



1/18/35

**LIBRARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**PRINCETON, N. J.**

**PRESENTED BY**

**DR. DAVID MAGIE**

215495

BX 9084 .B76 1878 v.1-2  
Brown, Thomas, 1811-1893.  
Annals of the disruption



2 vols

ANNALS OF THE DISRUPTION.

EDINBURGH  
PRINTED BY LORIMER AND GILLIES,  
CLYDE STREET.

ANNALS

OF

THE DISRUPTION:

CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF EXTRACTS FROM THE

AUTOGRAPH NARRATIVES

OF

MINISTERS WHO LEFT THE SCOTTISH ESTABLISHMENT

IN

1843.

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY THE

REV. THOMAS BROWN, F.R.S.E.,

CONVENER OF COMMITTEE.

---

*Published by Authority of the Committee of the Free Church  
on the Records of Disruption Ministers.*

---

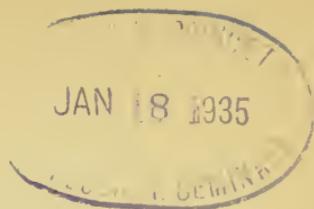
PART I.

---

SEVENTH THOUSAND.

EDINBURGH:  
MACLAREN & MACNIVEN, PRINCES STREET.

1878.





## P R E F A C E.

---

THE object of the following pages is to recall the circumstances of the Disruption, as described by the men who themselves took part in the struggle. The general and more public aspects of the event have been admirably brought out by Dr. Buchanan in the History of the Ten Years' Conflict, and by Dr. Hanna in his Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers. But there are other important objects which may be served by giving in greater detail the experience of individual ministers in their separate parishes. Fortunately, we have, from various districts of the country, narratives written immediately after the event, and portions of these may now be made available, to tell in their own words what it was that led the men of the Disruption to separate from the State, and what difficulties were encountered by the Church in taking up her new position.

Two years after the Disruption, when the General Assembly met at Inverness, in 1845, Dr. Lorimer, of Glasgow, proposed that the outgoing ministers should prepare Memorials recording the facts of their personal experience. A Committee was appointed, with Dr. Lorimer as Convener, and in answer to their appeal, thirty-seven narratives were sent in—those which in the following pages are referred to as Dis. Mss. i.—xxxvii.

In 1864 the subject was resumed, and zealously prosecuted, in a different form, by Dr. Parker, of Lesmahagow, then of Glasgow. The Papers collected or prepared by him will be

quoted as the Parker Mss., under the names of the different ministers and Presbyteries from whom he obtained returns.

Since 1873, when the present Convener was appointed, additional Memorials have been received, and these will be referred to as Dis. Mss. xxxviii.—lii.

In preparing a general statement derived chiefly from these sources, one great difficulty has been to avoid the sameness of so many narratives detailing similar occurrences in different localities. This has made it necessary to omit much which would otherwise have been well deserving of notice; but if there be any of the outgoing ministers who may feel that the part which they took in the sacrifices of 1843 has been overlooked, the Convener can, at least, say that in no case has this been done more completely than in his own. A wider range may be taken, if thought advisable, at some future time.

A brief Narrative is given for the purpose of connecting the different extracts, and reminding the reader of how the great change was brought about. It will serve, at least, to show in what light the passing ecclesiastical events of the day were viewed in a country manse by one who entered on the duties of his parish in the midst of the Ten Years' Conflict. At all the great turning-points of the struggle it seemed—and the subsequent experience of more than thirty years has only deepened the conviction—that the Church did what she simply could not help doing if she were to remain faithful to Christ her Head, and to the people under her care.

The only liberty taken with the extracts is in condensing them by omitting some of the less important portions as indicated, the true meaning and object of the writers being in every case carefully preserved.

More than once the General Assembly has expressed a desire for the publication of some portions of these Disruption Memorials and Records, and taken steps with that view. The

delay that has occurred has been due to the lamented death of Dr. Parker and to other circumstances, which the Committee have had much cause to regret—one Convener has been laid aside by ill health, and another has been called to the colonial field.

The First Part, now published, brings down the narrative of events to the point where ministers found themselves outside the Establishment, and involved in the difficulties incident to the great change. In a Second Part it is proposed to give some account of the efforts made to meet those difficulties as to sites and other matters, while the Church was being reorganised in her new position. It will include also complete lists of the outgoing ministers, with brief historical notices, so far as possible, of all those who have been removed by death.

It is with no desire to provoke controversy that the following statements have been prepared, but rather in the full belief that if the facts, as they actually took place, were better known, the hostility of adversaries would be to a great extent disarmed, and the attachment of friends confirmed and strengthened. It is true that when men are describing sacrifices and sufferings—their own or others'—there is difficulty in avoiding a certain amount of feeling. It is not every one who can dismiss such matters as one of the sufferers does, in speaking of trials overcome: “The facts which might be mentioned are of so very delicate a character that they cannot be stated, and must be left to the disclosures of that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.” If, however, we are to have a truthful view of Disruption times, such circumstances cannot be wholly suppressed; and, surely, they may now be spoken of all the more calmly and frankly, when the keen feelings of former days have, to so great an extent, passed away.

Amidst all the elements of human imperfection which mingled in the great movement of 1843, it is impossible not

to recognise the signal tokens of God's goodness to His servants in a day of trial, interposing to uphold and guide them for His own glory in the path of duty. And now that it has been given to the Free Church to gather into her communion so much of what constitutes the strength of Scotland—the intelligence, the faith, and energy of her people—the younger generation, who have risen into the place of their Disruption Fathers, may well take encouragement to hold fast the noble heritage of Christian truth and sacred principle for which their Church has once more, as in the days of old, been honoured to contend.

The subjoined minute states the authority under which this publication appears.

THOMAS BROWN,

*Convener of Committee.*

16 CARLTON STREET, EDINBURGH,

17th May, 1876.

---

EXTRACT MINUTE of the COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH ON THE RECORDS  
OF DISRUPTION MINISTERS, 17th May, 1876.

The Committee agreed to authorise the publication of the "Annals of the Disruption," prepared by the Convener, and cordially to recommend the same to the members of the Church. In doing so, they think it right to state, that, all the materials in their possession having been placed at the disposal of the Convener, he holds himself alone responsible for the selection and arrangement of the various extracts, as well as for the narrative that is given and the expressions of opinion which that narrative contains.

The Committee would earnestly invite additional statements and records from all who can supply authentic information as to Disruption times.

# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. FREE CHURCH PRINCIPLES AN INHERITANCE FROM FORMER TIMES, . . . . .	3
II. RELIGIOUS REVIVAL A PREPARATION FOR THE CONFLICT, .	9
III. NON-INTRUSION CONFLICT, . . . . .	22
IV. STRUGGLE FOR SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE, . . . . .	28
V. THE CONVOCATION, . . . . .	51
VI. APPEAL TO THE COUNTRY, . . . . .	60
VII. CLOSE OF THE STRUGGLE, . . . . .	77
VIII. MAKING READY, . . . . .	83
IX. THE DISRUPTION, . . . . .	90
X. THE FREE ASSEMBLY, . . . . .	99
XI. FAREWELL SERVICE IN THE PARISH CHURCH, . . . . .	102
XII. FIRST SERVICE IN THE FREE CHURCH CONGREGATION, . .	110
XIII. THE PREACHING OF CHURCHES VACANT, . . . . .	124
XIV. THE LICENSED PREACHERS OF THE CHURCH, . . . . .	129
XV. LEAVING THE MANSE, . . . . .	134
XVI. REASONS FOR GOING OUT AS GIVEN BY MINISTERS AT THE TIME,	146
XVII. REASONS FOR GOING OUT AS GIVEN BY THE PEOPLE, . . .	160
XVIII. A CONFIRMATION, . . . . .	175
XIX. THE DWELLINGS TO WHICH MINISTERS RETIRED, . . . . .	178
XX. THE ADVANCEMENT OF RELIGION A FRUIT OF THE DISRUPTION,	192
APPENDIX.—LIST OF DISRUPTION MANUSCRIPTS, . . . . .	259



# ANNALS OF THE DISRUPTION.

---

## I. FREE CHURCH PRINCIPLES AN INHERITANCE FROM FORMER TIMES.

THE Disruption and its results will be best understood if we begin by inquiring how it came that so many of the ministers and people were prepared to meet the crisis of 1843, and to act the part which they did. In not a few cases they tell us that little was needed in the way of special preparation. Dr. Foote, of Aberdeen, in speaking of his own experience, mentions, what was equally true of many of his brethren: "In my early years I held those views which belong to evangelical, orthodox, thorough-paced Presbyterianism. . . . I take no credit for standing to what I ever felt to be the essential principles of the Church of Scotland; but I bless God that, after co-operating with others, . . . to prevent the necessity of breaking our connection with the State, I felt no desire, and no temptation, not to act with decision when that necessity became plain."\* These views would seem in some cases to have come down by hereditary descent from those who had fought the same battle in former times. Dr. Patrick M'Farlan, of Greenock, whose name stands first at the Deed of Demission, belonged to a family who for four generations in succession held office in the Church of Scotland, his great-grandfather having been ordained shortly after the Revolution. Dr. Welsh, who headed the procession on the day of the Disruption, was descended from forefathers who, amidst the upper moorlands round the sources of the Tweed, had suffered for the cause of Christ in the days of persecution. Mr. Carment, of Rosskeen, was the grandson of John Carment, born in 1672,

\* Dis. Mss. xxiv. p. 2.

and baptised under cloud of night among the hills of Irongray by the well-known John Welsh. These men—and there were others of similar ancestry—were obviously in the right place when, amidst the struggles of 1843, they proved their hereditary attachment to the cause of Christ's Crown and Covenant.

Apart, however, from all connection in the way of lineal descent, these historical associations exercised a powerful influence among the people of Scotland. Mr. Taylor, of Flisk, thus refers to the effect of such memories on his own mind: "I owe much to the early and frequent reading of the 'Scots Worthies,' from which I saw that the principles of the Free Church are those for which the Church of Scotland has always contended in her best times. These principles are truly Scottish, as well as truly scriptural. They have been baptised by the sufferings and blood of our fathers, and this has doubly endeared them to me. As I benefited so much by the reading of that book, I have generally recommended it, . . . as one of the best books to throw light on our principles and position."\* The results of such reading, accordingly, were met with, not only among the ministers, but in many districts among the people also. At Monkton, in Ayrshire, it is stated that "much of the spirit of the old Covenanters" remained. "There are few dwellings in which there is not a small library, and in these libraries there is generally a well-thumbed copy of the 'Scots Worthies,' the 'Cloud of Witnesses,' or 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs,' in which they find that the principles for which the Church is contending are principles in maintenance of which their fathers shed their blood."†

Thus, over wide districts of Scotland there were very many even of the humblest classes to whom the names and principles connected with covenanting times had long been familiar. Weavers at the loom, artisans in the workshop, ploughmen in the fields, and shepherds out among the hills, cherished those memories and felt their power, and all through the conflict, we find allusions to those times meeting us at every step.

