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British American Presbyterian.

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1874.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

The new Election Bill has been discussed in the House at Ottawa with a good deal of spirit. Generally its provisions have been very much approved of, and there seems every likelihood of its passing into law very much as it stands.

The veto by the President of what is called the Inflation Bill, or that which authorizes the issue of a large additional amount of legal tender notes, is generally approved of by all really sober-minded people in the United States.

The Riel excitement has greatly subsided. It is said that Archbishop Tache produced before the Committee appointed to investigate the North-West matter, a letter from Sir John Macdonald, distinctly stating that he could not ask for an amnesty, but enclosing \$1,000 for Riel, and recommending that person to take himself off to the States.

The lock-out of large numbers of agricultural labourers in the English Eastern Counties will likely be attended by important results. The wages in those districts are very low, and the demands of the labourers are exceedingly moderate.

SYNOD OF HAMILTON.

Members attending the meeting of this Synod, in Guelph, will find a Committee of Reception awaiting them in Mr. Torrance's Church, to direct them to their temporary homes.

An adjourned meeting of the Presbytery of Guelph will be held (D.V.) in Chalmers' Church, Guelph, on Tuesday, 5th May, at 9 o'clock a.m.

OMISSION.

In the list of scholarships of the third year awarded at the closing of Knox College, we omitted the Lindsay Scholarship to Jomloties, Pastoral Theology and Church Government, which was awarded to Mr. S. W. Fisher.

SYNOD OF LONDON.

Certificates entitling the holders thereof to a ticket from their respective stations to London and return, at one and a third fare for the double journey, per the Great Western and Grand Trunk Railways, have been forwarded to members of the London Synod.

Elders Certificates have been sent to their respective ministers. Should any member of the Synod not have received a Certificate, he may obtain one by sending his address to the Rev. R. H. Warden, Bothwell.

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

A good many in Ontario would be all the better for reading attentively, and inwardly digesting the following remarks by Dr. Robert Chambers on "Social Intercourse." The evil may be worse in the old country, but in this new land we are hurrying or very fast in the same direction. There is among us the same spasmodic aiming at what is fashionable, and therefore what is cold, formal, stiff and stupid.

To a great extent the same may be said of Toronto and every other Canadian place of any size. Extravagance in entertainments is the order of the day, and hence a continued effort to excel or equal one's neighbor though that neighbor may be three or four times as wealthy.

MISSIONARIES FOR LAKE SUPERIOR.

As already announced in our columns the Home Mission Committee at its last meeting, appointed three of our Probationers in the Lake Superior District Mr. McKay goes to Sault Ste Marie, Mr. D. J. Caswell to Silver Islet, and Mr. D. McKerracher to Prince Arthur's Landing.

The Presbytery of Hamilton had charge of the arrangements for the ordination of Mr. Caswell, and that of Toronto for Mr. McKerracher. We shall in due course notify our readers of the days appointed.

FUNDAMENTAL VIEWS OF THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

The difference of opinion which exists as to the proper functions and relations of the Church, and regarding many practical questions of a social and political as well as ecclesiastical character, is owing to a large extent to the fundamental views that are entertained as to the nature of the Church.

1. There is the Erastian view which holds that the Church is dependent and subordinate. This assumes the supremacy of the Civil Ruler, the existence of the Church by his good pleasure, its subjection to him and regulation by him.

2. There is the Ultra-montane view, according to which the Church is independent and supreme. The Church is regarded as the repository of divine authority, and its head as the vicar of God. Established by God for the very purpose of holding natural principles in check, and controlling the action and destiny of man, the Church claims Sovereign superhuman authority.

3. There is the intermediate and constitutional view of the Church. According to this view the Church is an institution established by God, not the creature of the State, endowed with certain powers and functions by God, for the exercise of which she has no need of civil authorization, but her sphere is limited to the spiritual and ecclesiastical, and she has no call to interfere with the civil administration of a country, and is subject to the civil ruler in all temporal concerns.

The Church is in her own sphere a monarchy, independent and supreme. Christ is her Head and King; His law is her only statute book; and her function to do His will as revealed, not in acts of Parliament, but in His word and by His Spirit.

tion to the Great King.

