

Presbyterian Banner

PITTSBURGH, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1863.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America will hold its next meeting in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of Peoria, Illinois, at eleven o'clock A. M. on Thursday, the 21st of May, and will be opened with a sermon by the Rev. Charles C. Beatty, D.D., Moderator of the last Assembly.

The Committee of Commissioners will meet in the Lecture-room of the church on the Wednesday evening preceding, at eight o'clock, to receive commissions, and on Thursday morning, the day of the meeting, at nine o'clock, for the same purpose.

ALEXANDER T. MCGILL, Stated Clerk. WILLIAM E. SORRECK, Permanent Clerk.

Western Theological Seminary.

The Trustees of the Western Theological Seminary will meet on Wednesday, the 22d inst., at 10 o'clock A. M., in the Lecture-room of the First Presbyterian church, Pittsburgh. By order, JOHN T. LOGAN, Sec'y.

Mistake Corrected.

The ministers and churches of the Presbytery of Rock River will please notice that the meeting of the Presbytery at Rock Island is on the last Tuesday (28th) of April, at 7 P. M.; and not on the third Tuesday (21st), as stated in the published notice.

S. T. WILSON, Stated Clerk.

The Next General Assembly.

Stated Clerks of Presbyteries, and of other bodies sending delegates to the Assembly, are requested to send in the names of delegates immediately on their appointment, with the Post Office address of each one. By so doing you will assist and oblige us. Address: J. BOYD HEADLEY, GEO. H. McILVAINE, for Committee of Arrangements. Peoria, April 14th, 1863.

The Devotee Review.

The number for March contains five articles, viz.: An Inquiry into the True Doctrine of Human Society, by Rev. R. L. BRACKENRIDGE, D. D.; Commentary on Ecclesiastes, by Rev. LOVAL LOUNG, D. D.; Politics and the Church, by Rev. R. L. STANTON, D. D.; Credibility of the Resurrection of the Dead, by WM. T. FINLEY; and The New Life of the Redeemed, Part I., by Rev. S. YERKES. These topics are treated with ability, and will sustain the deserved reputation of this Quarterly.

LIBERAL AND TIMELY PROPOSAL—FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SOLDIERS.

Deacon GURDON JUDSON, of Raymond, Rock County, Wisconsin, writes to the Treasurer of the American Reform Tract and Book Society, of Cincinnati, as follows: "FEELING DEEPLY INTERESTED in the important work of supplying our soldiers with suitable religious reading matter, and knowing that your Society is engaged in this work, I propose to be one of twenty-five to raise five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for this purpose; hoping that there may be a ready response to this proposition, and enough found to fill up this amount, and much more, even."

I hereby enclose my proposition of the \$5,000, which will be \$200, to be used as above specified.

(Signed) GURDON JUDSON.

There is no department of effort for the good of soldiers, more important than the one contemplated in this offer. The Society's system of operating in this field is one that obviates many difficulties which have hitherto embarrassed effort in this direction. We are rejoiced to know that their labor is being appreciated. Shall the five thousand dollars be raised? Who will be the remaining twenty-four to contribute the amount? The call is a loud one. Is there any better way of serving, at this time, the common cause of our country and our Lord?

Communications relating to the proposed fund may be addressed to GURDON JUDSON, Treasurer A. R. T. and B. Society, Cincinnati, O.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.

This benevolent Association aims at the amelioration of the condition of the sick and wounded in all our armies, and at the furnishing of religious instruction. It has the sanction of the authorities at Washington. Its usefulness has been very great, and it is still extending its operations. Its plan is to have at least one minister and one lay delegate in each brigade of the army and each squadron of the navy, to preach the Gospel, hold prayer-meetings, relieve the sick and wounded, instruct and console the dying, write to their friends at home, receive and distribute the Scriptures, books, papers and tracts, with clothing and comforts, and accompany all with words of cheer to the men from home, and with prayer to God for his blessing upon them. Nearly four hundred men have already enlisted as delegates, many of whom are in the field at work, and others are ready to go at a moment's notice.