Sometimes there were local associations which gave special force to the appeal. At Lesmahagow, the people lived in a district round which lay Bothwell Bridge, and Airmoss, and

\* Dis. Mes. xxxvii. pp. 1, 2.

† Dis. Mes. xxxiv. p. 2.

Drumclog, and the spot where John Brown, of Priesthill, was shot by Claverhouse. A single example may be given of those mentioned by Dr. Parker to illustrate the ties which connect the present with that former generation. "James Dykes, of Leads-head, is the senior member of my session. Though now [1846] at the advanced age of eighty-seven, he is regular in his attendance at church from Sabbath to Sabbath, not excepting wet and stormy days. He is the great-grandson of John Steel, of Waterhead, who occupied so conspicuous a place in the troublous times of the Second Charles. He was by far the most distinguished man in this district of country ['looked up to as leader and counsellor of the Covenanters in the West']. He was driven from his house and lands by the force of persecution, and wandered as an outlaw for many a weary day. He was present with a brother at Airmoss, and narrowly escaped with his life. Towards the close of the battle, a trooper rode up to Steel and his brother, who were making their way from the field on foot. They were both exceedingly nimble, but the horseman soon came up to them, and addressing the laird of Waterhead, cried, 'Stand, dog, and die.' The laird turning dexterously round on his pursuer, with a heavy back-stroke brought him to the ground. He then set his brother on the trooper's horse, and he himself ran on foot. . . . His daughter, Isabella, the grandmother of my elder, was one of the first children baptised in Lesmahagow Parish Church after the Revolution. . . . She was married to William Dykes, in St. Bride's Chapel, Parish of Avondale; and after she became a widow, she resided with her son, the father of my elder. He remembers her well. He was sixteen years old when she died, and many a winter night he has sat by her side listening to the tales she told of the times of persecution, and of the eventful scenes through which her father passed. . . . It is interesting to remark that he is separated by so small an interval—as it were a single life—from the period in which men were doomed to imprisonment and death, for no other cause than choosing to worship God according to the dictates of conscience."\* In a parish where such hereditary connections prevailed, it was no

\* Dis. Mss. xxxi. p. 28.

accidental coincidence that, when the day of trial came in 1843, Dr. Parker, on abandoning the Establishment, was accompanied by five of his seven elders, and by a strong body of 800 communicants, comprising in their number fifty of the farmers who belonged to the district.

At Edinburgh also such local associations with those old times were not unfrequently referred to. Thus, at one of the meetings, an office-bearer appealed to the people: "Lawsuits, fines, and actions of damages have now superseded the gibbet and the stake. But the spirit of persecution is as truly at work as ever it was in the days of King Charles. . . . What cowardly dastards we must be, if we lose without a struggle what cost our forefathers so much to gain. Imprisonment, fines, death, tortures had no terrors for them. . . . Yonder lies the Greyfriars' Churchyard, where our fathers solemnly subscribed the Covenant—some of them with their very blood; and there, sir, lies the Grassmarket, where the fires of persecution were often lighted. . . . Who is there who can stand where we now stand . . . without feeling the glow of enthusiastic zeal thrilling through his every nerve and fibre? Let us, then, with one heart and mind, declare our unalterable adherence to the principles for which our fathers bled and died, and for which our Church is now contending. Let us declare that, come what may, we will abide by these, and stand by the ministers who are ready to maintain them to the uttermost. But, sir, let us not attempt to do this in our own strength; . . . let us resolve to do it in the strength of God."\*

Sometimes there were cases in which the *personal* element was specially prominent, as in a speech by Mr. Carment, of Rosskeen, already referred to. After alluding to the hardships of the Church, he went on to say: "Bad as matters are, we should remember it is no new thing that has befallen us. . . . My son is the outed minister of Comrie. On coming South I went to see him, for there was some work waiting for me. He had got an infant son, and the boy had been left unbaptised till the old man, his grandfather, should come and baptise him. At Comrie, just as in the Highlands, the congregation had to

\* *Witness*, 4th January, 1843.

meet on the bare hillside ; and when the child was brought up to me to be baptised, it did forcibly strike me, as well it might, that the circumstances in which we were placed were not new. And so I said to the people before I began : ‘ Here am I . . . going to baptise my grandson in the open air on the bare hillside—I, whose grandfather was baptised in the open air on the bare hillside, in the times of the last great persecution. . . . My father has told me that in carrying out the infant under the cloud of night they had to pass the curate’s house, and they were greatly alarmed lest it should cry in the passing, and bring out the curate on them. But it kept quiet, and they regarded the thing as a special Providence.’\*

Frequent allusions such as these meet us all through the conflict, not only influencing men’s views, but moulding the very terms and modes of expression in which the great principles were set before the country. “I have often thought of late,” Dr. Candlish said on the eve of the Disruption, “since we have been compelled to make ourselves familiar with the stories of the martyrs, . . . that in the course of these painful controversies we have not yet got a suitable watchword . . . a banner worthy of the days of old, worthy of the Covenant. *Non-intrusion* is a good enough word, but it would look ill upon some lonely gravestone in the wilds of Ayr. *Spiritual independence* is a good enough phrase, but it would scarcely bear to be emblazoned on our banner in the day of battle, when the stormy winds shall blow. It is not non-intrusion or spiritual independence that will do now, but the old time-worn and hallowed watchword of our fathers—‘*The Crown-rights of the Redeemer.*’ . . . We shall maintain these Crown-rights, perhaps in a state of exile from the Establishment, perhaps in a state of suffering—of toil and privation. It is possible that even out of the Establishment, the claims which have been put forth against us by Cæsar and his Courts may follow us, for indications and hints were given in Parliament of principles which, if carried out, would deny freedom, not only to the Church Established, but to the Church of Christ. Be that as it may, oh, let us be resolved and determined that we shall main-

\* *Witness* Newspaper, 4th November, 1843.

tain the rights of Christ the King, whether in or out of the Establishment—under persecution if need be.” \*

Thus, as the controversy went on it connected itself with the struggles of former times, but not often was that connection more fittingly expressed than in the words of M’Cheyne: “In generations past this cause has been maintained in Scotland at all hands and against all enemies, and if God calls us to put our feet in the blood-stained footsteps of the Scottish Worthies, I dare not boast, but I will pray that the calm faith of Hugh Mackail, and the cheerful courage of Donald Cargill, may be given me.” †

\* *Witness*, 25th March, 1843. The reader will observe there was no expectation that by going out at the Disruption the Free Church would, *ipso facto*, be free from the encroachments of the Civil Courts. Irrespective of all consequences, however, we shall see how the Church, for the relief of her own conscience, had to abandon her position in the Establishment, in order that she might remain faithful to Christ. Whatever came of it, she would at least not be compromised by retaining her emoluments under such conditions as came to be attached to them.

† *Memoir*, p. 560.

## II. RELIGIOUS REVIVAL A PREPARATION FOR THE CONFLICT.

BUT there was another cause which prepared men for the change, and which was much more generally and powerfully felt—the revived spirit of vital religion then pervading the country. This is frankly spoken of by some of the ministers as having been experienced by themselves. Of all such examples the most conspicuous is that of Dr. Chalmers, as given in his biography. In the Disruption Mss. there are similar instances more briefly referred to.

“I had been led,” says Mr. Innes, of Deskford, “by the blessing of God to a more evangelical style of preaching and to greater seriousness than at the earlier period of my ministry.”\*

Mr. Jeffrey, of Girthon, stated, a few days before his death, “that from the first he had preached the Gospel to the light he had received, but that a great change had taken place fifteen years before, when his views of religion became much more earnest and deeply evangelical.”†

Such, also, was the experience of Dr. Landsborough, of Stevenston, who, as appears from a letter of his friend, Professor Thomas Brown, had been brought forward in 1811 by Dr. Inglis and the “desperately moderate men.” Looking back to that period he states in his Diary for 1842, “How great was then my darkness, how unfit my spirit for the solemn work on which I was about to be engaged.” And again, under another date, “My birthday. What changes in the world since my life began. How many changes in my own life. Thou hast borne with me. . . . Thou hast enlightened me. I have reason to hope that I am renewed, and on the way to heaven.”‡ It seems to have

\* Dis. Mss. xv. p. 1.

† Parker Mss., Pres. of Kirkcudbright.

‡ Memoir, p. 163.

been at a comparatively early period in his ministry that the change had taken place, and we find him in the midst of the revival-work of 1840, labouring in his parish, and rejoicing with all his heart.

Throughout the manse of Scotland, it is believed that such cases were not rare. But few were so remarkable as that of Mr. Roderick M'Leod, whose name is identified with the revival of religion in Skye. "During the first three years of my ministry," he says, "I was an entire stranger to the Gospel scheme of salvation; and no wonder, for the staple theology of Skye preaching in those days was nothing better than scraps of Blair's Sermons or of some other equally meagre stuff, so that I have often thought that I scarcely ever heard the Gospel till I began to preach it myself, with the exception of going two or three times to the Gaelic Chapel in Aberdeen." He refers to one evangelical minister in Skye, Mr. Shaw, of Bracadale, from whom he borrowed a treatise of Bellamy's, which threw him into a state of alarm for his own salvation. It was a sermon by Dr. Chalmers which opened his eyes to the Gospel. After this he preached two years at the station of Arnisort, and then, on the death of Mr. Shaw, was translated to Bracadale. His change of views and principles brought a corresponding change in dealing with his parishioners, more especially on the subject of baptism, and there followed a series of collisions with the Moderate Presbytery, who would fain have deposed him, and cast him out of the Church. The Disruption is accordingly spoken of as having brought him "unmingled relief, and a happy termination to a twice ten years' conflict." \*

It was among the people, however, that this awakening was most general, and its effects most clearly seen in preparing men for the Disruption. The concurrence of testimony on this point is very striking. Thus at Kilsyth, well known as the scene of a remarkable revival under the Rev. Mr. Robe in 1742, there occurred a similar time of blessing in 1839, when "from July to October the whole community flocked to hear the Word with the deepest earnestness." This movement, which attracted at the time the attention of all Scotland, is described by Dr. Burns

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Skye.

as “a sun blink of Gospel light and warmth;” and, he adds, “the fact is unquestionable, that the greater number of those who have been seriously impressed, at the time referred to, have attached themselves to the Free Church.”\* It was an interesting coincidence, that a prayer meeting which dates from the time of Mr. Robe, and which for fifty years had been held in an upper room, gave accommodation to the first meetings for organising the Free Church movements in the parish.

