

British American Presbyterian

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

It seems a difficult matter for President Grant to fix upon a Chief Justice at all generally acceptable. He has already chosen two or three, who have been vetoed, and bids fair to make it quite certain that he will have no chance himself for another nomination to the Presidency.

The marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh has been celebrated at St. Petersburg with great pomp, and amid any amount of enthusiasm, either affected or real. Politically, it can have very little significance, but it is to be hoped that the union may be all that the most friendly could desire for those most immediately concerned.

The report has been circulated that Dr. David Livingstone has died while en route down to Zanzibar, along with his expedition that had gone to his relief. It is said that he died of dysentery, and that his body was embalmed, and is to be conveyed to England. It is to be hoped that the rumor is false, and that the Doctor will be spared to return to honour and safety, to receive a welcome such as few of Britain's most distinguished sons have ever received.

The excitement over the elections in Canada has, during the past week, been very great. It is a great mercy that it is to be so soon over. There can be no doubt about its being a great improvement to have all the elections in one day. It prevents, to a great extent, the possibility of unfairly influencing those in some localities by the manner in which they have gone in others, while it also leaves the whole matter to be settled by those most concerned without outsiders coming in either with their money or their threats.

The British Parliament is dissolved, and a new one has been summoned to meet in March. Gladstone's popularity has been for a good while on the wane, and the accession of John Bright to his cabinet has not added as much as was expected to its strength. Mr. Gladstone and others have been too much in the habit of treating Dissenters with want of courtesy and consideration, partly because, with all their liberality, they have a certain feeling of dislike to Dissent, and partly because they think that as necessarily Liberals, all Dissenters are sure for them at any rate. The consequence is, that the Whig, or Liberal English statesmen, are continually seeking to secure the support of those who can never be their genuine adherents, even though to the injury of those who are their fast friends. The Non-conformists of England are determined to endure such treatment no longer. It is very curious to notice how a certain class of Liberal politicians much nearer home act on very much the same principles, with the difference that inevitable certainty of landing in the same difficulty before many years go by. Certain classes are thought safe at any rate, and can, therefore, be kicked, and cuffed, and ignored with perfect impunity—their most cherished convictions ridiculed, and their most conscientious proceedings denounced as either stupid or bigoted; while those who never can be truly liberal, if they intelligently hold what they profess, are flattered and fawned upon to their utmost wish, as if they could not possibly go wrong, and as if the one thing to be desired were to have them pleased, at whatever sacrifice. There has come a crisis in the history of Liberalism in Britain, when "follow my leader" in all cases is seen to be neither wise nor profitable. We have read the signs of the times if some have not a taste of the same thing before many years go by. In the politics of a country, religious as well as such, ought not to be known at all. It is a thousand pities the theory and practice should be so different from each other, and some times meet with those who cry out so nastily against religious denunciations, as such, coming into the arena of public discussions and contests. The accession of half-hearted supporters is clearly purchased by the situation of the friends.

In the Rev. Mr. McKim's letter, published last week, "judicious" would read "ill-considered."

THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND ULTRA-MONTANISM.