Contributions of every kind, needed by the sick and wounded, and donations of reading matter, are forwarded promptly and gratuitously. "Nearly every office and store-room of the Commission is given rent free for its use; nearly every employee gives his services without salary; all rail-roads afford their facilities either free or at half price; over the wires of twenty-five thousand miles, telegraph companies transmit dispatches to and from the Commission without charge; and the Government gives free transportation over all its lines."

This is a strong testimony in favor of the Christian spirit of the country, and tends to cheer us with the thought that God is still with us.

An Army Committee, as a Branch of the Christian Commission, has been organized in Pittsburgh, of which Rev. HERBERT JOHNSON is President, and JOSEPH ALDRIDGE, Jr., is Treasurer. The store-room is at No. 79 Smithfield Street.

REVISED BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

The General Assembly having had the Book of Discipline under a process of Revision for six years, it would be a pity if now, when the time of final action approaches, any thing should be left without due consideration. We hence, as one of the speaking organs of the Church, are endeavoring to call attention to some of the more important changes which are proposed.

A copy of the Revised Book was sent, last Summer, to each pastor, and was doubtless then perused by some, and was, by others, laid aside to be taken up in process of time. At the Spring meetings of Presbyteries, when Commissioners are appointed to the Assembly, the matter should be discussed, if there are any strong proclivities. We do not mean that the Commissioners should go unprepared, nor yet with a mind predetermined; but they should go prepared for a wise discussion, which may result in an intelligent vote.

OF APPEALS.

Appeals have given the Assembly more trouble than any other class of business. As conducted, under the old rules, they consumed very much time, and were often very unpleasant. The proposed change we regard as a vast improvement. Under the New Book:

"An Appeal is allowable, 1st, in all judicial cases, by the party to the cause, against whose decision is made. 2. In other cases, when the action or decision of the judicatory has inflicted, or may inflict, an injury or wrong upon any party or persons, which cannot be remedied by a reversal of the decision, he or they, or any minority, consisting of not less than one-fourth of the minority voting, may appeal."

The condition which would authorize an appeal, of the 2d class, here stated, we confess that we cannot comprehend. Possibly, instead of the words we have italicized, the Committee meant to say: which can be remedied only by a reversal of the decision, &c. This would express a reason which could be appreciated.

The main difference between the new book and the old, is in sub-section V.:

"There shall be only one appeal as to matters of fact, when the first appellate court agrees with the original court in finding and stating the facts. When a case originates in the Session, and the Presbytery disagrees with the Session, as to the facts, an appeal may be taken, both in law and fact, to the Synod, where the finding and statement of facts shall be final. Only errors in principle, and irregularities in order, shall be carried by appeal to the General Assembly, except in trials for heresy, in which the record of facts must go up for trial, through the whole gradation of appeals."

And in sub-section VII.:

"The first step to be read all the records in the case from the beginning, except so far as may be omitted by consent of parties; and except the evidence, when the facts are not allowed to be the ground of further appeal; the second, to hear the complainant, first the appellant, then the appellee; the third, to hear any member of the appellate court, [we suppose the court appealed from,] who may desire to express his opinion; after which the final vote shall be taken, by calling the roll. A committee shall then be appointed to bring in a minute, expressing the judgment of the court, and the reasons thereon."

The liberty of appeal is herein slightly abridged.

The process is greatly abbreviated, simplified, and made more definite, and a righteous decision is more likely to be reached.

OF COMPLAINTS.

Some matters which, under the old book, might be carried up by appeal, are, under the new, to be issued as Complaints. And the process is greatly abbreviated. Under the old, the practice was to go through all the tedious formalities of conducting appeals. The change is provided for in sub-section V., as follows:

"In taking up a complaint, after ascertaining that the complainant has conducted it regularly, the first step shall be to read all the records in the case; the second to hear the complainant, and then the court shall proceed to consider and decide the case."

