

# The American Presbyterian.

John A Weir 15 July 69

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## American Presbyterian.

THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1869.

—Rev. Absalom Peters, D.D., who figured in the day of the division of the Presbyterian Church as a New School leader, being the Secretary and champion of the American Home Missionary Society, and a member of a New York Presbytery, died in New York just two days before the Assemblies met, in the 76th year of his age. He has more recently been pastor of the Congregational church in Williamstown, Mass.

—We observe that in the Assembly of the other branch a church was overruled in its determination to adopt the system of a rotary eldership, the decisions of Synod and Presbytery being sustained. The ground taken was that the traditions of the body were against the change. Some people like short traditions in Church matters. We prefer the long ones, which are on the other side in this case.

—The proposals made and urged in the other Assembly to begin correspondence with the Southern Assembly have not been adopted, partly at the wish of leading Southern Presbyterians, who fear that the movement would divide themselves into two parties—one, we suppose, willing to take the olive-branch in good faith,—the other to slap the O. S. Assembly across the face with it. We know only by brief telegrams what has been the tone of the deliberations at Memphis, but the election of Stuart Robinson to the Moderator's chair will not be taken as complimentary to the North.

—The R. P. General Synod decides that the Presbyteries (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Saharanpur) which "suspended relations" to Synod until it repealed the suspension of Mr. Stuart, have thereby cut themselves off from the denomination. The protests of the Philadelphia Presbytery against the statements made in the Report of the Commission of last year, were not allowed to be read until the Report of the Commission had been adopted. A minority of fifty-seven in the Second church of this city, (Dr. Sterrett's) who memorialized Synod for advice, and probably wanted a Commission sent down to politely force their pastor into the Second Presbytery, had the whole responsibility thrown upon their own shoulders by being recognized as the true R. P. church. The Saharanpur Mission Presbytery were required to return to their allegiance within a year, and notified that if they do not, a competent missionary will be sent out to claim the property and the custody of the children, and a special committee was ordered to correspond with the "converted heathen missionaries" to induce them to break with the American members of the Mission on the promise that they shall be recognized as the Presbytery. Fine work for a Church, sowing discord on a mission field, and exposing the worst nakedness of Christendom in the sight of the heathen!

On Union with the U. P. Church the Report was recommended to the Committee without endorsement or instructions, being, indeed, advocated with earnestness only by Dr. M. Master. Synod—like the Democracy in our late war—is in favor of the Union but opposed to any measures for securing it.

Dr. M'Leod besought Synod not to bring any more odium on itself by multiplying excommunications. We think that the results of the whole session—results for which Synod by special resolution returned thanks to God,—will have just the effect that he deprecates. The ministerial force of the body has dwindled from 53 ministers in 1865 to 27 in 1869—a loss of over one-half in four years, in spite of some twenty accessions to its ranks.

—Dr. M'Ilvaine, of Princeton, delivered a fine lecture in the Hall of the University, last Saturday evening, on the Christian solution of the problems of Social Science. It is hoped that he will accept the new chair, to which he has been invited by the Trustees.

## LETTER FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, May 26th, was a great day in our Assembly. Reports on Home Missions, by Dr. Humphrey, on the Freedmen, by Rev. Arthur Mitchell; on Church Erection, by Dr. Herrick Johnson, and on Education, by Professor Huntington, were successively read; and rarely have there been abler, more eloquent, or more stirring papers placed before our body. The strength of this Assembly has been most wisely turned in the direction of these grand, central causes, which, in other years, have been postponed and interrupted, and their final disposition often thrust into the closing hours of the session. Dr. Humphrey's report admitted the almost bewildering extent and variety presented by the Home field, and touched briefly upon the successive points of Christian enterprise, immigration, the West, feeble churches in the East, City Evangelization, and the Review for the Year. It closed by an eloquent prophecy of the advance in usefulness which might be expected in the event of a harmonious union. Mr. Mitchell, of the Standing Committee on Freedmen, with his small and juvenile form, brought quite as impressive and effective a report as any. After just expressions of surprise at our unaccountable delay as a denomination to engage in the work, he showed how warmly the heart of our people beat to this cause, and recommended that we undertake to raise \$100,000 this year.

Dr. Johnson's report spoke severely of the fact that over one thousand churches had failed to contribute during the year. The cause suffers because others are regarded as more spiritual. Regularity in contributions is required in order to meet obligations, which—when contracts and mortgages are concerned—are in a pressing form. What the body is to the soul, he said, that the church edifice is to the Church. Every dollar given to Church Erection is ten saved to Home Missions. In our great country, in causes of evil, Rome does not wait in erecting her temples. Why should we be behindhand? One hundred thousand dollars is the least we should raise this year for the work.