In Strathbogie similar preparatory work is described. Mr. Cowie, a dissenting minister in Huntly, “a man of eminent piety, vigorous mind, . . . and remarkable zeal in his Master’s work,” is said to have produced a powerful effect on the district, and to have left many seals of his ministry. “Another of these Strathbogie parishes is Botriphnie, where, about eighty years ago, there was a godly parish minister, Mr. Campbell, to whose ministry the people were wont to travel for many miles.” One of the fruits of his ministry was Mr. Cowie just referred to. “It is said that a godly farmer, who had been converted under the ministry of Mr. Campbell, mourning over the almost universal deadness both of ministers and people, was wont to spend much of the night in prayer in his barn for times of awakening and revival, and that long after this godly man was gathered to his fathers, this very barn was it in which, for five and a-half years, the Free Church congregation found a shelter for the worship of God, and in which many precious sermons were preached, and not a few souls were converted.”†

A revival of religion is recorded to have taken place in Lawers and Lochtayside in 1815. Again a similar work appeared in 1834, and subsequent years, in connection with the ministry of Mr. Campbell, of Lawers, and his younger brother in Glenlyon, assisted by the Rev. William Burns. Often would Mr. Campbell, of Lawers, afterward of Kiltearn, “when in company with Christian friends, revert to these great days of the Son of man.” His younger brother, Mr. Campbell, of Glenlyon, afterwards of Tarbat, writing under date October, 1864, mentions:—“I witnessed three religious revivals—one in Breadalbane and Glenlyon, in the year 1816;

\* Dis. Mss. xxix. pp. 2, 3.

† Dis. Mss. x. pp. 1, 2, 5.

one in Tarbat and other parishes in Ross-shire, in the years 1840 and 1841; a third in Lawers in the year 1861. Let sovereign grace have all the glory." Both brothers took a decided part in the "Ten Years' Conflict," and were of signal service to the Free Church in 1843, and afterwards.

In Ross-shire, Mr. Flyter, of Alness, gives his view of how men were made ready for the Disruption:—"Preparation was made in regard to elders and people in the influences with which the Lord accompanied the preaching of the Gospel. This influence was striking and impressive in various parts of the country in 1840. About that time in every district of the parish of Alness there were some sin-sick souls."\*

Dr. Mackintosh, of Tain, bears his decided testimony to the reality of this movement. "What I believe to be a genuine revival of religion—the work of the Spirit of God—has taken place during the past year [1840] to a considerable extent in this parish and district. . . . There was at first a good deal of outward excitement on some occasions under the Word, but this gradually diminished. . . . The experience which I had of the revival of religion, though limited and partial, is such as would lead me to long for its continuance and to pant for its return, as bringing with it the blessed results for which a minister of Christ would desire to live and die—the conversion of sinners and the increasing consolation and edification of saints."†

At Collace, Dr. A. Bonar speaks of the parish having been "prepared by a work of Divine grace in the souls of many among us. After my return from the mission to the Jews in Palestine and other countries a decided awakening took place. In the month of May, 1840, there was a deep impression on many, attended with outward expressions of concern upon one occasion when we were met during the week for prayer, but in general the work was silent. After that date one and another at different intervals seemed brought under the power of the truth. On the fast day appointed by our Assembly—in prospect of the solemn crisis of the Disruption—two persons

\* Parish of Alness, by the Rev. A. Flyter, Parker Mss.

† Memorials of Rev. C. Mackintosh, D.D., p. 53.

were led to the cross. In all these cases, without one exception, the individuals became most decided in their views regarding the Headship and Crown-rights of the Redeemer; and neither in this nor any of the neighbouring parishes did any of these awakened persons remain in the Establishment when the crisis came." \*

Mr. Carment, of Rosskeen (Ross-shire), writes, under date January, 1841 :—" Though the prospects of the beloved Church of my fathers are becoming every day more dark and gloomy, . . . yet the prospects of this parish are becoming increasingly bright and pleasing. There has been since 1840 a very remarkable awakening and religious revival in this parish and neighbourhood, especially among the young; and numbers, I have reason to believe, have been savingly converted. . . . I have been enabled to preach frequently on week days to attentive, impressed, and weeping congregations, who flock by night and by day to hear the Word." At the previous communion he had admitted more communicants than during the whole of the preceding eighteen years of his ministry. " It seems to me *a token for good that our present contendings as a Church are approved by God*, when revivals of religion are taking place in various parts of Scotland at a time when the Court of Session is, like the Scottish Council of old, trying not only to intrude unacceptable ministers into parishes by an illegal assumption of power not sanctioned by the constitution of the country, but in direct violation of all those Statutes which were passed to secure the Church against all such attempts." †

One additional example may be given, on the testimony of Mr. M'Cheyne, as to the work in Dundee :—" It is my decided and solemn conviction, in the sight of God, that a very remarkable and glorious work of God, in the conversion of sinners and edifying of saints, has taken place in this parish and neighbourhood. This work I have observed going on from the very beginning of my ministry in this place in November, 1836, and it has continued to the present time. But it was much more remarkable in the autumn of 1839, when I was abroad on a mission

\* Dis. Mss. xxi. pp. 1, 2.

† Parish of Rosskeen, Rev. J. Carment, Parker Mss.

of inquiry to the Jews, and when my place was occupied by the Rev. W. C. Burns. . . . Immediately after the beginning of the Lord's work at Kilsyth, the Word of God came with such power to the hearts and consciences of the people here, and their thirst for hearing it became so intense, that the evening-classes in the schoolroom were changed into densely-crowded congregations in the church ; and for nearly four months it was found desirable to have public worship almost every night. At this time, also, many prayer meetings were formed, some of which were strictly private or fellowship meetings ; and others, conducted by persons of some Christian experience, were open to persons under concern about their souls. . . . Many hundreds under deep concern for their souls have come from first to last to converse with the ministers, so that I am deeply persuaded the number of those who have received saving benefit is greater than any one will know till the judgment day." \*

Nor was it only at Dundee that such effects were produced ; a blessing was seen to go with Mr. M'Cheyne's labours in other districts. At Wanlockhead, Mr. Hastings speaks of a change having taken place in his congregation " since the sacrament in July, 1841, when the late Rev. Mr. Murray M'Cheyne assisted me. Many, indeed, were melted under his preaching, and became obviously more serious in their demeanour, and the chapel afterwards more regularly crowded." . . . " The people here understood well the principles of the Free Church." †

In the district of Buchan, Aberdeenshire, " the various parishes were blessed with the preaching of the saintly M'Cheyne in the early part of 1843, and in Ellon, as elsewhere, he left precious fruits of his ministry. Accordingly, though a year before the Disruption there were not known to be half-a-dozen Non-intrusionists in the whole parish of Ellon, when the event came, a congregation of above a hundred, with more than eighty communicants, was at once formed in this stronghold of Moderatism ; and since that time the congregation has greatly increased [1846]." ‡

It was a striking circumstance that the whole circle of friends

\* Memoir, pp. 495, 496.

† Dis. Mss. xix.

‡ Dis. Mss. ix. p. 4.

with whom Mr. M'Cheyne was specially associated were of one mind through the whole time of the great conflict. There was much to be done for Christ in Scotland, and God had raised up a remarkable band of labourers in the zeal of their first love, and in the strength of early manhood. What Dr. Horatius Bonar says of one of their number—Mr. Milne, of Perth—was equally true of them all:—"In the movements of the 'Ten Years' Conflict' he took no lukewarm part, though by no means an Ecclesiastic in the common sense of the word; he was a thorough Presbyterian—a vigorous maintainer of Reformation doctrine and Reformation discipline. Those who counted upon his laxity in regard to Church principles, and who were persuaded that a man so spiritual and so silent in Church Courts would take no part in the struggles of these years, were surprised at the resolute decision which he showed in adopting, and the energy in maintaining, the great ecclesiastical principles then battled for. . . . The ecclesiastical turmoil seemed to elevate, not to depress—to spiritualise, not to secularise. All the brethren whom he loved, and in whose fellowship he delighted, were of one mind on the questions which were dividing the Church Courts. Hence they could meet together, confer together, pray together. All were of one heart and of one soul. . . . The Church questions agitated were not those of partisanship or routine, they were vital and spiritual, both in themselves and in their bearings. They centred in Christ Himself—Christ, the Lawgiver of the Church—Christ, the Lawgiver of the realm. Hence, in handling them, Christian men were dealing with the Master and the Master's honour. The questions were summed up in two: 'Shall Christ give laws to the Church, or shall the Church give laws to herself? Shall Christ give laws to the nations, or shall the nations give laws to themselves?' Christian men had not to come down to secularities and externalisms in maintaining these. They felt they were discussing matters which touched their spiritual interests on every side, and they were contending for truths which brought their souls in contact with the Lord Himself." \*

The testimony of such men was of incalculable value—drawing

\* Life of Rev. J. Milne, by Dr. Horatius Bonar, pp. 74-76.

the hearts and prayers of God's people, and constraining some even of the adversaries to treat the cause with unwilling respect.

These extracts and incidents have been selected as referring to different localities, in order to show how widespread was the movement which then pervaded Scotland, and how deeply the questions at issue were felt to be connected with the most sacred feelings of the people. As the struggle went on, it became obvious to very many men of the truest spiritual discernment that it was the cause of Christ itself in the land which was at stake; and wherever men's minds were most earnest—wherever religious life was most active, there the conviction was deepest. In that lay the secret of the whole movement which took so many by surprise. If something of the fervour of old covenanting times again broke forth, it was because the same principles were believed to be at issue. Once more the same cause had taken hold of the heart and conscience of Scotland, and that with a force in many cases so overpowering as to set all obstacles at defiance. This, as we shall see, was the reason why the movement became one which the people to so large an extent took into their own hands, and carried out independently of the ministers.

But while the revival of religious life prepared men for the sacrifice, it yet made the Disruption more painful, in so far as it broke up many of those parochial and home mission operations into which they had thrown themselves. There are many published biographies which are full of the details of such work, but one or two examples taken from the Disruption Mss. may serve further to illustrate what was going on.

In 1820 the Rev. George Davidson was ordained at Latheron, Caithness, and found himself the minister of a parish covering 350 square miles, with 8000 of a population. For several years he was in the habit of preaching four sermons and travelling twenty miles every Sabbath. The labour, he quietly remarks, "was perhaps greater than could long have been borne;" and he was much concerned as to how adequate provision could be made for the parish. A plan of church extension was devised, and vigorously carried out, in no small measure on his own pecuniary responsibility. Sir John Sinclair, he mentions, in a

most liberal way gave his assistance, and, he adds, "I received great encouragement, and afterwards aid, from the eminent Dr. Chalmers. . . . I sent him the sketch of a plan by which I proposed to divide this large parish, extending nearly thirty miles along the sea coast, into manageable districts, five in number." How this object was attained he records, and the result was that "the year 1843 found the parish possessed of five distinct and regularly organised congregations, having each its own minister, elders, teachers, and communicants."