Whether the civil power is absolute and unopposed. But what does this concession amount to? To allow nothing. But to allow that while so far the State has recognized and undisputed authority, and the Church also has jurisdiction which can do without a question, and no interference, there are mixed questions in which there is both a civil and a religious element, over which conflict between Church and State may naturally be expected to arise. How are such conflicts to be either avoided or determined? Dr. Manning's plan, by the whole question, but it is that which Rome has demanded for centuries, and which she is still as eagerly working to secure in the present day, as ever she was in the days of her greatest arrogance, and pride of power. Dr. Manning argues that no one can define what is and what is not within the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church as pertaining to faith and morals, except a judge who knows what the sphere of faith and morals is, and how far it extends. But no civil power, he says, can do this, the Church alone being infallible, have "down certainly" as to the limits of its commission and message, and can therefore alone say in reference to any doubtful question, or, indeed, to any question whatever, whether it does or does not come under the jurisdiction of the Church or the State. What is this but saying that the Church in every case must be supreme judge in its own cause? If it say that such and such a matter comes within its own jurisdiction, and that, therefore, the civil powers have nothing to do with it, presto, by that very decision the matter in question is taken from the civil power altogether, and is to be judged and determined by the Church alone. It is very evident that this makes the Church and its rulers everything, the State and civil rulers nothing but the subjects, nay, the slaves of the ecclesiastic at the head of that Church. There is scarcely anything in either social or political life but what bears a religious aspect. At any rate, the Church has but to declare, according to Dr. Manning, that it has such an aspect, and forthwith the State must not presume to intermeddle with it at all. In this way, marriage, schools, contracts, priests, and everything that could be mentioned, can, by one stroke of the pen, be removed from civil jurisdiction and placed under the authority and rule of the Church. Archbishop Manning is quite correct in saying that this has always been the claim of his Church. But it is well that it should be re-stated with all the vigour and fearless directness of such an able and eloquent parrot, for men have been ready to think that such claims are too absurd to be still held, and too arrogant to be put ostentatiously and practically forward. What Dr. Manning states so clearly, the Pope, by his servants, has been seeking to make good in Germany, and to make good in order to the entire overthrow of the present order of things. The same claims sprang forward in Canada as the programme made manifest, and that programme is again brought out for use in the political struggle that is now proceeding in our land. There is not a conscientious, clear-sighted and thorough-going Roman Catholic but what will endorse Archbishop Manning's programme to the letter, and, as a matter of fact, they are all in theory doing so. The Church, they urge, must be supreme in its own sphere, and it must be the exclusive judge of how far that sphere extends. Grant this and all is granted. The Church has then the right to release subjects from allegiance to their civil rulers, if it says it has. It has a right to depose, excommunicate and denounce heretical rulers, if it says it has, and so on. Now all this is not a theory in Germany. It is a stern, practical, and undeniable fact, and what the civil authorities are doing to counteract that which, if acquiesced in, would undermine and destroy their power altogether, is so far as we can see this. Bishops, priests, and other ecclesiastical persons, have been practically preaching sedition, and using their sacred function as an instrument for weakening, if not destroying, the civil government of the country. It may not always be possible to prove what at the same time is a matter of notoriety, but to meet the evil as far as possible, this, at any rate, is insisted upon as both legal and reasonable, that each bishop, before being installed, shall take the oath of allegiance to the German Emperor, and each priest, before being settled, shall do the same thing, or, at any rate, shall satisfy the civil authorities that he will not plot for the overthrow of the Government under which he lives, and will not in any case know of secret conspiracies having that for their end without making the fact known to the proper civil authorities. Is there anything wrong or tyrannical in such a demand? Or is there anything unreasonable in the conclusion that the man who takes such an oath, and makes such a promise, is simply an emissary of rebellion and treason whose no Government would allow to settle quietly down in a district under the pretence of being a religious teacher, but really with the view of sowing dissension with the powers that be, and paving the way for disturbance and revolution? There is not a civil government on the face

of the earth, in circumstances analogous to those of Prussia, but what would do the same thing. The principles which Archbishop Manning avows, and which the Church of Rome has for ages advocated, when sought as they are at present in Germany, to be practically embodied, are the best justification of Bismarck and his policy, for they make the State only the creature of the Church, to regulate, perhaps, a few insignificant details, and to be taken up with more parish politics simply as the Church rulers may at any time see fit to determine and command. It is thought the circumstances in Prussia are propitious for the trial. If there were any idea that the same thing could be successfully attempted in Canada, we should very soon be in a condition to better understand Bismarck's portion, and the more heartily to sympathize with Bismarck's policy. The struggle may be nearer, even in this western world, than many are ready to imagine, and it is just as well to study the whole question pretty carefully, and be prepared for whatever may turn up.

REVIVALS IN SCOTLAND AND CANADA.

The reports of what is taking place in Britain are leading not a few in Canada to long and pray for similar times of revival among ourselves. It is felt that we need such seasons of refreshment very much. With this view weekly meetings of the Evangelical Alliance are being held in Toronto, instead of the monthly one, and so far the undertaking has proceeded with encouraging success. The meetings are large and increasing, and it is fondly hoped, will issue in great and wide-spread spiritual quickening. Ministers of different denominations are going heartily into the movement, and the best of spirit is displayed. Compared with what is taking place in Edinburgh, it is still the day of small things in Toronto, but that day is not to be despised. When iniquity comes in like a flood, may we not expect that the Lord will lift up a standard against it. The great danger in new countries, where the vast majority settle for the all-but-exclusive purpose of bettering their worldly position, is a relapse into comparative barbarism, not outwardly, but in spirit. Every spiritual emotion is in danger of becoming cold and callous, if it be not altogether extinguished in the eager race for riches, and the absorbing pursuit of more material good. This has been noticeably the case in the far West, and accordingly these religious revivals, with all their excitement and wildfire, have done immense good by re-awakening a sense of the spiritual, the unseen and the holy, and so bringing men to feel that there are other things than those that perish with the using necessary to make even the present life either a successful or a happy one. When one looks at many of the effusions of the Canadian secular press, especially for the last few weeks, can we say that we are in no danger of relapsing into barbarism, or that there is no need of a wide-spread awakening to the all importance of the things that are unseen and eternal, so that men may learn to treat each, if not with the consideration due to fellow-Christians, at least with the decency which even a moderate degree of civilization unflinchingly secures?

Book Notices.

THE ALDINE. There is so much of beauty and artistic excellence in the February number of the Aldine, no lover of the fine arts can well afford to allow it to remain a closed book. The promise held out for the New Year, in the January number, of a volume of surpassing worth and taste, is sustained in this issue. A dozen beautiful pictures embellish its pages, more than half of which are original American views. The literary contents of this number of the Aldine are choice, varied and original. It is safe to say that no other American publication ever offered its readers so many art and literary attractions. Subscription price, \$5, including chromos "The East" and "The West." James Sutton & Co., publishers, 29 Maiden Lane, New York City. Mr. W. H. Firth, 50 King St. East, or Drawer 358 Toronto, is the Canadian Agent for the Publishers, who will receive orders, and procure this beautiful art periodical for subscribers.