This is simple, brief, straight forward, and a full provision for reaching a righteous judgment.

GENERAL RULES.

The rules for judicatories are amended, enlarged, rearranged, and greatly improved. Some ten new rules have been added, which experience has shown to be greatly needed. The Committee have done a good work. It would not be easy to select twelve men in the Presbyterian Church better qualified to revise our Discipline than were the members of the Committee who met in Pittsburgh, last July; and if the Assembly of next May shall not be prepared to sanction their work, and submit it to the Presbyteries for adoption, the subject may as well be laid aside for the wisdom of another generation. For ourselves, we have never been enthusiastic in desires for a change; but the subject having been so often agitated, and a new Book being now offered, of which we can heartily approve, we trust there will be harmony in sanctioning it as the law of the Church.

IS THE WAR NEAR AN END?

A confident expectation recently sprung up, among all parties North, that the South was about to abandon its wicked enterprise, or that somehow, peace was near.

The World, which may be regarded as the organ of the ultra Democrats, speaking on this subject, under date of March 27th, said:

"The rapid decline in the price of gold; the decline in the price of cotton; the well-authenticated accounts of extreme destitution in the rebel States; the sudden and enormous depression in the value of the Confederate currency; the indefinite and assured postponement of foreign intervention, are among the reasons assigned for this expectation."

It then quoted from the Tribune, and added:

"If these pleasing anticipations are to be realized, the peace question will presently be the engrossing topic of public discussion, by men of all parties, and in all sections of the Union. Until the rebels are ready to make—or at least to entertain—peace propositions on the basis of reunion, the war must of course proceed with all possible energy, and the loyal States continue to exhibit what General McClellan, in a letter written a day or two since, eulogizing his fellow-soldier, the late lamented General Sumner, calls 'a firm determination to sacrifice everything that might be necessary in subduing the rebellion, and restoring peace and the unity of the nation, by putting forth all the strength of the country to defeat its armed enemies in the field.'"

Our people see what is before them. Dreadful as is the thought, they must fight and destroy. Peace and union can result only from victory. We need strong armies, able generals, and wise counsellers.

Ministers Deceased.

Rev. JOHN S. McCracken died at his residence, Xenia, O., April 1st, 1863, aged 59 years lacking 24 days. Mr. McCracken was a minister of the United Presbyterian Church, and brother to the late Rev. SAMUEL McCracken, pastor of the United Presbyterian church of Hopewell, Preble County, Ohio.

Rev. MRS. TEMPLETON died suddenly at Marietta, Ohio, on the 25th of last month. Mr. TEMPLETON was a member of the Presbytery of Marion, and at the time of his death pastor of the church at Marietta.

The World's Notion from the Tribune.

"Our faith is strong that the next Fourth of July will be celebrated throughout a restored and peaceful Union. We believe that the rebellion is about to be vigorously pressed on all sides to its disastrous and final collapse, and that no further blood will be required to achieve its overthrow. There may or may not be a call of uniformed militia for two or three months to hold Washington, Baltimore, Louisville, &c., while our veterans advance upon the last strongholds of treason, but the men now in the field will probably suffice to deal decisively with the rebel armies."

Sorry are we that we could not, and cannot yet, enjoy to the full, this pleasing expectation. If the war is to be waged to a thorough victory, and who that loves law and order would think of stopping short of that, it is possible that more than one "Fourth of July," will pass before we see smiling peace shall again greet the land. This, however, depends partly on the determination of the rebels; and partly upon the energy of the Government.

