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Contributors and Correspondents.

HOURS WITH A CHURCH COURT.

I. THE DAWN.

The great Church gatherings, in the shape of General Assemblies, Synods, Councils, Conferences, that yearly take place, in many different places, all over the Christian world, have become so familiar things that it seems to be thought enough to give a bare report of their proceedings, something after the manner of a ship's log, bone, and sinew, and muscle sufficient, but little flesh and blood—the fact suited to an historic record in brevity, but a small moiety of the humanities, little of the moving Spirit of the scene. It may be that that is frequently enough. To be true to life, in portraying a mere business meeting, the picture would need to be as free as possible from anything like flesh and blood. If commonplace, brevity is an excellence, whose absence can never be excused. Nevertheless, some few prunings allowed, as in perfect keeping with the fitness of things, in many cases there is a great void left after the reports have told their simple tale. In that silent void, in which many echoes of golden utterances die away, many gems of thought and deed sink into oblivion, there is some substantial loss, to be contemplated not without some feeling of regret. We have on occasions felt the void. Not a little in connexion with the recent Assembly held in Ottawa, which was not a common one, nor dry-as-dust, nor commonplace in its *res gestae* or even in its *modus operandi*. As no one has attempted to fill up the void, a thing for which we have been waiting, we now write to do a little in that direction. And if our contribution do little more than stimulate some graphic and powerful pens in the cause, it will not be in vain.

We arrived in Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion, on the evening of the fourth of June, in company with quite a number of ministers and elders of two Presbyterian Churches in the land, a some what learned company, furnishing the most agreeable fellow-travelers, hailing chiefly from the West, from the shores of Lake Huron from London, Hamilton, Toronto, and neighbourhood, and from other places to the east of there, as far down as the staid little town of Prescott. All seemed in the best of spirits and the happiest of humours, not a bad preparative for the weighty business, in which they were about to embark, an excellent antidote to all mental as well as physical dyspepsia. The journey over, and our strength regaled with a refreshing tea, we hastened to the Church which bears the name of the hero of the Scottish reformation, where we found that the opening service of the Assembly had commenced, the retiring moderator, Rev. Wm. Reid, being busy with the delivery of his discourse to a large and attentive audience. Here another repast awaited us; for scarcely had we joined the audience, and settled down to the service in hand, than we felt that there had been touched in us a sympathetic cord; and our thoughts were carried forward to momentous issues to be grappled with ere the Assembly should close its sittings, while mingled memories came rushing in upon us thick and fast, bearing upon the Church's experiences in the day's that are gone, and her many earnest prayers for divine wisdom and charity. The preacher seemed *en rapport* with the hour. The text itself, which was in the words of Paul, at Phillipians first chapter and eighteenth verse, was significant; and the handling of it, if not savouring of any attempt at oratory, indicated considerable fore-thought; dispensed some rich fruits of ministerial experience and observation, and was replete with the elements of adaptation. Not a bad beginning this, thought we, of whatever texture the ending may chance to be. With this we take our leave of the initiatory proceedings, and seek the balmy air of solitude of a few hours.

With a new day dawned upon us, and Church business now the order of the day we find the Assembly in its more common attitude; and ere we are aware, our thoughts begin to circle round itself, as forming a deeply interesting study. Not oblivious to the things done, the doors for a nonce direct the current of reflection, a truth you can never separate the two. What variety in that circle of brotherhood, seldom so much is comprised in the same place. All ages, from manhood's bloom to a venerable autumn of life. Many nationalities, with their blended range of experience and acquisition. Men who have looked on Africa's burning Strand, and listened to the roar of lion and the hiss of very serpents. Men, who have gazed on the regions of eternal snow and ice. Here

the silvery locks of venerable Pioneers, whose story of life is bound up with the laying of the foundations of a great nationality in the land. There the children of the old loyalists, who loved so well the old flag of a thousand years, and followed it northwards across the lakes, when to the South it was hauled down. There again the children of pilgrim fathers and mothers, who left the land of their birth and of their fathers, here to seek for better days, and more comfortable resting places. No ordinary combination this! We almost wonder how they are all got to harmonise to bond their energies for like ends, to go hand in hand, while each thinking for himself. In this we seek the explanation of it, "they are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints and of the household of God." Diversity in many things, but the same spirit in all. Again, do we think of the calibre of such a body. A highly respectable company surely have we here. There is the new Moderator, a venerable Irishman, who has seen much good service in the Church. There are learned Professors who bear an honoured name, and are doing a noble work. There is a large band of workmen adorned with many gifts and graces. If men like Ounston and Inglis have gone to other scenes, there are others left behind, who have their place in the first rank; and many more, and younger, destined yet to accomplish much, and to furnish no mean chapter in the annals of the Church God's grace to the workers. God-speed to the work. No fear of the vessel with such pilots at the helm. Forward, the motto be; faith and love the compass, brothers.