There is a touch of sadness when he comes to speak of the way in which this work was cut short. In 1842 he was busy with the last of these churches—that of Dunbeath—when "a serious obstacle presented itself; for the Church question, which was for several years depending before the Civil Courts, had just assumed a rather alarming aspect, and warned us to cease from building." For long this devoted man had toiled to make full provision for the religious wants of his parish. The last stone was about to be laid on the structure, and he went to Edinburgh in May, 1843, "almost hoping against hope—scarcely believing that the Government of the country would have been so infatuated as to hazard the breaking up of the Establishment, and that some relief would be afforded to save the consciences of the evangelical party, at least at the eleventh hour."\* How vain was that hope he was destined soon to learn.

Beside this example from the far North, we may place the experience of Dr. Roxburgh, then at Dundee. He had been licensed in 1831, at the time "when Dr. Chalmers' labours in the cause of Church extension had fired the young preachers of the Church with a portion of his enthusiasm." He was "one of six probationers who tendered their services to the parish ministers [of Glasgow] to aid them in the supervision of the neglected and overgrown population." To Dr. Roxburgh was assigned the Cowcaddens, then one of the worst localities in the city, where he met with signal success. "He used to pride himself on being the first parochial missionary in the Church of Scotland." While acting as assistant in St. George's, Edinburgh, he "became personally acquainted with Dr. Chalmers, with whom he had much

\* Dis. Mss., Parish of Latheron, pp. 2, 3.

congenial intercourse." Accordingly, on being settled in Dundee in 1834, his first effort was in the direction of Church extension. "Finding himself burdened with the oversight of a population of about 9000 souls, in addition to the families of his flock, he forthwith set himself to have a church erected in the west end of his parish. To this Mr. M'Cheyne was appointed, with whom, until the day of his death, he lived in habits of almost daily and most cordial co-operation. The Presbytery of Dundee (2nd August, 1837), having formed an association in aid of Church extension generally, and especially within their own bounds, appointed Dr. Roxburgh convener, and Mr. M'Cheyne secretary. . . . The town and parish were mapped out into districts of such extent and population as appeared to form a suitable parochial charge. . . . And in a short time the erections of Dudhope and Wallacetown Churches in some measure rewarded the efforts of the association." Steps, indeed, were taken towards a wider circle of operation by means of an association for the county. "But the time was now at hand when all these and other promising efforts for the religious and educational well-being of the country began to be paralysed, and were ultimately brought to a stand, through the infatuated conduct of the Government in resisting the righteous claims of the Church. From the first, Mr. Roxburgh was an ardent defender of the Church's spiritual independence and the rights of the Christian people. In maintaining the controversy in which these high interests were involved, he greatly valued the aid derived from the earnest spiritual pleadings, both in the Presbytery and in public, of his friend and brother, Mr. M'Cheyne, whose devout mind deeply felt how much the interests of vital godliness were concerned in the preservation of the principles for which the Church was contending."\*

Examples such as these, which it would be easy to multiply, will give some idea of the kind of work that was being done, and of the hopeful prospects which the Established Church then had before her.

And how, then, was it that men in this state of mind, and zealously engaged in such work, came to abandon their position

\* Rev. Dr. Roxburgh, Parker Mss.

within the Establishment, and to face all the sacrifices of the Disruption? The question has often been asked, and the answer simply is, that they were constrained by the successive attacks of the patrons, and the encroachments of the Civil Courts. The minds both of ministers and people were gradually awakened by the progress of events. The sacred principles involved became from time to time clear, in view of what was actually taking place. Step by step—one step at a time—the path of duty was made plain, and it was thus by the hand of God Himself, in the leadings of His Providence, that the Church was made ready for the final crisis.

Various allusions to this preparatory process occur in the Disruption Mss. “As the battle became hotter,” Mr. Mackenzie, of Farr, states, “I found the concern for the prosperity of Christ’s cause was getting stronger, especially among the serious and godly. . . . I had frequent demands upon me for communicating in their own language [the Gaelic] information regarding the causes and progress of the struggle. While thus preparing to gratify their anxiety, and give them correct information, . . . I obtained a closer and more intimate acquaintance with the subjects for my own satisfaction, so that endeavouring to instruct my people in this remote locality, additional light was darting daily on my own mind as to the line of my duty should the State carry matters so far as they ultimately did.” \*

At Collace, Dr. A. Bonar speaks of the weekly prayer meeting, at which, “as the events of our Church’s history became more and more solemnising, we used to speak of them and pray over them. This prepared the people in some measure for the events that followed.” †

So far as the ministrations of the pulpit were concerned, there seems to have been little of what has been called preaching to the times, but as public attention was more and more roused, it became impossible to avoid all reference to passing events. For the most part this seems to have been quietly and calmly done, as in the case of Dr. Lorimer, of Glasgow. “In regard to preparations for the Disruption, I am disposed to account the circumstance of my having for some time before been lecturing

\* Dis. Mss. xx. p. 2.

† Dis. Mss. xxi. p. 1.

through the Acts of the Apostles as useful to myself and congregation in the prospect. Thus the essential principles of a Church of Christ, the heroic spirit of the early Apostles and teachers, in contending with the encroachments of civil authority, and various important lessons for the ministers and people, were brought out in a quiet way, without any *direct* allusion to our own great controversy. The hearers, I have no doubt, saw and made the application for themselves.\*

In other cases the reference was more distinctly stated. Mr. Thomson, of Muckhart, as clerk of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, was from the first in the thick of the fight. Yet, "personally," he says, "strife and dissension was always something from which I shrank—over-sensitively shrank. While some of my brethren had held meeting after meeting, . . . I had contented myself with merely circulating tracts. This state of matters had continued till near the end of 1842, when, for the greater part of a week, I could fix on no subject on which I might discourse to my people on the Sabbath. I turned over in my mind text after text, but I felt that I could not break ground at all. Friday passed over, and it was still the same. Saturday forenoon passed, . . . until about seven o'clock in the evening, and I was concluding that I must take up some old sermon, which I was very unwilling to do. . . . In these circumstances, in almost hopelessly turning over the Bible, the book of Daniel opened before me, and it occurred to me that even yet I might obtain some fresh and profitable materials in Daniel's conduct. . . . The subject with great rapidity opened itself before me with an unusual vividness; and (to me) in an incredibly short space of time, the whole materials of the discourse were collected and arranged. I saw it was to lead me to a full explanation of our position, duty, and prospects, whether as office-bearers or as individuals, in reference to our present difficulties. I was disposed to shrink from it. I felt, however, completely shut up to it, and was impressed with the feeling that it was the call of God; and after some little struggle at thus throwing myself into the field of controversy, I proceeded with the preparation of the discourse. I was led, *first*,

\* Dis. Mss. i. p. 2.

to advert to the snare or temptation in the way of the prophet, to obey man rather than God, or evil, apparently, would be the consequence: the loss of station, power, influence—ruin, utter ruin; *secondly*, his conduct under temptation—calmly, resolutely, without hedging, without hesitation, without hankering, doing his duty; and *thirdly*, the consequences that resulted from the line of conduct he followed—the trial not altogether averted—the triumphant issue out of it—the ruin brought on his enemies, and, ultimately, the declarative glory of God greatly promoted. All this I was led to apply to the circumstances of the Church with considerable enlargement and solemnity of mind, and never, perhaps, did I see my people more solemnised and deeply impressed. From that time, I believe, may be dated the determination of many of them to cast in their lot with us.”\*

\* Dis. Mss. xxviii. pp. 3-5.

### III. NON-INTRUSION CONFLICT.

HERE it may be right to recount briefly the leading events of the conflict, and to point out the great principles which came to be involved.

In 1834, the Church resolved that her Christian people should have an effective voice in the calling of their pastors. On every vacancy the wishes of the congregations were to be effectually considered. This had, indeed, from the first, been the principle of the Church of Scotland, and it was still part of her constitution, according to the opinion of the highest legal authorities who were consulted, among others the Crown lawyers for the time. And so the Act on Calls—the Veto Act—was passed by the Church in the full belief that it was in accordance with the mind of Christ, was legally within her powers,\*

\* The highest legal authorities in England were as decided as those in Scotland. The day after the Veto Act was passed, Lord Campbell (then Sir John Campbell) addressed a meeting in Edinburgh, and gave his opinion in explicit terms: "I rejoice to think that not many hours since a law has gone forth from the General Assembly which may have, under the blessing of Providence, the effect of reforming the Church of Scotland, and bringing it back to the standard of its former purity, and removing from it every objection and complaint. By a majority of 46 last night Lord Moncreiff's motion was carried."—Quoted in *Witness*, 13th April, 1842. A few weeks afterwards Lord Brougham, in the House of Lords, took occasion to say: "The late proceedings in the General Assembly have done more to facilitate the adoption of measures which shall set that important question [Patronage] at rest, upon a footing advantageous to the community, and that shall be safe and beneficial to the Establishment, and in every respect desirable, than any other course that could have been taken."—*Mirror of Parliament*. These statements are not quoted here for the purpose of comparing what the learned Lords

and would conduce to the best interests of the people. Unacceptable ministers were no longer to be thrust on unwilling congregations.

It was in the autumn of that same year (1834), that the important parish of Auchterarder, pleasantly situated at the foot of the Ochils, became vacant, and Lord Kinnoul, the patron, on the 14th of October, presented to the living, Mr. Robert Young, a preacher of the Gospel. The people had the usual opportunity of testing his ministerial qualifications, but their opinion was so adverse, that out of a population of 3000, only two individuals, Michael Tod and Peter Clark, could be found to express approbation by signing the call. Five-sixths of the congregation, on the other hand, came forward solemnly to protest against his settlement. The Church, accordingly, found that they could not proceed to his ordination at Auchterarder, and the patron was requested to make another appointment.

Unfortunately, this was not done. Lord Kinnoul and his presentee resolved to carry the case into the Civil Courts, and after the usual preliminary delays, the pleadings began in November, 1837. On the 8th of March, the sentence of the Court was pronounced adverse to the Church and the Christian people. It was decreed that in the settlement of pastors the Church must have no regard to the feelings of the congregation. The trials of the presentee must be proceeded with in order to ordination, just as if the refusal of the people had not been given.

To ward off, if possible, from the Established Church the consequences of this decision, the case was appealed to the House of Lords, where the pleadings were heard in March, 1839, and the decision given on 2nd May of that year. The sentence of the Scottish Court was confirmed. The wishes of Christian congregations were to be considered of no value in any way, and Lord Brougham, in order to make his meaning

then *said* with what they afterwards *did*—though, certainly, the contrast is sufficiently striking. The reader is merely asked to observe what good reason the Church had to believe that the Veto Act was within her competency when such authorities were so profuse in their congratulations, without once hinting a doubt as to the legality of the course that had been taken.

plain, introduced a simile which attracted much attention in Scotland. Alluding to the fact that when the Sovereign of Britain is crowned in Westminster Abbey, one of the coronation ceremonies is the appearance of a champion on horseback, his Lordship remarked that as no one could suppose that the recalcitration of the champion's horse could invalidate the act of coronation, so the protest of a reluctant congregation against an unacceptable presentee would be equally unavailing. The solemnly declared judgment of a Christian congregation would have as little value as the kick of the champion's horse.

