all that sort of thing some how or other, "does not suit the cloth. There is an ever widening feeling that it is much better and safer for ministers and even elders not to meddle with the bottle. All this may be protested against, and certain interested parties may insist that it is not so. But the fact remains all the same in spite of their assertions and indignation. All this tells its own story, and points its appropriate moral.

The Kirk Synod met on Wednesday at Kingston. Rev. J. Hogg, D.D., of Guelph, was elected Moderator. A report of the proceedings of this court will be prepared for our columns.

We compile the report of the General Assembly up to Wednesday evening from the city dailies. Subsequent proceedings will be sent us from our own reporters. The Assembly will likely remain in session till Thursday or Friday of next week.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE CHURCH.

As will be seen from our short account of the proceedings in the United Presbyterian Synod at Edinburgh, the question about the use of instrumental music in public worship, has been settled by that body by each congregation being left to determine its course on the subject for itself, provided there be such an amount of unanimity among the members that the introduction of such musical instrument would not destroy the harmony or unity of the congregation. This shows a considerable change of opinion within the last few years. Fourteen years ago one of the largest and most influential congregations in the body asked for permission to use an organ in conducting the Psalms of the Church, but the permission was promptly refused, and the Synodical order was given for the removal of the instrument. The members of that congregation showed their good sense and true Presbyterianism by bowing to the decision of the Supreme Court and putting out the obnoxious "kist o' whistles." During all the succeeding years, that congregation though quite agreed on the lawfulness of such a thing, have never sought directly or indirectly to go contrary to the church law on the subject, and now without their asking for it, they have received liberty on such conditions as no sensible person could complain of as either harsh or unreasonable. We are far from being strongly in favor of the change, though unable to see in what its absolute sinfulness consists. For all purposes of praise in Churches we believe that vocal music is much to be preferred. But others have a different opinion, and where none in a congregation object to the use of a musical instrument, we do not well see why that congregation should be prevented from carrying out its wishes. We, of course, know that the theory of Presbyterian unity goes contrary to such permission inasmuch the whole body is one, or that an individual in Sarina may feel himself as much compromised by what is done in Quebec as in the congregation to which he belongs. But this theory must not be carried too far. Some discretionary liberty must be allowed to congregations in the order of their church service, though it is difficult to say how far it should extend. At the same time it is to be borne in mind that many very good conscientious people regard the use of such instruments in the worship of God as positively sinful, while those who favor them cannot say that they are committing sin by not employing such helps to praise. In such circumstances there is surely great room for forbearance on the part of those who think themselves strong, so that they do not unnecessarily grieve tender consciences, even though these may be somewhat unenlightened. Christians surely are not always to please only themselves, though that rule holds good with minorities as well as majorities. The tyranny of the weak over the strong has undoubtedly been far greater and more general than the tyranny of the strong over the weak.

PRESBYTERIAN NEWS.

It is not possible to give an extended account of the proceedings in the various Presbyterian Synods and Assemblies that have been holding their Annual Meetings during the past weeks.

The Assembly at Detroit closed its Sessions on the 29th of May after being very pleasantly and successfully engaged in Church work for thirteen days. It held twenty-four business Sessions and had several popular assemblies, while there were also a few Elder's meetings of very great interest and importance.

The abounding hospitality of the good people of Detroit seems to have been matter of general remark and commendation. All the Commissioners were accommodated and in such a manner as to make each believe that the best place had been reserved for him.

The number of young men in the Assembly was also a noticeable feature, and at the same time the steady, business-like fashion in which the work of the Assembly was gone about.

The next Assembly meets in Baltimore, and though there have been for some time past proposals to reduce the number of representatives on account of the difficulty in accommodating so many,

yet it is expected that the Capital of Maryland will accommodate the boundless hospitality of Detroit, and that such diminution will not be needed for a year or two to come at any rate.

The most of the business transacted in the Assembly was not of very special interest to us in Canada except to show how earnestly and liberally the Presbyterians of the States are going about their great Evangelical work. Everything with them is on a large scale.

The ever increasing demands from the miles of population and its progress westward tax the energies of the Church to the utmost, and the efforts to meet those demands are worthy of all admiration and imitation.

The PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE STATES has eleven Theological Seminaries and Universities under its control and management. The best known of these Theological Institutions are Princeton, at which 37 students matriculated last Session, and 21 graduated; and Union Seminary which has endowments yielding income to the extent of \$400,000, with buildings to the value of \$70,000. New buildings are at present projected, for which \$350,000 have been subscribed, but the work is not to be proceeded with till \$500,000 have been secured.

The UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD, SCOTLAND, by latest accounts had got over the most important part of its work within the week on which it met. It had decided that the Ministers of the Churches negotiating for Union were, so far as the U. P. Synod could secure them in that right, eligible to become pastors in the U. P. Church; that the Government Education Bill for Scotland merited general approval, while any distinctive religious teaching in the common schools of the country did not meet the wishes of the Synod; that very encouragement should be given to the U. P. congregations in England to unite with the English Presbyterian Church, even though the larger union should not take place; that uniformity on the question of instrumental music should no longer be insisted on, while at the same time the Synod was desirous that simplicity in public worship and the unity of congregations be carefully guarded; and that the grants received by the Missionaries of the Church from the Indian Government for the support of orphans be discontinued.

Dr. Cuyler and Henley, American deputies, had been expected to attend this meeting of Synod but did not arrive in time.

MINISTERIAL HOLIDAYS.

We direct the special attention of our readers to the remarks of our New Brunswick correspondent in reference to a yearly holiday which ministers so much require, but which they so rarely receive. There is no class of men that need a holiday more than do ordinary working clergymen. And there is nothing which would be better for the congregations than seeing to it that such holidays be always secured. It would be well also for ministers to bear in mind that such times are really for relaxation and rest. We have known ministers getting such holidays and spending them in wandering about preaching and lecturing and in a state of continued excitement, so that they returned more jaded out both in body and mind than when they started. Such proceedings are not fair to any concerned. It is but seldom, however, that the chance of doing this is presented. In ordinary cases people think that the minister gets six holidays in the week and has simply to stand up and speak a couple of hours on the seventh. That idea is no doubt wearing out, but still there are too many who think the minister has a "good time" of it, and that his working time is a great deal better than other folks holiday. How different the facts are many of our readers can testify.

The hint thrown out by our correspondent about exchanges between the ministers of the Lower Provinces and those in Ontario and Quebec, ought not to be lost sight of. Some could manage it even without the present from their congregations so feelingly and fully dwelt upon.

PRESBYTERIANISM seems likely to extend from Scotland to those countries on the European continent now receiving the light of Protestant Christianity. There is now a synod with thirty churches and their pastors in Spain. Presbytery is also likely to be the order of the Reformed Church of Italy.