MEMORIA.

Presbytery of Ontario and Probationer's Supply.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—But for an unfortunate sentence in the reported proceedings of the last meeting of the Presbytery of Ontario, I should not have troubled you at present. As, however, a remark made by me at that meeting has aggrieved the Convener of the Committee for the Distribution of Probationers, and he has sought to set himself right through your columns, let me set myself right with him in the same way.

Mr. Torrance's circulars have hitherto stated the time of the Committee's meetings for the distribution of supply, but the last one did not. If there was no report from the Presbytery of Ontario at the Committee's last meeting, there could scarcely be much blame attached to me when I was not informed of the time of meeting. If the report was not forward three weeks before its meeting, it was owing to peculiar circumstances with respect to our vacancies over which I had no control, and which made it impossible for me to report earlier than I did.

One of our vacancies was supplied by a student, a call from the other two to the same probationer was pending with the certainty almost, known to the Presbytery, that he would accept one; an arrangement had been made to supply the other with a student, so that although Mr. Torrance says the Committee knew that there were vacancies, when I sent my report I knew that we had none, and I promised the Committee the information as soon as it could be obtained, that we had none.

The Committee's task is no easy one, and the Presbytery of Ontario will most willingly believe that it was only from the Committee's desire to do justice and to serve them that they sent us three probationers. But we know perfectly well that if we want supply we must ask for it, and when we don't ask any, the natural inference would seem to be that we don't wish any. If the Committee presumes to know a Presbyter's wants better than the Presbytery itself, and takes upon itself to send probationers when none are asked, I still do not see why upon that principle of distribution they may not send to any Presbytery as many as they choose.

Mr. Torrance seems to take some comfort from the fact that the Presbytery was able, after all, to give employment to the supply sent. I take comfort from it too, but it is no justification. We were enabled to find employment for the probationers sent only by the congregation for which a student was to be obtained, withdrawing from that arrangement, a circumstance which the Committee could not possibly have foreknown would take place.

I quite agree with Mr. Torrance that, "it is only just that probationers should be afforded the opportunity of preaching to all vacant congregations," and probationers would be delighted, I have no doubt, were justice in this matter more strictly enforced by our Church.

I am, Sir,
Yours truly,
Wm. D. BALLANTYNE.

The minister should preach as if he felt that although the congregation own the church, and have bought the pews, they have not bought him.

SERMON-HEARING AND WORSHIP.

The subjoined words of Adam, the "Shakespeare of the Puritans," are as applicable in our day as when first uttered. Churches were called in primitive times *dominica*, the Lord's house, and *oratoria*, houses of prayer, devoted to the praise of God. Many in our time come to these holy places, and are so transported with a desire of hearing, that they forget the fervency of praying and praising God. The end is ever held more noble than the means that conduce unto it. Sin brought in ignorance, and ignorance takes away devotion. The word preached brings in knowledge, and knowledge rectifies devotion, so that all our preaching is but to beget your praying, to instruct you to praise and worship God. The most immediate and proper service and worship of God is the end, and hearing but the means to that end. And the rule is true, 'The end ever excels that which leads to the end.'

God reckons not so much of our audience as of our obedience: not the hearers, but the doers, are blessed in their deed. Indeed, Christ saith, 'Blessed are they that hear the Word of God; but with this condition, that they keep it.' The worship of God is the fruit of hearing; show me this fruit. Our hours of prayer are turned into places of hearing, and we are content that God should speak earnestly to us, but we will not speak devoutly to Him. I hope no man will so ignorantly and injuriously understand me, as if I spake against hearing of sermons frequently. God forbid! You must hear, and we must preach. The Apostles gave themselves 'diligently to prayer and to the preaching of the Word' (Acts vi. 4); where yet prayer is put in the first place.

I complain not that you come to sermons (for God's sake, come faster), but that you neglect public prayer, as if it were only God's part to bless you, not yours to bless God. Beloved, mistake not. It is not the only exercise of a Christian to hear a sermon; nor is that Sabbath well spent that despatcheth no other business for heaven. I will be bold to tell you that in heaven there shall be no sermons; and yet in heaven there shall be hallelujahs.

So that all God's service is not to be narrowed up in hearing; it hath greater latitude; there must be prayer, praise, adoration, and worship of God. Neither is it the scope of Christianity to know, but the scope of knowledge is to be a good Christian. You are not heathen to ask, 'What must we believe?' nor catechists to demand, 'What must we do?' You know what to believe, you know what to do. But you have learned more than you have followed. Come, then, hither, both to hear God and to praise God; as David was not only a praiser, but a preacher. 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.'

