

first of all, Providence has cast us on a most interesting era in the history of Theology. The Divine of the coming age has no more beaten track before him, but a new and fresh career. The state of public opinion is everywhere, in the world and in the Church, demanding special appliances. Germany, by the footing it is so generally securing for its own peculiar philosophy—a philosophy so instinct with the principle of subjectivity, is fast revolutionising men's modes of thought, and rendering absolutely necessary new and hitherto unheard of evidences and defences of Christianity—the attacks coming in shapes and from quarters altogether new. Germany, too—the religious portion of it—let us bless God, is awaking to correcter views, and displaying a better spirit. Long have we been largely indebted to that nation of pre-eminently learned and thinking men, for invaluable aid in the way of Biblical criticism and illustration; but it is a melancholy yet undeniable truth, that the greater part of their distinguished professional Theologians, notwithstanding all their zeal, and all their success in the department referred to, were lending the whole of their talents, their learning and their influence, for the destruction of every thing that is vital and distinctive in the gospel. Gladly and gratefully do we acknowledge the change that is taking place. German Theology, we are persuaded, still retains a large, though a diminishing intermixture of error; but even now, it is offering us many important suggestions as to the best modes, both of exhibiting some of the doctrines of Christianity, and also of vindicating its truth. The Church, however, has arrived at a period seriously critical. Happy will it be if her rising ministry be found equal to the emergency—fitted by their talents, their learning, and their prudence, and guided by the word and Spirit of God, to repel every assault, on the citadel of our faith—to reject from the spiritual provision of the Church, all dangerous and deleterious admixtures, and bringing forth out of their treasury things new and old, to feed the flock, of God with knowledge and understanding. How worthy of adoption, at such a time as this, is the sentiment of Lord Bacon—"I do desire, as much as lieth in my pen, to ground a sociable intercourse between antiquity and proficience."

Again, what man of moral discernment and aspiration, can think of our country at present, without having his spirit stirred within him? Canada is, by universal consent, destined to become a great nation, and that at a period by no means remote. In vast regions, where at present are only the primeval forest and the wild beasts that roam in the desert, there will, in the days of our children's children, be myriads of immortal men, made originally after the image of God, and capable of being restored to his favour and likeness. At present, too, how much does the scanty population of our country resemble one of its own saplings, easily bent, but, according as it is turned, certain to fix the direction of the mighty tree it is soon to become. What nobler object of ambition could any really great and good man propose to himself, than to settle in some of our incipient villages or hamlets, and there break up the fresh and virgin soil, and sow the seeds of evangelical truth, which, under God's blessing, he might confidently anticipate would take root, and continue to flourish, and extend, and multiply, and fructify abundantly, after that hamlet has become the great metropolis of a densely populated district?

Further, unless general report be false, our denomination has much that is peculiarly acceptable to the serious and reflecting portion of the people of this land. Besides the hold we have of the strong hereditary affections and associations of not a few, we believe it is on all hands admitted, that our doctrinal views are as thoroughly evangelical, as are anywhere to be found. Our form of polity, both as Presbyterian, and as repudiating alliance with the State, we are persuaded, may be shewn to be based on Scripture; and if the people love freedom, sure we are that more of that is not to be enjoyed in any Church where Christian order and discipline are maintained. God speed our humble endeavours, for supplying them with an educated, pious, and efficient native ministry! Nor let us despond on account of the smallness of our numbers. Many cheering and encouraging analogies and parallels might be pointed out. Think of our own Mission to Canada. Little more than twenty years ago, two self-denying, pious, energetic men—for I need not include another, a friend of my youth, fired with holy ardour and zeal, who accompanied them, but reached our shores only to receive his Master's invitation to a better country—two such men, with the Scriptures in their hands, and the grace of God in their hearts, went back into the wilderness, and unostentatiously and noiselessly commenced and prosecuted

their evangelical labours; and now, what hath God wrought! The increase of our churches has been twenty-fold. Little more than a hundred years ago, four ministers in Scotland, who, faithful to God, to their vows, and to their consciences, could not endure the defections and corruptions now universally admitted to have been at that time prevailing and increasing in the National Church, forsook its communion, and amidst opposition, mockery, and insult, and branded moreover with ecclesiastical deposition, did what was then deemed the bold, hazardous, and audacious thing of declaring a Secession, and setting up a new Presbyterian organization. And a little later, one meek and holy man, Gillespie, also subjected to official degradation, was seen single-handed upholding the banner of the Relief. Yet, it is not now denied that these Churches, so feeble at their origin, have, under God, been one chief means of preserving and restoring evangelical religion in the land of our fathers, and have, now happily united, become one of the most numerous and influential denominations in the kingdom. If we may refer to something awfully more sublime, eighteen hundred years ago the Kingdom of God came not with observation. It was a little stone that became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. That glorious King, among whose humblest subjects we are anxious to be reckoned, who has now on his head many crowns, who has a name which is above every name, and shall have the heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,—He was born of a mean woman, in a stable, and laid in a manger. Wherefore, let us not repine that our cause has had, and has, its Bethlehem. Let us not despise the day of small things. In humble dependence on God, and honestly and earnestly devoting ourselves to the advancement of his glory, and the best interests of his people, let us acquit ourselves with wisdom, energy and perseverance. Let us be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Let us be strong, yea, let us be strong. And God grant the little one may become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation. May the feeble be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord!

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UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HISTORY.

BY THE REV. DR. FERRIER, CALEDONIA.

We found in our last communication that the views of the Associate Presbytery, on the power of the magistrate, as limited to secular matters and on the sole Headship of Christ in his Church, and its absolute independence of all civil interference and control, were substantially those which are still maintained by their successors in the United Presbyterian Church; and thus that the slander of some officious, opponents in representing us as having deserted the sound principles of our fathers, is without foundation. We do not deny that with the progress of light and knowledge, clearer views have been attained in our own day; but we hold that these, with only a more full and scriptural development, are substantially the sentiments which have been always held among us.—As this is a subject of great importance, being closely connected with some remarkable events in the history of our Church, we are anxious, though our narrative be somewhat interrupted, to dwell on it a little, for the purpose of vindicating our ecclesiastical character and operations.

The principles referred to on the Headship of Christ, and the independence of his Church, have been maintained by the more faithful remnant of christians in all ages. They are the principles of the Apostolic Church. They were sustained amidst reproach and persecution, during the first three centuries. It was at the commencement of the fourth century, that a part of the nominal Christian Church was incorporated with the state, and in this originated those views of legal provision for the ministers of religion, and, of course, of civil authority and control over sacred things, and thus of union between Church and State, which corrupted and degraded so much of what was called the Christian Church, till it exhibited the hideous features of the Man of Sin. In the meantime, however, God had always a faithful remnant, often hidden from the world, which on these points, and others of vast importance, maintained the truth as in Jesus.

At the Reformation some light was thrown on this subject, and although much prejudice and error remained, yet the great aim in that work was to restore the Church to the model of Scripture. This at-