Such a decision, so explained, was sufficiently startling; but as if to make the matter yet more plain, the case of Auchterarder was followed by those of Lethendy and Marnoch.\*

At Lethendy the people had rejected Mr. Clark, the presentee, an unhappy man, who subsequently gave himself up to drunkenness. The patron and the Presbytery had agreed to settle, and actually did settle, another preacher in the pastoral charge; but Mr. Clark dragged the Presbytery into the Court of Session, when certain proceedings took place to which we shall afterwards refer.

The case of Marnoch, Strathbogie, deserves special attention. It was in 1837 that the vacancy occurred, and Mr. Edwards, a preacher of the Gospel, was presented to the living. For three years he had officiated in the church as assistant to the former minister, and the parishioners knew him only too well—so well, that only one man, Peter Taylor, the innkeeper, signed his call, while six-sevenths of the congregation actively opposed, his settlement. In May, 1838, he was set aside by the Church.

As in the former cases, Mr. Edwards appealed to the Civil Courts, and in June, 1839, a decision was given to the same effect as before. No regard was to be had to any opinions or feelings of the parishioners.

\* It must not be inferred from these cases that the veto was often exercised. Patrons, for the most part, were careful; and of the 150 vacancies which took place during the five years following 1834, it is stated that there were about 140 where the settlements were harmonious. Even the adversaries of the law began to praise it. The people were not willing generally to object, unless the reasons were supposed to be strong.

At Marnoch, however, a new feature came into view. The majority of the Presbytery belonged to that party of Moderates in the Church who agreed with the Civil Courts in wishing to retain the power of intruding presentees on unwilling congregations; and so, when the Court of Session ordered the settlement of Mr. Edwards to go forward, they readily lent themselves to the work. The supreme Courts of the Church were obliged to interfere, and this they did in the most decisive way. At the rising of the Assembly in 1839, the Commission of that Court expressly prohibited the Presbytery of Strathbogie from taking any steps towards the settlement of Mr. Edwards. It soon appeared, however, that the majority of that Court were resolved to ignore the prohibition; and this having been formally brought before the Commission at its next meeting, the Moderate majority of the Presbytery were suspended from their office as ministers of the Church, and prohibited from all acts, ministerial or judicial. This was done because they would give no promise to refrain from the intrusion of Mr. Edwards, and because the Church was resolved to protect the people from such intrusion.

It might have been expected that ministers of the Gospel, who had at their ordination vowed obedience to their ecclesiastical superiors, would have respected their vows. But their desire to obey the Court of Session, and carry out the forced settlement, prevailed. In breach of their sacred engagements, they resolved to meet at Marnoch on the 21st of January, 1841; and the striking scene which then took place will not soon be forgotten.

The snows of mid-winter lay deep on the ground, but when the seven Strathbogie ministers met at the church, 2000 people were gathered around and within it. No sooner had the pretended Presbytery taken their places than a solemn protest was handed in by the parishioners against the deed that was about to be done. "We earnestly beg you . . . to avoid the desecration of the ordinance of ordination under the circumstances; but if you shall disregard this representation, we do solemnly, and as in the presence of the great and only Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, repudiate and dis-

own the pretended ordination of Mr. Edwards, and his pretended settlement as minister of Marnoch. We deliberately declare that, if such proceedings could have any effect, they must involve the most heinous guilt and fearful responsibility in reference to the dishonour done to religion, and the cruel injury to the spiritual interests of a united Christian congregation." Having delivered this protest, it was intimated the people would leave them to force a minister on the parish, with scarcely one of the parishioners to witness the deed.

"The scene that followed was indeed touching and impressive. In a body the parishioners rose, and, gathering up the Bibles" which some of them had been wont to leave, for long years, from Sabbath to Sabbath in the pews, they silently retired. "The deep emotion that prevailed among them was visible in the tears which might be seen trickling down many an old man's cheek, and in the flush, more of sorrow than of anger, that reddened many a younger man's brow. 'We never witnessed,' said an onlooker,\* 'a scene bearing the slightest resemblance to this protest of the people, or approaching in the slightest degree to the moral beauty of their withdrawal; for, stern though its features were, they were also sublime. No word of disrespect or reproach escaped them; they went away in a strong conviction that their cause was with the Most Powerful, and that with Him rested the redress of all their wrong. Even the callous-hearted people that sat in the pew, the only pew representing *intrusionism* and forced settlements, were moved—they were awed; and the hearts of some of them appeared to give way. "Will they all leave?" we heard some of them whispering. *Yes; they all left, never to return* until the temple is purified again, and the buyers and sellers—the traffickers in religion—are driven from the house of God. **THEY ALL LEFT.**"†

In this way it was that the course of events did more than anything else to open men's eyes to the great principle of Non-intrusion. During the whole of the Church's history it had been held that the call of the people was essential before a

\* Mr. Troup, of the *Aberdeen Banner* newspaper.

† *Ten Years' Conflict*, ii. 193.

minister could be settled. The congregation must invite before the Presbytery could ordain. Here were cases, however, one after another, in which the parishioners were virtually unanimous in their opposition to the presentee. Was the call, then, to be treated as a mockery? Were the Michael Tods and the Peter Taylors of Scotland to overbear the whole Christian people of united parishes? Was it to be tolerated that the members of Christian congregations must submit to have obnoxious presentees forced on them? Surely it is not to be wondered at that so large a body of the ministers and members of the Church should have felt that these proceedings could not be in accordance with the mind of Christ, and should have determined that in such settlements they must at all hazards refuse to take part.

#### IV. THE STRUGGLE FOR SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE.

AT this point, however, there came into the field the still more formidable question of Spiritual Independence, which was destined to act with such decisive effect on the issues of the conflict. As Spiritual Independence is the distinctive principle on which the Free Church has taken her stand before the country, it is right that we should retrace the course of events, and mark the steps by which the great truth on this subject was brought into prominence.

But there is one general explanation which seems to be called for at the outset. Many persons object altogether to Church Establishments on the ground that if the Church accept the pay of the State, she must, in some degree, yield her spiritual authority to be controlled by the State. On behalf of the Church of Scotland this was all along resolutely denied. The Church, though allied to the State, was in this honourable position, that she had the aid and support of Government in all Christian work, while she retained her uncontrolled spiritual freedom, and independence of action. This view Dr. Chalmers proclaimed in London, amid the universal applause of all our leading public men, both in Church and State, so late as 1838. "It should never be forgotten, that in things ecclesiastical, the highest power of our Church is amenable to no higher power on earth for its decisions. It can exclude, it can deprive, it can depose, at pleasure. External force might make an obnoxious individual the holder of a benefice, but there is no external force in these realms that could make him a minister of the Church of Scotland. There is nothing which the State can do to our independent and indestructible Church, but strip her of her temporalities : *nec tamen consumebatur* : she would remain a Church notwithstanding, as strong as ever in the props of her

own moral and inherent greatness. And though shrivelled in all her dimensions, by the moral injury inflicted on many thousands of families, she would be at least as strong as ever in the reverence of her country's population. She was as much a Church in her days of suffering as in her days of outward security and triumph—when a wandering outcast with nothing but the mountain breezes to play around her, and nought but the caves of the earth to shelter her—as now when admitted to the bowers of an Establishment. The magistrate might withdraw his protection, and she cease to be an Establishment any longer, but, in all the high matters of sacred and spiritual jurisdiction, she would be the same as before. With or without an Establishment, she, in these, is the unfettered mistress of her doings. The King, by himself or his representative, might be the spectator of our proceedings, but what Lord Chatham said of the poor man's house is true in all its parts of the Church to which I have the honour to belong: 'In England every man's house is his castle.' Not that it is surrounded with walls and battlements, it may be a straw-built shed. Every wind of heaven may whistle round it, every element of heaven may enter it; but the king cannot—the king dare not."\*

Now, what really brought about the Disruption was the fact that the civil authorities of the country adopted and enforced the opposite view, holding, with those advocates of disestablishment, that Government connection infers civil control over the Church in her own proper functions. At the very crisis of the contest, on the 11th of August, 1842, Lord Campbell, in the

\* Nine bishops of the Church of England attended the lecture from which the above extract is taken. An American traveller—the Rev. Dr. Clark—who was present, dwells with delight on the sight of so many dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, &c., in the audience. Dr. Chalmers was seated at a table while reading the lecture, but at the more emphatic passages he rose to his feet, the audience in their enthusiasm rising with him, "waving their hats above their heads, and breaking into tumultuous approbation." Dr. Begg was beside him on the platform, and states that in delivering the above passage, the words, "the king cannot—the king dare not," were uttered in accents of prophetic vehemence . . . and were responded to by a whirlwind of enthusiasm, which was probably never exceeded in the history of eloquence.—Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, iv. 38, 39.

House of Lords, spoke the mind of the Judges :\* “ While the appellants remain members of the Establishment, they are, in addition to their sacred character, public functionaries appointed and paid by the State ; and they must perform the duties which the law of the land imposes upon them. It is only a voluntary body, such as the Relief or Burgher Church in Scotland, self-founded and self-supported, that can say they will be entirely governed by their own rules.”†

No less clearly did Sir Robert Peel state the views held at the time by the statesmen of the country in the year following the Disruption : “ I think it of the greatest importance that the *spiritual* authority of the Church should be restrained, as it is restrained and made *subordinate* to Parliament.”

These statements were not the mere unguarded utterances of the moment ; they really embodied a theory definitely held, and carried out, as the only theory on which the Church of Scotland could be continued as an Establishment. But how utterly repugnant such views were both to the ministers and laymen of our country need not be said. They held, as their fathers had done, that no Church had the right, for any earthly consideration, to barter away that sacred authority in things spiritual which Christ had given her in trust, and which she must retain and administer as responsible to Him alone.

What brought these opposite views into conflict was the question as to forming the pastoral tie in such cases as Auchterarder. When the Judges decided, as we have seen, that unacceptable ministers must be forced on unwilling parishes, it followed that the Church must ordain them, for not otherwise could they get the living. The views of the court therefore were decided. The Church must go on to examine Mr. Young with a view to his settlement—*i.e.*, his ordination. The Church replied, that she had already ascertained there was a fatal bar to ordination. It was in vain that the Lords of Session decreed the refusal of the people to be no obstacle. The Church held

\* *Witness* Newspaper, 13th August, 1842.

† It ought to be observed that this view of the freedom of Non-conformist Churches is *practically* the same with that which was adopted by the Court of Session in *finally* deciding the Cardross Case, in 1863.

that to ordain a minister over a congregation who refused him would be to desecrate the ordinance and sin against the mind of Christ.