R. D. F.

IMPORTANT.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—For the first time, through chance, I learned what the number printed with the name of the subscriber on the small slip of pink paper meant, and thought that a little note of explanation at the commencement of the fourth page of the paper might be advisable, to let subscribers know that the number before their names on the address was the number of the paper they had paid their subscriptions to, and that the change of that number was sufficient receipt when they had renewed their subscription, and so not leave any room for excuse that they did not know that their subscription was due, which was the case in this instance, something that ought not to be (for so excellent a paper) some time past due.

A very pleasing and interesting feature to many in your very valuable paper is, that when any suggestions for improvement, grievances that call for redress, or anything of special interest to the Church, your columns are open to lay, as well as clerical, correspondents. When some grievance is felt in a locality, it seems we are apt to come to the conclusion that the whole machinery of the Church is at fault. A case in point: In your issue of 17th inst., on the first page, under "Information Wanted" by "A Minister of C. P. Church." After making some statements, &c., he says: "Our Church has given the whole power over to the people, and made ministers rolling-balls which any fractious member may drive about to desperation." On reading that statement, we could not help thinking that if the writer had witnessed the notions of some of our Presbyteries in the West, he would have come to a different conclusion. When, unfortunately, anything should happen in a congregation whereby

the pastor's usefulness is very much impaired, and if, after a Presbyterial visitation, they have failed to heal the breach and restore the pastor's usefulness, according to the laws of our Church, the Presbytery are bound to release him from his charge and proclaim the Church vacant. But, sir, as "law breakers should not be law breakers," preaching seems to be one thing and practice another. We have seen one of our best congregations in Ontario rent in twain, and one-half call a minister of another denomination, rather than submit to a Presbytery who, rather than have the moral courage to carry out the rules of the Church, would rather sacrifice the best interests of a large congregation by yielding to the wishes of a brother minister. We have seen further, that a minister, seemingly in order to get over an unfortunate difficulty, has gone so far in encouraging a call from another congregation, that we could not help saying he was in truth and honour bound to accept it, and while acknowledging that (one of the beauties of Presbyterianism steps in), he leaves himself in the hands of the brethren, and a majority refuse the translation. With them it becomes a very solemn, and a very serious matter to sever the tie that has existed for many years. But when a call comes from a larger Church, and a larger salary is promised, no matter what the people may think or say, the brethren gracefully yield to the translation.

O tempora! O mores!

A LAYMAN OF C. P. CHURCH.

Toronto Ladies' College.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I have often wondered why, that in Toronto with its numerous institutions for learning that there is no College for Young Ladies in connexion with our church, it is a want long felt by those who desire to give their daughters a good education and are obliged to send them to other institutions not in connexion, true there is one college already at Ottawa and another I believe about to be opened at Brantford which will be a convenience in their own districts but Toronto is more central and more acceptable to a greater number than either of these places.

Would it not be possible to convert the present College Buildings into a Ladies College, the situation is good, and would be both convenient and healthy, it would be useless for me to urge the many reasons why Toronto or the church should take up the question. The Roman Catholic, English and Methodist Churches seem fully alive to the importance of securing the influence of the feminine mind in their respective churches.

Yours truly,
A MEMBER.

The Indians.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The work of our Church in the North West is principally among its own members, while all other opportunities of doing good are ignored. A weak effort has been made to evangelize the Indians—an evidence that an opinion prevails that something ought to be done. In a large settlement at the Saskatchewan there is a missionary whose time is needed among the colonists, and who sees a few Indians occasionally; and just outside of Manitoba for some months past a catechist was travelling and working. But the amount of work attempted even if it had been successful, is not in proportion to the ability of such a church as ours.

The field rightfully belongs to the Church in Canada, and just as Presbyterians elsewhere, are among the most active and successful in the prosecution of difficult and dangerous enterprises, so they ought to be in this work. If it were entered upon in faith, the means for carrying it forward would soon be forthcoming. If our Church be not courageous enough to set about doing it, there ought to be an appeal made to some other Presbyterian Church for assistance, so that the field might be occupied and the disgrace of doing next to nothing in the past taken away. Certainly this would be the less spiritual, but if matters are to continue as at present, the wiser conclusion. If men were sent out by some other church, no exertion would be spared to make their work successful, both in the selection of missionaries thoroughly fitted for it, and in their equipment with everything essential to success. If the higher motive, "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," be not sufficient, there are others. The interests of this country require that something should be done for their improvement. Sometimes there are indications that seem to make it probable that at some time our neglect of the Indians may bring a terrible punishment upon us. They are being exterminated by white men, who though they occasionally employ firearms in the work, more frequently use the ruin bottle, than which no more destructive agency among Indians is at present known.