A congregational meeting of Erskine Church, Montreal, to consider the "Union Question" was held in the school-room, on Wednesday evening. The meeting was presided over by the Rev. J. M. Gibson, and was a most interesting and harmonious one. While all present were decidedly favourable to union, some few recommended delay, but after a full and free discussion on the matter, which was read in extenso by the chairman, at the opening the following motion was carried:—"That this congregation approve of a union of the four negotiating churches on the basis and ten Resolutions as set forth in the remit sent down by the General Assembly." The Rev. Dr. Taylor was present, and took part with many others in advocating the consummation of this great work, which we may soon be able to chronicle as we just triumph.—Witness.

Ministers and Churches.

On Friday the first service was held in the new church, Hanover. A capital reading was given by the Rev. W. Park, of Harbour. A vigorous speech on congregational prosperity, by the Rev. D. Duff, of North Brant. A spirited lecture on the "Life and Work of W. C. Burns, the Chinese Missionary," by the Rev. C. Moffat, of Walkerton, and a short speech by Dr. Landerkin, M.P., South Grey. The church was crowded. It is a very neat brick building, and will hold about 270 people when seated. In the face of very many difficulties this station has been built up single handed by the Rev. R. O. Moffat. No aid was every sought or given from any source. In fact when preaching was commenced no salary, however small, could be offered, and since he gave it up it has been supplied mostly by students, and now, as the result, this brick church gives permanence to the cause. May Hanover and West Bentinck speedily secure, as a settled pastor, a true man of God.—Cont.

We are happy to record that the Anniversary Services in connection with the Presbyterian congregation of Georgetown, held on Sabbath and Monday last, were of equal interest with those held by this Church in past years. The sermons preached by Rev. W. Meikle, Oakville, which were able and eloquent, were listened to by large and attentive audiences. The Soirees held on Monday evening, which was addressed by Rev. Messrs Tindal, Alexander, Meikle, and Cocks was also successful, the Church being completely filled with an appreciative and delighted audience. The music rendered by the efficient choir of the congregation was such as is seldom equalled, and rarely surpassed at meetings of this kind. The services were, altogether such as calculated to do good both socially and spiritually in the congregation and community. At the close of the meeting Jas. Barber, Esq., made a liberal offer to give \$100 provided the young men shall raise \$400, to furnish a library and reading room somewhat commensurate with the wants of the place. It is to be hoped that very speedy action will be taken in this matter.—Cont.

The annual soiree of the West Presbyterian Church was held on last Wednesday evening, (21st). Although the evening was unfavourable the attendance was very large. After tea had been served in the basement, the company assembled in the Church, where the Hon. J. McMurich presided, and opened, with a few remarks, congratulatory on the flourishing state of the Church, which every year showed progress. Mr. John Winchester, Secretary of the Managers, then read the annual report—which showed that the receipts had been \$2,574.83—which does not include the amounts for the schemes of the Church, as these have not yet been collected. The debt on the church had been lessened by \$485. The Session report 335 names on the Communion Roll, 98 received during the year, and the Sabbath School in a flourishing state. The Rev. Mr. Byrne, agent of the Free Church Mission, then gave an address, chiefly on the Mission he represents, and was followed by Rev. J. Potts, of the Metropolitan, who gave a most interesting practical address on the "Elements of a Successful Church." These he described as, first, the social element properly cultivated and manifested in all the members taking an interest in strangers, enquiring after their welfare, getting their address, and calling on them, and making them feel as much at home as they had done in the old land, from which they had lately come. The second element of a successful church was a successful Sabbath School, which was the nursery of the Church, and from which we must in future look for our chief accession to the membership of the Church. The third was good preaching, which kept before the people the vital doctrines, precepts, and promises of the Gospel, and directed them to Christ as the only Saviour of sinners. Fourth, good hearing. Taking a nap, or holding down the head when a minister needed the aid and encouragement of their eyes upon him, and interest manifested in what he said, was not good hearing. They should hear in such a way as to cheer the preacher in his efforts to benefit them; and they should seek to profit by his preaching. Fifth, above all they should seek and pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as we hear of it in Scotland and England at the present time. At Edinburgh the largest hall could not contain the crowds that came to hear Mr. Moody set forth the way of salvation through Christ; and he prayed that God would send us in all our Churches such a Revival that multitudes might be led to dedicate themselves to the Lord. The exercises throughout were enlivened by an excellent choir, rendering selections from the Creation, the Messiah, &c. in a very interesting manner.—Cont.

Love is the law of Christ's kingdom, the law of his school and the law of his household. It is one thing to wish to be on the side of truth, and another thing to wish to be on the side of truth.