And what, then, was to be done? At once the question arose—HAD THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, BECAUSE ESTABLISHED, LOST THE RIGHT TO BE GUIDED BY HER OWN CONSCIENTIOUS CONVICTIONS ON A MATTER SO OBVIOUSLY SPIRITUAL AS THE FORMING OF THE PASTORAL TIE? Men stood forth at once to repudiate the idea. The Spiritual Independence of the Church was proclaimed. The fact was appealed to, that in her Standards, ratified by the State, it was written as plainly as words could express it, that the Church Courts were supreme in things spiritual, as surely as the Civil Courts in things civil. The sole Headship of Christ, His Crown-rights as Redeemer, the duty of undivided allegiance to Him, became the watchwords of a momentous struggle. But though the point at issue thus inevitably involved questions of the deepest sacredness, yet the matter itself was plain and simple. Were the Civil Courts, on account of the stipend, entitled to put a force on the conscience of the Church in such a thing as the forming of the pastoral tie? Must she, at their bidding, break through what she held to be the law of her Divine Master? Unlike the Church of Rome, she made no claim to infallibility—only that, having done her best to ascertain her duty to Christ, she must be allowed, in this spiritual matter, faithfully to follow out her convictions. Unlike the Church of Rome, she pretended to no right to impose her views on the Civil Courts, or to interfere with their independent jurisdiction. It lay with them to judge and dispose of all civil interests which might be involved. But the responsibility of things spiritual, which she had herself to carry out, must be left in her hands.

This was the whole claim of the Church to Spiritual Independence; and surely it is not to be wondered at if men held that no secular judge ought to have the power to force the conscience of the Church in things spiritual.

To the sacredness of this principle the Scottish mind has all along from of old been keenly alive. It surprised Bishop Burnet and his friends to find in Scotland "a poor commonalty

capable to argue upon points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion." It has astonished many a reader to find Andrew Melville, in the previous century, at the Scottish Court, boldly confronting his sovereign with the declaration: "I must tell you there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of this commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." Of our martyrs not a few suffered imprisonment and death with that very confession on their lips. And here, amidst the keen contendings of the Ten Years' Conflict, the same truth was once more coming to the front, and that with such resistless power as ultimately at the Disruption to rend asunder Church and State.\*

With this general explanation, we return to the course of events; for it was only by the hard logic of actual facts that, step by step, the truth as to spiritual independence was brought up and forced anew practically on the mind of the Church.

So early as 1838 there were signs of what was coming. In deciding the Auchterarder case, not only had it been broadly stated from the bench that the Church of Scotland was the *creature of the State*, but the general principles of law on which the Court proceeded were felt to have struck a heavy blow at her spiritual liberties. Men took alarm. Within two months the General Assembly was to meet; and at once, from all parts of the country, overtures were sent up calling on that Court to stand firm. And very remarkably was that appeal responded to, when Dr. R. Buchanan presented himself on the floor of the

\* It may be worth while to give a sentence from John Welsh, of Ayr, the son-in-law of John Knox. From his prison at Blackness he wrote the Countess of Wigton, in 1605: "These two points—*first, That Christ is the Head of His Church; secondly, That she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction except Christ's*—these two points, I say, are the special cause of our imprisonment, being now convicted as traitors for the maintaining thereof."—History of Mr. John Welsh, Wodrow Soc. Select Biographies, vol. i. p. 23. What else than this did the Free Church assign in 1843 as the ground of the Disruption?

Assembly to move the Independence Resolutions, and take his destined place in the councils of the Church. "Spiritual independence," he showed, "was familiar to the mind of Scotland, inscribed not unfrequently, in characters of blood, on many of the brightest and most memorable pages of our ecclesiastical history. Like some ancient banner which had been borne in triumph through many a hard-fought field, it hung, honoured and venerated, within our Church's armoury." But there were indications that the time had come when we should be "shaking the dust from its folds, and flinging it again abroad to the winds of heaven." Thus the memorable debate of 23rd May was opened, and it ended in a resolution giving no uncertain sound. By a decisive majority the Assembly declared that the supremacy and sole headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the spiritual jurisdiction which depends thereon, "they will assert, and at all hazards defend, by the help and blessing of that great God who in the days of old enabled their fathers, amid manifold persecutions, to maintain a testimony even to the death for Christ's kingdom and crown."

During the year which followed, the House of Lords (May, 1839) gave their decision, already referred to, in the Auchterarder case; and on that occasion there had been some remarkably plain speaking. Sir Frederick Pollock, counsel for the Church, had thought it right to intimate to their Lordships that if their decision were adverse, it could not be complied with in its spiritual effects; and Lord Brougham, when decree was pronounced, referred to this statement: "My Lords, it is indecent to suppose any such case. You might as well suppose that Doctors' Commons would refuse to attend to a prohibition from the Court of Queen's Bench; you might as well suppose that the Court of Session, when you remit a cause with orders to alter the judgment, would refuse to alter it." His Lordship, like all who hold Erastian views, had forgot the difference between the civil and the spiritual, the allegiance due to Cæsar and the allegiance due to God.

Within a fortnight, however, the General Assembly again met, and that distinction was held forth before the country by one to whom all men gave heed. A resolution, moved by Dr.

Chalmers, was passed by a triumphant majority, pledging the Church implicitly to obey the Civil Courts in all matters of civil interest, but firmly refusing their control in things spiritual.

A collision was now inevitable. The Church would loyally support the authority of the judges in their own civil department, but in a spiritual matter like the settlement of a pastor—*i.e.*, ordination—she could bow to no authority but the law of her Lord. In the years that followed, it was in vain that this position was assailed from the bench by decision after decision, and interdict after interdict. The Church had taken her ground, and with unswerving fidelity, amid conflicts and sacrifices, she was enabled to hold it to the end.

The first testing case was that of Lethendy, where the Presbytery of Dunkeld found themselves within the grasp of the Court of Session, and placed as culprits at the bar. Mr. Clark, the presentee, as already stated, had proved unacceptable to the people, owing to his preaching, and for other reasons. He had been set aside, and the patron had presented another in his room, Mr. Kessen, whom the people welcomed, and the Presbytery were preparing to ordain. Meanwhile, Mr. Clark stepped forward to claim what he called his rights, applied to the civil judges, and obtained an interdict prohibiting the Presbytery from proceeding to ordain Mr. Kessen. In consequence of this, the Church resolved to abandon all claim to the fruits of the benefice, leaving these to be disposed of between Mr. Clark and other parties as the civil judges might think right; but in regard to ordination to the cure of souls, that was a spiritual matter which the Church was bound to care for. The interdict was disregarded, and Mr. Kessen ordained.

No sooner had this been done than a summons was issued against the Presbytery, and they were brought to the bar of the Civil Court, June 14, 1839. The scene has been depicted by the hand of Hugh Miller:—"In front, elevated on their bench, clothed in their robes of human authority, and invested with the stern *insignia* of human power, sat the judges, twelve in number. Opposite stood another Court—the Court of Christ—called to their bar for executing the spiritual functions conferred by the Lord Jesus on His Church. . . . With a demeanour

touching from its perfect simplicity, which indeed characterised the bearing of them all, the Rev. Mr. Stirling, of Cargill, the senior minister, read a statement," to the effect that they appeared in obedience to the citation, because they were deeply impressed with the obligation of giving all honour and reverence to the judges of the land ; disclaiming any intention of disrespect to the Court in what they have done. But in ordaining to the office of the holy ministry, and in admitting to the pastoral charge, to which, in their proceedings complained of, they had strictly limited themselves, they acted in obedience to the superior Church judicatory, to which, in matters spiritual, they were subordinate, and to which at ordination they had vowed obedience. "It is commonly understood that five of the judges voted in favour of the sentence of imprisonment, and six for the more lenient measure of rebuke, and that the Lord President did not vote at all."

They were accordingly rebuked in terms as strong as the Court could well employ, and a distinct intimation given, that should any breach of interdict again occur, the offenders would inevitably be sent to prison. How little effect this threat produced was soon to be seen. But in the meantime legal proceedings of another kind were taken. An action was raised by Mr. Clark, and the Presbytery were cast in damages and expenses to the extent of several thousand pounds. And so the first case of conflict came to an end—the Church making good her object in shielding and caring for the spiritual interests of her people, while the Court of Session had shown their power not only in rebukes and threats of imprisonment, but in fines so heavy that, looking to the income of Presbyterian ministers, they might, if help had not been contributed by friends, have proved oppressive and ruinous.

Far more formidable, however, was the next case of collision arising out of the settlement at Marnoch. We saw how, amid the snows of winter, the seven ministers of Strathbogie had ordained Mr. Edwards, and forced him on the parish. Expressly to prevent this, the Church had suspended them from the office of the ministry and all its sacred functions ; and hence it followed that other ministers had to be sent to preach and dispense

ordinances to the parishioners. Here, again, to the amazement of many, the Court of Session interposed by an interdict, making it an offence for ministers to preach the Gospel in those seven parishes. Such assumption of spiritual authority by civil judges was a new thing in Scotland since the days of the Stuarts. It had been believed that at common law there was freedom for any minister of any denomination in any part of the country to preach the Gospel to those who chose to hear him; and men opened their eyes when the Court of Session were found laying the Word and ordinances of God under civil interdict.

On the part of the ministers so prohibited there was, of course, only one thing to be done, and this has been well described by Dr. Guthrie, one of the first on whom the prohibition fell:—“In going to preach in Strathbogie,” he said, “I was met by an interdict from the Court of Session—an interdict to which as regards civil matters, I gave implicit obedience. On the Lord’s day, when I was preparing for divine service, in came the servant of the law, and handed me an interdict. I told him he had done his duty, and I would do mine. The interdict forbade me, under penalty of the Calton Jail, to preach in the parish churches of Strathbogie. I said, The parish churches are stone and lime, and belong to the State; I will not intrude there. It forbade me to preach the Gospel in the school-houses. I said, The school-houses are stone and lime, and belong to the State; I will not intrude there. It forbade me to preach in the churchyard. I said, The dust of the dead is the State’s; I will not intrude there. But when the Lords of Session forbade me to preach my Master’s blessed Gospel and offer salvation to sinners anywhere in that district under the arch of heaven, I put the interdict under my feet, and I preached the Gospel.”\*

The effect of this on the surrounding district was very great. “I recollect,” says Mr. Dewar, of Fochabers, “the Sabbath morning when the interdict was served on Dr. Guthrie in Fife-Keith. I called at his lodgings on my way from Botriphnie to preach to my own congregation. During the short time I was in the room a messenger was sent to him by some person

\* Memoir of Dr. Guthrie, vol. ii. p. 18.

who wished to see him. He returned immediately, held up the interdict in his hands, and I shall never forget the indignation that flashed in his eye while he exclaimed, 'No interdict shall prevent me from preaching the blessed Gospel of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' . . . He preached that week, night after night, to crowded audiences in several parishes in Strathbogie. There was intense excitement when, at the conclusion of his discourses, he held up the interdict, and declared that at all hazards, and whatever the consequence might be, he would proclaim the everlasting Gospel to his fellow-men." \*

The whole district of Strathbogie was at that time in a state which none who witnessed it can ever forget, and the effects were felt all over Scotland. As time went on the ministerial supplies had to be drawn from all different quarters of the Church. And it naturally followed that, as the ministers went down, a feeling of personal concern was roused in their congregations, and spread from parish to parish, when they knew that a threat of imprisonment was hanging over their pastor.