If the enemy is "as determined as he professes to be, and as were our fathers of the Revolution, and as were the Czarinas against the Russians, he may hold out for years and years, against such efforts as we have been making. But if the South-erners become divided, their cause will soon fail. Or if we of the North should unite cordially, and put forth all the strength of the country to defeat its armed enemies in the field; and if to this we could add the tender of some compromise, peace might come speedily. But these "ifs" are sadly in the way. Both sides feel yet too strong to either propose or accept conditions. The South is yet too well "united" to yield; and the North, though improving, is yet too much divided, to put forth all its strength. We rejoice in the rapid growth of the sentiment, that the war must be fought out; and we wish it may speedily come to this, that the whole people will say, no compromise with traitors in arms. We cheerfully accord to every State all its rights under the Constitution, and to every individual all his rights under the laws. And, the rebellion being suppressed, we would administer the laws leniently. But we insist that the rebellion shall be suppressed; that there shall be no new guarantees to slavery, and no acknowledgment of a right to secede. The putting down of the rebellion, by force of arms, will, in our opinion, be a gradual, and not a sudden, process. Let it perish under its loss of political power, under non-extension, under the frown of public sentiment, under the growing love of humanity, and the liberalizing influences of the Gospel.

Peace may be near. But our hopes are not sanguine. We would use the means of peace—a true, lasting, and a happy peace—that is, we would execute the laws. If the President will gather up all the deserters, and make desertion hereafter to be certain death; if he will surely punish all commanders who suffer surprises, and who make shameful surrenders; if he will promptly bring into the field another half million of soldiers; if he will make the war national and call into the contest all the nation's talents and all its resources, using all the high powers entrusted to him, wisely and energetically, then we shall have hope.

As to the prospects of peace from Northern "concessions," and "by the force of reason;" it may be in point to quote the Richmond Inquirer. [We quote, of course, from an exchange, having ourselves no access to Southern papers.] Speaking of the "Peace" men, it says:

"Reader, excuse us. We cannot repress a natural movement of scorn in speaking of those creatures. Nay, we avow the opinion, that it is good to cherish and cultivate a little contempt, in contemplating the mean disposition of those speculators in war, when they find they have invested in a non-paying business, and that it is 'time' to wind up the bad concern. On what lofty ground we regard Confederates—stand now, high over the heads of the Union men, who are greedily Yankee nation, from which they are not to be separated, and who could no longer brook the contact; and whose every act and every saying since that day, more and more decisively justifies us in quitting their hateful Union, wiping the dust from off our feet! It is salutary, we dwell upon and insist upon the contrast."

"We shall watch those Confederates' (so-called) who may show any inclination to hearken unto these eloquent Democrats; who may praise their lofty patriotism; or sympathize in their noble struggle for their Constitution. Such Confederates we will sit subjects—to say the least—of medical treatment as lunatics. To shave their heads and half-drown them with shower baths, might do them good; but to answer them according to their folly would only exasperate their rascality. If there be few such Confederates, or none, so much the better."

"If there were once peace indeed, it would be better not to insist too urgently on the ineffaceable differences which make us now and hereafter two distinct races of men; we should then strive to look upon Yankees only with a transient dislike, as the most foreign of all foreigners; most disagreeable of all bora. But while they are our mortal enemies, it is salutary to bring out and develop the points of antagonism, and so make sure that in peace or in war, we shall indeed be at odds for all time; for our ways are not their ways, their people are not our people, neither is their God our God."

tant peculiarity of which is, that it will furnish plating for the modern ships of war, impenetrable to any shot hitherto invented. The Boston Journal, in further noticing the natural resources of Maine, says:

"Several abundant deposits of marble and limestone have been found during the past year in Aroostook County; known deposits of the best limestone of Knox County have been traced to localities hitherto supposed destitute of it; besides which have been found, in various places, ores of copper and of lead and roofing slates; also felspar suitable for the pottery, granulated quartz, suitable for glass manufacture; marls of high fertilizing power, or which by slight manipulation may be converted into utility; and many other valuable minerals and building materials, besides the discovery of a gold field similar to that of Nova Scotia, which has been found to yield profitable returns."

NEW-YORK.

A WRITER in the Observer makes mention of a powerful revival in progress in Irving, New York. Daily prayer-meetings are held in most of the public schools, which are attended by over a thousand children. Union-meetings are held every evening, at which at least fifteen hundred people are said to be always present. Hundreds remain for the inquiry meeting which is held at the close of each service. All the churches are represented: as enjoying tokens of the Divine presence.

