

committees are prepared for immediate and satisfactory action concerning the Resolves, and take means to secure early information of every movement upon the question in the Legislature, and (how you may be prepared for any emergency. Another objection just, and your influence over members will be comparatively slight. Besides, a new Governor may soon arrive in the Province, adverse to the principles we desire to establish. His influence with some members of his cabinet, and with leader in Parliament, may turn the scale in favor of some of the plans of our opponents. And experience abundantly proves what with viceregal influence, the prospect of office and party obligations, there would be no deficiency of public writers to gloss over such destruction. To guard effectually against such dangers, take the case into your own hands, so that no one can betray you. Have every member pledged to correct views, and to an immediate enforcement of them, either through the Government, or by an independent measure, should the executive prove recalcitrant in their trust.

We contemplate committing in Toronto a committee of vigilance, during the remaining stages of this question, and shall be happy to cooperate with our friends throughout the country in the adoption of any measures which may be found requisite for securing an early and triumphant issue.

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Original Articles.

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UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HISTORY.

BY THE REV. DR. FRASER, CALLEDONIA.

We are now to enter on the consideration of a movement in the Associate Synod, which, with a similar movement in the General Associate Synod, afterwards to be considered, forms a portion of ecclesiastical history which has had an important influence on British sentiment, and which may even be regarded as exhibiting the fundamental principle of civil and religious liberty.

Hitherto this denomination had followed the course of their fathers with little variation, and had acknowledged their adherence to the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, not excepting those passages which teach the anti-christian doctrine of the magistrate's power in the Church. For, although the answers to Mr. Nairn's reasons of dissent express views of an enlightened character, yet they do not seem to have been acted on to the full extent. Occasionally, indeed, preachers took exceptions to the strong language employed in the Confession; and Presbyteries seemed to exercise a discretionary power in permitting this; but the ecclesiastical proceedings, and the sentiments of the body at large, seem to have been much the same as when in connection with the Established Church. They were still under the impression that civil establishments of religion were scriptural and expedient, and they were still willing to return to the National Church should the way be opened.

Now, however, they were about to take up new ground, or rather old ground with a firmer grasp. Their assent to the Confession, it was understood, was always given in coincidence with the views of the Associate Presbytery in their answers to Mr. Nairn, but this was now a matter of old standing; and not known as at first, and, in consequence, not considered sufficiently explicit, nor were some of those who were licensed and ordained satisfied with certain questions in the Formula which seemed to require an approbation of intolerant and persecuting principles. This led on to what is called the Old and New Light Controversy,—a controversy which was carried on with much keenness, and which occasioned strife and division; but which, under a wise over-ruling Providence, has led, as we shall afterwards find, to vastly important results, and may even be considered as bringing us to an era of ecclesiastical history most important and memorable, not only so far as the Secession denominations were concerned, but extending its influ-

ence to other Churches, and leading greatly to subvert the very principles on which the mystery of iniquity seems to have its base.

The questions in the Formula (we said, about which scriptures were expressed, are the second and the fourth). The second required an unqualified assent to the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith. Now, it was not surprising that serious objections should be made to this by conscientious persons who had carefully read those passages in the Confession where the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion is concerned. What says the Confession?

"The civil magistrate may not assume to himself administration of the Word and Sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all Blasphemies and Heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed: for the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."

It is evident from this passage in the Confession, and from the Scriptures which are adduced in proof, that the Confessors made a complete surrender to the civil magistrate of the Church's freedom,—that the civil authorities were to judge of doctrine and to reform what they considered ecclesiastical abuses, and were authorized to call Synods and control their deliberations. In short, that they had all the power conceded to them, and that, as the Confession elsewhere states, even though they were infidels, which the most oxastian and tyrannical government could require. Who can wonder then that enlightened and conscientious men should be startled by such doctrine, and obliged to dissent from it? We rather wonder that it passed so long without decided and general opposition, and we wonder more that in this enlightened age, the whole Church of Scotland, ministers and elders, should deliberately subscribe these sentiments, and we wonder most of all that the office-bearers of the Free Church, rather than acknowledge that their former position was wrong, or that their new position calls for some qualification, should still insist so much on assenting, without exception, in the very language we have quoted, to all this arbitrary and unscriptural power as vested in the civil magistrate. The subject to come before us has thus an interest in the present day, in preventing with clearness the difference, we may say the only difference, between the United Presbyterian Church, and the Free Church. The latter are still labouring in the dark, like our own father of the last century before this controversy arose. A goodly number in the Free Church, we believe, like many in both branches of the Secession Church before this question was agitated, are imbuing New Light views, and feel a necessity for some change in their formula and professed creed, on this subject, in their altered condition: and doubtless ere long there will be a burst among them for real as well as imaginary freedom. But when, and how, it is to come God only knows; and who is to have the honor of carrying out such a movement in a Church comprising so many pious ministers, is known only to Him, who when his own time comes is at no loss to find instruments to accomplish his wise and holy purposes.

We have no doubt that such a movement will yet revolutionize the Free Church, and bring them round to our own scriptural views, which at present they seem either not to have the penetration to understand, or the candour to acknowledge,—that in the providence of God this is delayed till that church be ripe for it, which perhaps from the prejudices of their education it is not wonderful should still be a future event,—and that when it takes place it may be more harmoniously, and more effectually carried out. What a vast advantage to Christianity in Scotland and in other lands, would be a union, longed for by many in both these churches, which are now, as has been often exemplified, most opposed because most approximated. The present generation will not likely see it, but their children may; and then all our existing jarings and animosities will happily sink into oblivion, like those of former days among the parties that are already harmoniously blended: and even the very existence of civil establishments of religion, in practice as well as theory, by which the visible exhibition of Christianity has been corrupted and degraded, shall be regarded as among the things that were.