Dr. Huntington reported on Education, and noticed with feeling the death of Dr. Owen, whom he placed next, as a practical commentator, to our beloved and honored Albert Barnes, who still survives, but whose last work is done.

Dr. Kendall explained that the balance of \$12,000 in hand was all due to missionaries at the first of May, and that we are even with the world, as we have always been, thus far. He also analyzed more fully the sources of the income for last year, showing that almost the entire increase of the year came from the Synod of New York and New Jersey. He showed that we can't get one-fifth of the men we want though we have taken them from half a dozen denominations. He had even gone to Princeton Seminary for men. The Committee would appoint 75 men and locate them at once if they could be found. It is a peculiar fact that the very places are now known and waiting to which the most of these men could be sent. And it is remarkable that every graduate of Union Seminary this year, save one who goes abroad, has settled within about a hundred miles of New York City; just the opposite course to that taken by a very large number of last year's class, ten of whom, it will be remembered, went in a body to Missouri and Kansas, and the fruit of whose labors is seen in the organization of the new Synod of Kansas with nearly 30 churches. One would think a holy ambition would fire our young preachers to match or exceed such a shining example of enterprise for Christ.

Dr. Hatfield, from the Freedmen's Committee, showed how widely the field was opening, and recounted the invitations from the Freedmen's Bureau to occupy ground for educational purposes, in Georgia, Alabama and Florida, and the offer, from Lincoln University, of thirty young men for labor during the summer. It was refreshing to hear this excellent New York chairman remind the brethren that our own denominational causes

should be prized and recognized, before such institutions as the American Bible Society or the American Tract Society.

Our Board of Church Erection, it seems, cannot help these colored churches in erecting buildings, unless permitted by the Assembly to make gifts with less stringent conditions than now. The Board of the other branch is untrammelled and is furnishing such aid.

Dr. Ellinwood illustrated the unity of the three causes now before the Assembly, by a copious flow of apt illustrations—an isosceles triangle—the coat of arms of the Isle of Man (three legs)—the three branches of an army—the trinity of causes. And his whole course of remark was bright with striking modes of presenting his subject. We have, he said, an actual working power of only about four hundred churches. We must multiply the sources of power. A man is not planted but simply "heeled in," and waiting to be planted, if he has not a house over his head. Dr. Bushnell, who furnishes so many fine suggestive thoughts and illustrations, was quoted as declaring that no religion had made itself felt in the world that had not expressed itself in solid masonry, and significant allusion was made to the zeal of the Romanists in this direction. It seems to us, however, that Romish zeal in this matter of architecture is excessive, and that Karnak, and Baalbec, and Cholula, and the vast temple ruins of India and Java, besides those of Athens, Antioch, and Rome, show that the most solid masonry and most magnificent structures are no security against decay. The spiritual structure must rise parallel with and inform the material, and both together are needed to secure the duration of the system.

Dr. Atterbury gave some capital illustrations of the success of his Committee's work in bringing forward worthy young men for the ministry.

In the afternoon the Narrative of the State of Religion was read by Mr. Magie. This document has almost, if not quite, invariably been reserved for the closing exercises of the session; and wisely. For information continues to come in, missing documents turn up, and the whole sphere of view enlarges. In this instance nearly a dozen Presbyteries appear to have been overlooked, and their names, entered in the report as delinquents, were ordered to be stricken out by the Assembly. Among these were some of the most important in the body, as those of New York Third and Pittsburgh. And the Narrative certainly misrepresented the facts and understated the work of God in the churches, as any one conversant with the columns of our newspapers might have known. It was not, however, recommended, as it should have been.

Nearly all the thirty-one deaths announced are of men ripe and full of years, two being over eighty; ten over seventy; nine over sixty; four over fifty; three over forty; three over thirty—twenty-one over and ten under sixty. Rev. B. F. Randolph, colored State Senator of South Carolina, fell by violence at the hands of the Ku Klux at Cokesburg, S. C., and Nathan Campfield was drowned by his own act, as the Stated Clerk remarked, at Bellows' Falls. These brethren were but thirty years old. Those who died from natural causes were all much older.

After the narrative Dr. Ormiston was heard as a Delegate from the Canada Presbyterian Church, and then the discussion of the various causes was resumed by Rev. A. M. Stewart and a number of other brethren.

## The Reunion Report.

At half past ten o'clock on Thursday morning the Chairman of the Committee of Conference, Dr. Adams, appeared upon the stand and read the long-expected report, which was also distributed in printed form among the members. The announcement that the Committee had reached a unanimous result was received with applause. And while there was manifest satisfaction all over the Assembly at the results, past experience and failure in the best laid schemes, largely restrained such outbursts of enthusiasm as have at other

times been indulged in. It was fully understood that no attempt unduly to hasten the passage of the report through the body should be allowed, and a strong effort was made by Dr. Crosby for an express postponement to 3 o'clock this afternoon, but was voted down, with the understanding that discussion should begin at once.