THE N. Y. EAST CONFERENCE of the Methodist Church cannot surely be charged with ambiguity in its utterances on the great national question of the day. We think that shortly before the adjournment of the Conference, Gen. Wool and Judge Bates appeared in the meeting, and that the latter administered the following oath, which was taken by all the members:

"I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, whether foreign or domestic, and that I will bear true faith, allegiance, and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or law of any State Convention or Legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; and further, that I do this with a full determination, pledge, and purpose, without any mental reservation or evasion whatever; and further, that I will well and faithfully perform all the duties required of me; so help me God."

THE Christian Intelligencer, punning on the word Law, says:

"The subject of this city to the authority of Law is sublime: Law holds, controls, works, taxes it, and does whatever needs to be done for the honor and interest of Law. Who buys up aldermen? Law. Who seizes the 'Battery' Law. Who takes his mind reservation of evasion whatever? Law. Who appropriates ferry slips, and engulfs them, according to his own sweet will, on the vexed waters of our rivers and bays? Law. Who regulates the State Legislature? Law. In view of his sovereignty, why may not this city and its environs be declared in fee simple to George Law, his heirs and assigns forever?"

EASTERN SUMMARY.

NEW-ENGLAND.

A correspondent of the Boston Watchmen writes as follows in regard to Millerism in New-Hampshire:

"I have reason to believe that there is a marked revival of the Millerite delusion in many parts of this State. Meetings of its former advocates are re-established, and in some cases new ones are being re-opened. Some of our Advent friends affect to work miracles, appealing to the last clause of Mark xvi: 18, in support of their claims, but stoutly resisting a personal application of the first half of the same verse."

THE Portland Mirror, in noticing the recent ordination and installation of Rev. Mr. Beaktoft as pastor of a Dutch church in Roxbury, Mass., furnishes the following interesting items:

"Mr. Beaktoft is a native of Holland. Three or four years ago he was led to Roxbury by one of those providences which we regard as full of strangeness. Mr. B.'s purpose was to go to the Cape of Good Hope; God purposed that he should go to Roxbury. Here he found about a hundred of his countrymen. These had no place of worship. In many places the Gospel was preached, but in what was to them an unknown tongue."

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"Before Mr. B. came, the moral condition of these families was extremely low; but great improvement has taken place, and the future is full of promise."

MISS SARAH BAXTER, of Boston, lately deceased, bequeathed to various religious and charitable Associations, property to the value of \$100,000. The principal part of this was donated to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

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"Rev. Ephraim Johnson, of Pittsfield, Vermont, heard that one of his two sons in the army was sick in a New-York hospital, and that the other had lost a leg at Fredericksburg. Starting immediately to find them, he met the dead body of one, and found the living son, who was robbed of his right arm by the way, and reached Washington only to learn that the second boy was dead and buried. Kind friends promised to send the body home to him. The coffin came—but by some mistake the body was a stranger."

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REV. N. G. CLARK, late Professor of Latin and of English Literature in the University of Vermont, has accepted the Professorship of Logic and Rhetoric in Union College, N. Y.

DOCTOR MACGOWAN, whose lectures on the East have been received with such general favor, seems to have been equally successful in securing the public approbation of his proposed scheme of a scientific and industrial survey of Eastern Asia. An exchange says:

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Revival at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

PITTSBURGH, PA., April 13, 1863. MESSRS. EDITORS:—It is very pleasant to perceive continued evidence, that even in these troublous times, God remembers his Church.

A letter from a valued correspondent in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, informs me that, on the first Sabbath of this month, over forty persons were received to full communion in our church in that place; thirty-five of whom were by examination, and eleven of these by adult baptism. A work had also been in progress in the Methodist Episcopal church of that place, from which about one hundred and fifty conversions were reported up to the time when services in our church commenced. There have also been a number of accessions to the Baptist church there.