This was seen, for example, at Ruthwell, on the extreme south of Scotland, when the venerable Dr. Duncan, then Moderator of the General Assembly, went north to Strathbogie. During the earlier stages of the Church conflict his people had been somewhat apathetic. "The first incident that seemed really to pierce the heart of the parish was when" he "was invited to proceed to Strathbogie to supply for a time one or two of the parishes whose ministers had been, for contumacy, suspended. The emotion and anxiety were very great, for they understood that he went, having professed his willingness, if interdicted, to pay the forfeit of disobedience, though it should be imprisonment. . . . When, instead of any such extreme measure, they learned that the legal officer, who followed him to a country inn, was so ashamed of his mission that he could hardly muster courage to execute it; † and that in all places he found a hungering after the good news of salvation, we were all filled

\* Dis. Mss. xliv. p. 4, Rev. D. Dewar.

† "The act was performed with downcast looks and stammered apologies, as by one ashamed of his office."—Memoir of Dr. H. Duncan, p. 274.

with a lively joy. . . . He himself was never more refreshed in his ministry than by his visit to that enlivened region. . . . When he came home to Ruthwell his lively prayers and interesting narratives of the state of souls in Strathbogie refreshed us all." \*

The reader, however, will best understand the experience of the ministers who were engaged in this service by our giving the narrative of Mr. Wood, of Elie, then of Westruther. He had travelled north over night, and after arriving at Huntly, he says: "I was engaged with my toilet, when a gentleman was announced, who introduced himself as —; and almost the very first words he spake were: 'Have you got your name on your luggage? Excuse me,' he added, seeing that I was somewhat startled by his salutation, 'but there is no need that you should assist the officers in finding out your name.' The only article of my luggage which bore my name was a hat-box, which I produced, and this he immediately took in charge. Having completed my toilet, I rejoined —, who took me across to his own house. . . . 'You must understand,' said he, as we crossed the street, 'there are two inns. The one out of which we have come is the Non-intrusion, and that other one is the Moderate inn. And there,' pointing to an individual in a shabby black coat, the pockets of which were evidently distended by papers, who was pacing up and down on the flagstones, 'there is the messenger-at-arms waiting to serve the interdicts. You have no idea,' he added, 'of the length to which the Moderates are going, in order to obtain the names of the ministers. We found our servant-girl listening at the back of the door of our sitting-room for this purpose. No doubt she was bribed.' . . .

"I dined at the inn with Dr. Duncan, of Ruthwell, who was returning from a fortnight's visit to one of the parishes, and who gave me some very interesting details of the religious awakening which seemed to have visited them.

"— had given me directions how to proceed to my destination. The inn pony was brought to the door, and when asked where I was going, in order to fill up the duty ticket, I told them to the country, according to arrangement. I then waited

\* Dis. Mss. xvi. p. 2.

a few minutes till I saw — on horseback at the foot of the street, and then mounted, and rode after him. Little more than an hour's ride brought us to a farm-house of one storey, consisting of a but and a ben, to the inmates of which, a middle-aged man and his sister, I was introduced as the minister that was to be with them for a fortnight.

“The parish of Cairnie is chiefly upland, and presented several features which were new and strange to me. With the exception of the portion of the high road to Elgin, which ran along the borders of it, I believe there was not a made road in the parish. . . . The harvest was got in upon sleds—*i.e.*, two long poles trailing behind a horse, and connected by a cross piece. Corn was carried to market, and lime fetched for farm purposes, on horseback. My host was a small farmer, who lived with his sister in a one-storey house—a but and ben, as I have said. They were godly people, connected, I think, with the Independents, but I remember the woman saying that they had sent word to their itinerant minister, ‘that he need not come the noo, for they had plenty of Gospel preaching.’ The arrangements of the house were of the most primitive kind. . . . No grate of any kind; the turf piled up in a heap on the hearth, which it required some skill to arrange. My kind hostess used to come in in the evening and pile the turf *secundum artem*, and after lingering about the room for a while, she would open the door and call to her brother, ‘Are ye no comin’ ben to have a crack wi’ the minister?’ and then they would both come and have a good long talk about many things. My heart was much moved when, years afterwards, I learned that my name was among the last words she spoke before her spirit took its flight for the realms of glory.

“Sunday, the 17th of May, was one of the stormiest days I was ever out in, and well it was that we had the use of a small building erected for a Mason lodge, where I preached to a good congregation from Acts ii. 41, and in the evening from John iii. 3.

“As I by no means intended to spend an idle week at Cairnie, I gathered a meeting of the most responsible men in the neighbourhood, to consider what it might be best to do. They

recommended diets of catechising, and I put all the arrangements into their hands. As a specimen of the work, I shall give an account of the proceedings on Monday. We were to have two meetings that day. A pony was provided for me, and after breakfast I set forth, accompanied by some of the neighbours to guide me to my destination, which was a large barn, belonging to a farm at the distance of a mile. I found it crammed to the very doors, and persons sitting even on the baulks of the roof. I soon got the young people gathered together, and put to them a few questions; but the greater part of the business was a lecture or running commentary of my own.

“Having finished my work in that place, I started, under the direction of my guides, for the place where the second meeting was to be held. As far as I recollect, the distance was about a couple of miles, and our procession was to me both novel and interesting. Some forty or fifty people accompanied me. One group would close round my pony and indulge themselves in conversation for a time, and then, falling back, would give way to another. Then, perhaps, some individual would make his or her way toward me with the words: ‘Eh! sir, there’s an auld man lying bedrid in yon cot-house, and naebody gangs near him to speak to him about his soul. Would ye no just gang in and see him for a minute or twa?’ Of course, the appeal could not be resisted, and the whole crowd stopped at the door, and my pony was held for me till I had gone in and spoken a few words, and prayed with him. This was repeated two or three times in the course of our journey. Our second diet of catechising was just like the first, and need not be particularly described. These meetings were held every day of the week except Friday, which was the day of the fair at Keith, and the most numerous-attended one was on Saturday, when nearly a hundred persons were present.

“I preached again on Sunday, the 24th May, from Job xxvii. 10 in the morning, and from 1 John ii. 15-17 in the afternoon. Next day I left, not having had an interdiction served on me, because the messenger who held them had never discovered my name. Nobody in the parish knew it, and I was among them simply as *the* minister that had come for a fortnight. I found

out afterwards that extraordinary pains had been taken to discover it, a person having actually been sent out to find where I had my linen washed ; but, as I had a sufficient supply with me, I had no need to employ a washerwoman, and so that plan failed. . . .

“ I had been so interested in the parish of Cairnie, that before leaving I had promised to return and dispense the sacrament. Accordingly, I went north by the Aberdeen boat on Tuesday the 28th July. As we approached Aberdeen, an old woman in a red cloak came up to me on the deck. ‘ Ye’ll be ane of the ministers that’s gaun to Strathbogie?’ said she. I signified that I was. She then told me of the deep interest she took in the whole matter, and her earnest desire to give her aid to the cause in any way that she could. ‘ An’ whaur will ye be ga’in when ye get to Aberdeen, for I’m thinkin’ ye’ll be a stranger there?’ I told her I was a stranger, and had no acquaintances in the city. On which she kindly offered me her hospitality for the night, and took me to her son’s house, a Mr. Rodger, one of Dr. M’Crie’s people. Next morning I started from Aberdeen, and arrived in due time at Cairnie, where I received a very warm welcome. Thursday was our Fast Day, and I had just finished breakfast, and was preparing to go down to our place of worship, when a messenger-at-arms appeared, accompanied by two witnesses, and served me with an interdict.

“ This interdict is now before me, having been carefully bound up with other papers, after having done good service in its day at many a non-intrusion meeting, and I think a sentence or two descriptive of it will not be amiss.

“ The document consists of forty-two quarto printed pages, each page signed by John Smith, the messenger-at-arms. It commences with an application to the Court of Session, rehearsing the whole proceedings of the General Assembly of 1840 towards the seven ministers of Strathbogie, and praying their lordships to suspend the resolutions and sentence of the General Assembly, to interdict the minority of the Presbytery, and the special commission appointed by the Assembly to co-operate with them, from acting on the said resolutions and sentence, and especially from appointing ministers or probationers to

preach or administer ordinances in the parishes of the complainers, and to 'interdict, prohibit, and discharge, all presbyteries and all ministers and probationers who by the aforesaid resolutions and sentence may be appointed or called upon to preach and administer ordinances within the parishes of the complainers.' Then follows a 'Statement of Facts,' giving a complete history of the Marnoch case from the date of the vacancy in that parish. It is worthy of notice that it appears from this Statement that the interdict as first granted on 20th December, 1839, was only against intruding into the churches, churchyards, or school-houses, and from using the church-bells; and that it was only on the 14th February that the Court, on a reclaiming petition from the seven ministers, altered the interlocutor of the Lord Ordinary (Murray), which had refused to go farther than the interdict already given, and granted the interdict *as craved*—that is to say, interdicted all ministers and probationers from intruding into the parishes of Strathbogie. This interdict had been before the meeting of the General Assembly, and the 'Statement' goes on to rehearse the whole proceedings of the Assembly, against which a renewal of the interdict was desired. Then follow eleven 'pleas in law.' I recollect that I had some difficulty in discovering from the document what thing it was that was forbidden. The last, or outside page, certainly intimated to me, by name, the 'interlocutor, note of suspension, and interdict, statement of facts, pleas in law, and appendix,' interdicting, prohibiting, and discharging me in terms thereof; but it was not till after some search that I discovered on the 41st page, in smaller type than all the rest of the document, the words: 'Edinburgh, 11th July, 1840. The Lords having advised the note of suspension and interdict, on report of Lord Ivory, pass the note, and grant the interdict as craved. (Signed) C. Hope, I.P.D.' So that the terms thereof were, that I should not preach nor administer ordinances within any of the seven parishes of Strathbogie.

"I put the interdict into my pocket, and walked down to the Mason lodge, where I preached to a large congregation from Zech. xii. 10. After sermon, I exhibited the interdict and

pointed out that though I recognised the authority of the Civil Court in regard to churches, churchyards, and school-houses, I never could acknowledge any right in the Court of Session to prohibit the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, and therefore I had not for one moment hesitated to break it.