4. There is the Democratic view, according to which the Church is a voluntary association of individuals, having power to enact their own terms of membership and laws for their guidance, a self-governing community responsible to no higher power. We ought to have and the churches, for every Society is quite independent and has a right to say whether it will fellowship with any other Society and if so on what terms.

It is easy to see how these several views will sway the judgment of those who hold them, leading either to Erastian submission, ultramontane arrogance, evangelical independence, or radical relaxation of law and enfeebling respectively as supreme of civil law, or the church, or the scriptures, or the people.

RUMOURED MOVEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

We have already called attention to the rumour, that in the interests of political conservatism, a proposal will be made by the British Government, to make sundry changes in the present position of the Established Church of Scotland that a portion of the Free Church at last may find their way back to the place they occupied before 1843.

For my part I can conceive nothing more irrational than that our people should be allowed to take up an impression that conceivable Acts of Parliament must necessarily determine our procedure and destiny. Were an act of parliament passed to-morrow indicating every principal we ever contended for, I should regard it with satisfaction as a tribute to what we have maintained.

On the other side Mr. W. Balfour, contended as follows in view of the two positions at the conclusion of the "Claim of Right" viz that God might inspire them with zeal and energy to promote the advancement of His sons Kingdom, and that in His own good time He would restore to this Church those benefits which were the fruits of the struggles of their fathers in past time.

Dr. Begg also opposes all ideas of Disestablishment and would regard such a step as a national calamity. He desired to see the Church of Scotland improved and particularly to have the nefarious act of Queen

Anna sent to the tomb of all the Culpable. And there could not be the slightest doubt that the removal of that Act would alter the position of things so far as at least. It depends entirely, of course, on how it is done, but when the late Prime Minister of this country represented to a deputation from the Established Church his anxiety in allowing of abolishing Queen Anne's Act, it struck me as being about the quaintness of something that was not very amusing because the late Prime Minister was one of the Government that drove us out of the Established Church.

In reference to the permanent character of the principles on which the Free Church left the State connection, Sir H. Moncreiff said. Of course we know what these principles were. The main and leading principle, was that the Church possessed inherently a spiritual independence or a spiritual jurisdiction which she was bound to exercise in obedience to the commands of the great Head of the Church, and that she was not to be controlled by any external authority.

Thus we find even in Scotland a tendency to battle the great disruption movement, and to call in question its necessity and wisdom. It is very difficult now to realise the deep feeling of that period, and it would be foolish to attempt a vindication of all that was said and done by the disruption party. Still we may be sure that an act which took worldly-wise men and politicians by surprise, and evoked the sympathy and approval of all churches not immediately and directly interested in it, must have been based on true principle.

OVERTURE ANENT RUMOURED CHANGES IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

"Whereas the principles which in 1843 determined the action of this Church in severing her connection with the State are of permanent obligation and of vital importance; whereas the passing away of a generation and the changes in the condition of the country during thirty years call for special effort to have these principles fully appreciated by the existing membership of the Church; whereas, although the blessing of God rested on the Disruption of 1843 in a remarkable manner, and there was much reason to own in it His guiding hand, endeavours are now actively made in quarters external to this Church to persuade our own adherents as well as the general population that that Disruption was a mistake, and involved a needless schism, and that the position of the Free Church cannot now be defended, whereas there is reason to believe that proposals may be made in Parliament affecting ecclesiastical matters in Scotland in connection with which it may highly concern the Free Church of Scotland that the integrity of the ground assumed by her in 1843 should be duly guarded and vindicated; and whereas the practical position of influence and usefulness now attained by this Church through the gracious providence of God is a great trust, and one the advantage or obligations of which she cannot throw aside but must strive to maintain and improve to the utmost in all circumstances: It is humbly overtured by the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh to the ensuing General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland that they take the premises into their consideration, with a view to secure that the foresaid principles of this Church and the great religious interests entrusted to her be effectively protected and advocated as well as clearly represented to all parties.

We beg to call the attention of our readers to the Tract which appears on another page, of which twenty-five thousand are being printed, and will be divided proportionately to the congregations, and sent in parcels to the various ministers, who are expected to see that they are circulated among the people. Mr. Warden King, of Montreal, may be addressed in this connection. The tract will repay careful perusal.