Among the speeches of note were those of Judge Strong in the morning and Dr. G. W. Heacock in the afternoon. These were cases of somewhat recent and reluctant conversion to the Reunion policy. Judge Strong said he would have made a somewhat different report if it had been left to him, but he could freely say that he cordially accepted this one. Dr. Heacock nobly held up the banner of liberal Calvinism, that attribute of our own Church which had won his suffrage and secured the support of his best years.

Dr. Pratt of Portsmouth, O., created great and pleasurable sensation by declaring himself a New School man from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. He believed in Barnes, he had all his works, and had received more benefit from them than from those of any other man. And if our Old School brethren would read and study these books on their knees, they would agree with a venerable U. P. brother who declared that Barnes on the Romans which he had read through, and part of it—the Vth chapter—twice over—was substantially correct.

Dr. Patterson was loudly called for, and his declaration of adherence to the plan was cheered. Assurances from brethren on the other side, of the utter abhorrence of any intention to exclude or to dishonor those who held views like those of Mr. Barnes, had done much to remove his difficulties.

Dr. Johnson's earnest plea for liberty came with all the more force, because of his assent to the imputation of being *Old School* in theology. Most fervently did our hearts go with him when he exclaimed: "Perish the union, if such freedom is sacrificed to obtain it."

At half past five o'clock, a minute was spent in silent prayer, and the vote was then taken, resulting in a unanimous decision for the Basis.

Thus, for the third time, with *te deum*s and thanksgivings and enthusiasm, as at each previous occasion, the New School Assembly cast its unanimous vote for Reunion with their brethren. Each time they have made advances and concessions on their previous basis. Each time they have believed themselves to be in closer accord and understanding with their brethren than before. Each time they have congratulated themselves on the favorable adhesion of their O. S. brethren to the terms proposed. At this time, indeed, the omens are vastly more favorable than at any previous time. The members of our body who have hitherto hesitated, or resisted the movement, will now put no obstacle in the way, or will positively encourage it. The new plan includes a solemn Declaration, recognizing in the fullest manner, the equal soundness and orthodoxy of both bodies; the terms of union submitted to the Presbyteries accept the Standards in the truly and sufficiently liberal terms of the ordination vow; the Scriptures being put foremost as above all human Confessions, and our honored Westminster Confession is to "continue to be sincerely received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures." The declarations, made by the Assemblies,—but not to be submitted to the Presbyteries—are almost word for word, the amended basis of our part of the Joint Committee, the clauses of the First Article and the whole of the Tenth being omitted.

Hence, most naturally, there was a material decrease of opposition and dissatisfaction on our side, and, while not a few still refuse to admit the expediency or the obligation of the movement, they freely and with little or no fear for the future, declare their entire acquiescence. Intercourse between brethren of both Assemblies, facilitated by the proximity of the places of meeting, has certainly promoted a better understanding between

some of the most advanced and earnest on both sides. And it seems a point beyond question that the prevailing temper of the Old School Assembly, was favorable to every degree of liberty that our body cared to ask or enjoy. That their willingness has not found more frank and emphatic expression in an official form, but can be brought out only by implication, broad and fair, yet implication only, is explained by the remaining anxiety of Reunion leaders in that branch, to avoid needless provocation of the small but tenacious class of rigid men yet in their body. The weight and value of such an explanation have often been considered in these columns; and such a concession on our part, as well as on the part of the other body, has been steadily opposed as the grant to these men of an influence practically predominant in both bodies, and in the very article of union. That these men should rather have met rebuke, than concession, in such a transaction, has always been our freely declared opinion. That they have been rebuked by the movement as it has now issued, is true, though but lightly. And the only ground of regret is, that, as the skins of this class of men are generally very thick, the rebuke is not likely to be felt as deeply as for peace and liberty it should be.

Nevertheless, they have been rebuked, and without doubt, they feel that their day is done, their rule is broken; suspicions, slanders and scandals can no longer be put upon a man for refusing to theorize in their exact line of thought or in any line at all, on those departments of truth that lie outside of the plain declarations of Scripture and the universally recognized essentials of the Calvinistic system. Leading men among us are satisfied that this is the true state of things in the other branch. And not only did Dr. Adams, in his admirable address before their Assembly, as a delegate from our body, with equal grace and emphasis maintain our liberal position and commend our honored historic names to their reverence; not only were the Old School members of the Committee of Conference fully informed by our own of the persistence of our body in its liberal interpretation of the non-essentials of our Standards, but particular pains were taken in the debate, especially by Dr. Heacock of Buffalo and by Dr. Johnson of our city, to put the doctrinal claims and character of our body on record in the most public and emphatic manner, at the very moment when each Assembly was voting the other to be a sound body.

## FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

THE OLD AUBURN FIRST.

We are pleased to learn that the old wooden structure used so long by the First church of Auburn, and so hallowed by varied associations, is not, after all, to disappear altogether, nor cease from sacred uses. It was pulled down with care, and is to be re-erected as a mission chapel. Although it is to be reduced somewhat in size, it is to look as much like itself as may be, and to be consecrated again to sacred uses.

It is to be located in the Eastern part of the city, where such a structure is needed, on grounds given for the purpose by James S. Seymour, Esq. The mission school is to be managed by the First church, who are not so bound up in their new church enterprise, but that they can care also for the general interests of the city. It is hoped that this school will not only care for the present wants of children in its locality, but grow also into a church with the growing city, at some day not distant.

N. Y. STATE S. S. TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The fourteenth Annual Convention of the New York State Sabbath-school Association, is to be held in Albany, on the 15th, 16th, and 17th days of June. Every Sabbath-school in the State is invited to send "one delegate, and their minister," and one "additional delegate for every hundred scholars." All persons who intend to be present are particularly requested to notify Mr. H. H. Boone, Chairman of Reception Committee, or some member of the Committee at Albany, on or before the 5th day of June, so that arrangements may be made for their entertainment.

These Conventions are great occasions. We need not urge any one to be there. The crowd will be great without any urging. Questions of practical importance will be discussed; papers of much value will be read; and many of the leading Sunday-school men of the land will be there to give to all present the benefit of their experience and wisdom in Sunday-school matters. To a young teacher or a new Superintendent one of these conventions is worth years of experience and hard work, in learning how best to perform the great duties they have taken in hand.

PERSONAL.—The *Auburn Advertiser* mentions a serious accident which befel Rev. G. G. Smith, who has been preaching at Sennett for a year past. He was removing to Genoa, where he has been invited to take charge of the Presbyterian church, and while driving a wagon loaded with his goods, he was thrown from his seat forward upon the horses, frightening them into a run. He fell to the ground, and the hinder wheels passed over him. The lines had also caught about his body in such a manner, as to drag him after the frightened team for several rods, tearing and bruising him badly. He was taken into a hotel and kindly cared for. We hope it will prove that he was not so badly hurt, as this account would seem to indicate.

GENESEE.

Rochester, May 29, 1869.

## CITY BULLETIN.

THE CLINTON STREET CHURCH celebrated the Thirty-third Anniversary of their Sabbath-schools last Sabbath afternoon. The occasion was a happy one. A profusion of growing plants and beautiful bouquets adorned the platform and pulpit. The singing was lively, joyous and accurate, the selections being from Gould's new book, "Songs of Gladness." The school is larger than last year, numbering 250 in attendance. The Missionary Contributions were within a trifle of \$500—of which had been donated to Mr. Jessup's schools in Syria, \$100—to our own Home Missions, \$80; to Rev. R. G. Wilder's Mission in India, \$50; to the American Sunday-school Union, \$60; to the support of a pupil in Mrs. Bridgeman's school in China, \$40. Addresses were delivered by Rev. Mr. Dana of the Walnut street church, Dr. Stryker of North Broad street church, and the pastor, Dr. March.

Allusion was made to our deceased member, Mr. Clem Zinglay, for many years been a teacher in the school, but had been removed during the year by death. Also to Mr. B. B. Comegys, formerly the Superintendent of the school, now out on the ocean on his way to visit foreign lands.

—The University of Pennsylvania seems likely to be restored to its proper place in the estimation of the public. A movement for its increased endowment has already secured pledges of \$150,000 from the merchants of our city. The Trustees have voted to establish a special chair of "Social Science and kindred subjects" for the dissemination of just views on points of the utmost importance to our State and city. Mr. Stephen Colwell, the translator of "Litt's National System," has presented them with his magnificent library of over 15,000 works on political economy, the most complete and valuable in the world. It was collected by himself in this and the old world, at a cost of some \$25,000, and covers the entire literature of the subject in the leading modern languages. A bill is before City Councils to sell a part of the city property in the Southern part of West Philadelphia for the erection of new buildings, and although the price offered is less than the land is or soon will be worth, yet the city will hardly lose much by the sale, as the far more valuable property on Ninth Street is now exempt from taxation, but will no longer be so when devoted to other than its present purposes. The Common Councils have refused to reconsider their vote on the Bill, and it is hoped that the Select Council will not be behind them in the adoption of a generous municipal policy towards an institution founded by Franklin (among others), and partially endowed by the Penns.

Rev. Mr. Dickey, pastor of a U. P. church in Allegheny City, accepts a call to the First church, St. Louis, (formerly Dr. Nelson's.)