The interest in our church is stated to have been "deep from the first." Preaching was continued every evening, for about three weeks, with inquiry meetings, after the first few days, each afternoon; the pastor-elect, Rev. J. W. Larimore, being assisted for a portion of the time by Rev. George D. Stewart, of West Point, Iowa. A list of some thirty names sent me, shows the work to have been almost entirely done by the young; and one peculiar feature is, that about one-half of these thirty are quite youthful—probably from fourteen to sixteen years of age; and without exception, we believe, baptized children of the church. Having but lately been his pastor, it is not without emotion that I tender to the writer of this article, the thanks of the church, for his faithful and untiring labors. May that Good Shepherd, who gathers the lambs with his arm, ever carry them in his bosom. Another pleasing statement of my correspondent is this: "Every teacher in the Sabbath School is a professed follower of Christ; except one."

This church must show some hundred members, if not more; and it may be of interest to some to state, that Mt. Pleasant is a very pretty little "city" of about four thousand inhabitants, handsomely located on the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, twenty-eight miles West of the Mississippi river. It is one of the most beautiful places we ever knew, in a Western life of some fifteen years. So far as we know, there is neither a drinking nor gambling saloon in the place; nor has the moral sense of that community allowed one for years past—we do not know just how many. May Mt. Pleasant long continue to have so pleasant a preeminence; and as now so, offer in the future, may the churches be enabled to report that "sinners of refreshing" have come "from the presence of the Lord."

PROVING TO MUCH.

A discreet lawyer, in managing an important case, while eliciting testimony in behalf of his client, is always careful not to prove too much. If, however, he commits that mistake by an incautious blunder, he at once endeavors to cover it, so that it may not become conspicuous and damaging.

This sound legal rule, "Never prove too much," has been sadly disregarded by the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War. Their report, published on Monday last, is evidently intended to extinguish General McClellan, by proving him to have been incompetent and cowardly (and perhaps something worse), during all the time he was in command of the Army of the Potomac. Never an argument made for the conviction of a felon, with more of a remorseless purpose than to pervade the report of these political civilians on the conduct of the war. Steadily in its aim, it discharges its deadly missiles at McClellan, not only to hurt, but to destroy him, and make his name a by-word and a reproach throughout the land.

We now have no wish to appear as the champion of this or any other general; nor have we any inclination to nurse political animosities at a time when all should be united for the common good. But claiming as we do the possession of some respect for truth and fair dealing, we cannot but be thoroughly surcharged with the gall and wormwood of political and personal hatred as is this long-heralded report. We do not say that it contains a single false statement or an imaginary fact, but we do know that it assumes much that is not proved, and conceals more that is not proved, and judicial exposition of the whole case. Taken as it now stands, the report proves too much.

It assails more than the honor of a General—it convicts the Administration of dishonesty, and of personal enmity to the use of the means of dishonesty. It shows, if it shows anything that is beyond dispute, that the Administration kept at the head of our chief army a General of whose unfitness it had abundant proof. That it stood by him and supported him, when all his movements were manifestly wrong; after all his able military faults had been compassionately demonstrated. If this be so (and it must be, if the Administration to give an abused, deceived, and indignant people? How much confidence in the President and in the chief of now reads, inspire to the public mind?

How can they excuse themselves for the crime of having placed General McClellan a second time at the head of the army, after his reverses under Pope, and then sending him off in charge of the only forces capable of defending the capital and of expelling the rebels from Maryland? We submit, that the civil Congressional inquiry upon the military corps of the late Gen. McClellan, is a finding which, if true, altogether covers the Administration with a pall of infamy too heavy ever to be lifted.

General was guilty of insubordination, in resolution, and of trifling with the interests of the country, none knew this so well as the President, Secretary of War, and other high officials at Washington, and they must bear the responsibility of acting in the face of that knowledge.

But we do not inculcate either the Administration or Gen