S. D.

Springfield, Manitoba, July 18, 1874.

THE LAW REPEALED.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The "abominable law" to which a minister of the C. P. Church refers in your previous issue has been repealed at last meeting of Assembly. For this the thanks of the ministers in particular, and of the Church in general, are due to the Presbytery of Cobourg. This Presbytery, I am sure, will rejoice to think that as one of the first fruits of their "overtured anent Home Mission Regulations," there is every prospect of at least two additional candidates for the ministry.

Yours truly,

W. BENNETT.

Springville, July 20, 1874.

Presbytery of Montreal.

This Presbytery held a quarterly meeting at Montreal, and in Presbyterian College there, on the eighth and ninth days of July, 1874. The Rev. Alexander Young, Moderator. Present, fifteen ministers and three elders; the Sequestrants, five. The Rev. James S. Black, lately minister of Olive Street Congregational Church, Nashua, New Hampshire, United States, and Mr. Gavin Sinclair, licentiate of the Free Church of Scotland, were received into the Canada Presbyterian Church. The resignation of the Rev. John Jones having been received, he was loosed from his pastoral relation to Chalmers' Church, Montreal. The Presbytery at the same time recording their confidence in Mr. Jones, and testifying to the zeal and fidelity with which he has cultivated a difficult, though very hopeful field, and to the signal success that has attended his labours. The Presbytery authorized the Rev. Kenneth Macdonald to moderate in a call at Indian Lands, and appointed a special meeting of Court there on the twelfth day of August next, to prosecute said call. The quarterly Home Mission Report was read and considered *scrutinim*, and the Presbytery resolved, That the Home Mission Committee send a suitable missionary with as little delay as possible, to labour at Arundel, De Salaberry, and Hamilton Farm. A regular gospel call from Erskine Church, Montreal, to the Rev. James S. Black, was signed by two hundred and eighty members in full communion, and fifty-seven adherents, accompanied with a promise of \$8,000 per annum for salary, and sustained, and notice thereof was ordered to be duly communicated to Mr. Black, in view of his accepting said call, and steps being taken for his settlement on Thursday the eighth day of October next. The Presbytery instructed their Home Mission Committee, to prepare a revised list of grants to supplemented congregations and mission stations, and to forward said list to the General Home Mission Committee, in due time; the Presbytery's Home Mission Committee were also instructed to prescribe subjects of discourse to Students of Theology within the bounds. The Rev. John Scrimger reported that the congregation of the Presbyterian Church, Stanley Street, Montreal, had elected Elders who were ready for ordination and induction. He also submitted a constitution for management of temporal affairs of said congregation, and moved that the same be sanctioned, to which the Presbytery agreed. The Rev. Dr. Taylor, however, at the same time, craving and obtaining leave to dissent, on the ground that, in his judgment, the second article of the said Constitution is inconsistent with the late decision of the General Assembly on the employment of instrumental music, and virtually introduces a new term of communion into the congregation. The Presbytery having learned that the Rev. James Wellwood, of Cote des Neiges, had gone for three months to recruit his health at sea and in Great Britain, approved of his doing so, and expressed their sympathy with him in his affliction. Mr. Robert Watt was transferred to the Presbytery of Guolph, and Messrs. James Cameron, Ayr, and Telesphore Brouillette, having delivered their public probationary trials to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, were, in due form, licensed to preach the Gospel. The Presbytery ordered that sessions and congregations be instructed by circulars to send in their returns anent the General Assembly's Remit on Union, on or before the eighth day of October next, which day the Presbytery will meet at Montreal, in Presbyterian College, at ten o'clock forenoon.—JAMES WATSON, Presbytery Clerk.

A Hindoo paper published in Bengal, *Soyona Rajana*, speaks of the excellence of the Bible. In advocating the introduction of the Bible into government schools, from which British timidity, indifference and infidelity had excluded it, these heathen writers describe it as "The best and most excellent of all English books, and there is not its like in the English language. As every joint of the sugar cane, from the root to the top, is full of sweetness, so every page of the Bible is fraught with the most precious instructions. A portion of that book would yield to you more of sound morality than a thousand other treatises on the same subject. In short, if any person studies the English language with a view to gain wisdom, there is not another book more worthy of being read than the Bible."—*Southern Presbyterian*.

The incomes of the five leading foreign missionary societies in England are as follows: Church Missionary Society, \$1,306, 105; Wesleyan, \$839, 626; London Missionary, \$79, 747; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, \$551, 935; English Baptist, \$201, 275. These incomes, amounting to a total of nearly three and a half millions, show a sustained and growing interest in the work of foreign missions.