“The hall or Mason’s lodge being too confined, we resolved to have the sacrament in the open air. A suitable meadow was secured. An immense block of granite with a flat surface was made the head of the table, and posts driven into the ground supported planks, which formed the remainder of the table and the seats. A slight tent was also erected for the protection of the speaker in case of bad weather. On Friday, I walked over to Grange and obtained the assistance of two elders for the Sabbath-day services. Saturday was occupied with divine service, when I preached from 1 John v. 1-3; with conversing with communicants for the first time, of whom there were a good many, and not all of them were young persons; and with completing the arrangements of the tent and tables.

“Sabbath, the 2nd day of August, was the communion Sabbath. The text of the action sermon was Heb. x. 13. I also fenced the tables, served three (the whole number), and gave the concluding address. Mr. Moncur, the probationer, who had by that time been permanently stationed at Cairnie, preached in the evening. The season was a very remarkable, and, as I believe, a profitable one. The people were deeply affected—many of them in tears. A good many grown-up people sat down at the table for the first time. Among these there were a grandmother and granddaughter, who sat side by side. The scene was the occasion of a good deal of curiosity among outsiders. As we came down to the place where we celebrated the communion, we could see the suspended parish minister, with a group around him, scanning the proceedings through a telescope over the wall of the manse garden; and I well remember that, while I was fencing the tables, the mail coach from the north to Aberdeen, passing along the highroad about a furlong off, and probably within reach of my voice, actually pulled up, and stood for about five minutes, the passengers looking with curiosity on

the strange scene. The services were closed on the Monday with a thanksgiving sermon from Gen. xviii. 19. On Tuesday I left by the mail for Aberdeen. It was blowing a hurricane (we had reason to be thankful that we had had a quiet Sunday), and I recollect that we had to walk the horses very carefully across the long bridge at Inverury, lest we should be blown over.”\*

It was a strange time in Scotland, when for many months the attention of the whole country was fixed on those seven parishes. A continuous supply of interdicts went down from Edinburgh; they were served on each minister as he arrived—so soon as his name could be ascertained—and invariably, without the least hesitation, they were broken. A state of things such as this was deeply to be regretted—was, indeed, without parallel among a law-abiding and loyal people like those of Scotland since the old persecuting times. But the same vital questions were again being stirred, the old fire was rising. The Civil Court had at last fairly “overshot the mark—it was Erastian over-much.” Broken interdicts were shown as common things all over the country, and the remarkable circumstance was, that, notwithstanding the distinct threat of imprisonment held out by the Court, neither the private parties nor the legal authorities ever ventured to put that threatened penalty in force.

Connected with this case, however, there were other and far more serious matters in reserve. At first, it seemed as if the seven ministers had intended to observe their ordination vows. On being suspended, they ceased the exercise of their ministry. But soon there came a change—they presented a formal application to the Civil Court, asking the secular judges to take off the spiritual sentence, and restore them to the exercise of their sacred functions. And this the Court actually professed to do by a formal decree. It was one of the startling decisions of that strange time when the civil judges assumed the power of restoring the sacred functions which the only competent spiritual authorities had taken away. But the grave ecclesiastical offence was not that the judges gave such a decision, but that the Church’s own sons, her ordained ministers, should have asked a Civil Court to exercise the power of the keys, so as to set aside

\* Dis. Mss. 1.

and overbear the spiritual authority which the Church holds from Christ. Had this been submitted to, it is obvious that all spiritual authority was laid prostrate at the feet of the Court of Session. The seven ministers, accordingly, for this offence, were put on trial. Slowly and reluctantly their case was gone into by the Church, as may be seen at various stages of the procedure. Every effort was made to prevail on them, as brethren, to withdraw from a position so false. The case was most painful in itself, and in the results to which it pointed. But, ultimately, all efforts to ward off the final issue were unavailing, and in the Assembly of 1841 they were deposed from the office of the ministry.

There is only one more of these leading cases requiring briefly to be noticed—that of Stewarton, which arose in 1840, though not decided till January, 1843. It had much to do with forcing on the Disruption.

The parish of Stewarton, in Ayrshire, was extensive and populous, and the Presbytery, anxious for the spiritual welfare of the people, proposed to have a portion of it attached *quoad sacra* to a Chapel of Ease, and put under the charge of an additional minister and kirk-session. Six years before, the Church, following many unchallenged precedents in her own history, had raised such chapels into *quoad sacra* parishes, leaving all civil interests connected with the old parochial arrangements unaffected, the only result being that the ministers were rendered truly Presbyterian, were put on a par with their brethren in Church Courts, and had kirk-sessions to aid them in their pastoral work. The immediate effect of the act had been very great. Nearly 200 churches at once rose over the land, not only in populous cities, but in extensive country districts, as at Latheron already referred to, where a parish with thirty miles of sea-board, and 320 square miles of area, instead of its one parish church, had five fully-equipped charges, each with its own minister, kirk-session, and school. It was blessed work for the great Master, into which Dr. Chalmers, Mr. M'Cheyne, and many men of kindred spirit had thrown their whole heart.

But on this field also the Church was now to be assailed,

and once more the Court of Session was called in to deal the blow. Certain heritors of Stewarton applied for an interdict. It could not be shown that any civil interests were infringed on; the Church had been careful to leave these where she found them. No civil law, not even the formidable Patronage Act of Queen Anne, had been touched. The whole action of the Church was confined to making more efficient provision for having her spiritual work carried out. But in spite of this fact, and of the masterly argument and protest of Lord Moncreiff, the interdict was granted. At a blow, more than 200 ordained Presbyterian ministers were stripped of one-half their sacred functions, more than 200 kirk-sessions were extinguished, and this was done by civil judges sitting in a secular court. Without any allegation that a single Act of Parliament had been infringed on, the Lords of Session wrested from the Church the power of administering in such matters the spiritual affairs belonging to her as a Church of Christ.

How the decision was received may be seen from the speech of Dr. Chalmers, when immediately afterwards, addressing the Commission of Assembly, he exclaimed, "It is not on one point, but on all that we are assailed. . . . The ancient wall of circumvallation that has protected us in former days has all been broken down."\*

And not less decisive was the language of Dr. Begg, who was prepared to accept the judgment in the Stewarton case as of itself enough to drive the evangelical majority out of the Establishment—"This judgment is deserving of the most solemn and serious consideration of the Church, as one of the most violent attempts which has yet been made to overturn the foundations of our Church. Our foundation principle is Presbyterianism—that all our ministers are equal—that every minister is bound to rule as well as teach—and it appears to me that the Civil Courts have no more right to subvert that principle than they have to overturn the whole constitution of the Church; or rather, this is the constitution which the Civil Courts are now attempting to overturn.

\* *Witness* Newspaper, 1st February, 1843.

\* \* \* \* \*

“But whatever the Government may do or not do, we have a plain and clear course of duty to follow—to stand upon our Presbyterian principles and say, If you drive these men out of the Church you will drive us also. We will go with them. They shall not be separated from us, nor will we allow the Civil Courts to separate those whom Christ has united, or to separate rule from teaching in Christ’s house. There is a formidable prospect as well before the Church as before the kingdom of Scotland. Our leaving the Establishment I reckon to be a very insignificant matter as compared with what is to come after.”\*

While a struggle such as this was going on, the feelings of both parties, as might have been expected, began to get embittered. Hard sayings came from the bench, little in keeping with the usual judicial calmness of the place; while on the other side bold words were fearlessly spoken, according to the use and wont of Scottish Churchmen since the days of Knox. Obviously, things were getting dangerous, and if the conflict went on in this fashion, the most disastrous results must be looked for.

It was the fear of this that had led to certain private attempts, so early as 1840 and 1841, to come to a common understanding. On the one hand, Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Hope, Dean of Faculty, and on the other, Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Candlish, sought to reach some common ground on which the controversy might be arranged. The direct result was unfortunate, and yet, when these negotiations ceased, the Church was not without reasons for thankfulness, both because of what had been escaped from, and what had been gained.

There had been great danger of a compromise. The Veto law was to be repealed, and to this the friends of the Church would have willingly agreed, provided some other plan could have been found for securing the standing of the Christian people, and skilful lawyers and statesmen were exercising all their ingenuity in devising a way in which the Veto law was really

\* *Witness*, 28th January, 1843.

to be set aside, and yet the object of it substantially gained. The problem was found to be insoluble, and in the opinion of many it was well. Under all the specious appearances of agreement, there lay a real antagonism of principle—Erastianism against Spiritual Independence—and in the end it was surely best that such questions should be dealt with frankly and honestly, apart from all appearance of evasion.

And there was one other reason for thankfulness. In after days, when the great breach had actually taken place, the leading men who guided the counsels of the Church had the satisfaction of thinking that the most sincere desire had been manifested to go as far as, in honour, they could—to the extreme limit indeed—in the way of fair and reasonable concession to the views of their opponents. Even at the time the negotiations had one beneficial result. The favourite cry against the Church, which her adversaries were never tired of repeating, was that the whole movement was due to clerical ambition. The Church was merely grasping at power for herself. Mr. Hope, the Dean of Faculty, had made that the great theme of a bulky pamphlet, and year after year the secular press had kept incessantly ringing the changes on priestly love of power. It turned out that the measure which Lord Aberdeen pressed on their acceptance was designed to take the power from the people and give it to the Church. This, in the face of the country, she distinctly refused, insisting that her Christian people should have their rights fully preserved. In some quarters this announcement seems to have been received with surprise, more especially in the House of Peers, where some even of those opposed to the Church could not withhold a tribute of respect to her for the course which she had followed.

There is no need to dwell on the cases which began rapidly to multiply towards the close of the conflict. Hardly any step could be taken by the Church in which she was not obstructed by some interdict. When a minister was about to be deposed for theft, on the ground of a sentence acquiesced in by himself, an interdict came from the Court of Session to prevent his deposition. When a Presbytery was about to try a minister

on a charge of fraud and swindling, an interdict came to arrest the process. And the worst feature of these and similar interferences was, that they resulted logically from those general principles of law which had been deliberately adopted by the Court. Thus it was that, while the secular judges were invading the spiritual province, and subverting the authority of the Church, the minds both of ministers and people were opened, step by step, to the true meaning of spiritual independence, and men were made to feel the vital importance of the principles at stake.

When the meeting, therefore, of the Assembly of 1842 drew near, it was felt that some far more decisive step must be taken on the part of the Church. Accordingly, the Claim of Right, the most important document in the whole "Ten Years' Conflict," was prepared. It was drawn by Mr. Alexander Dunlop, to whom the Church was so deeply indebted, and after being urged on the Court by the eloquence of Dr. Chalmers, it was, by an overwhelming majority, adopted and passed. It consisted of a formal appeal to the Queen and Government of the country, narrating the grievances of the Church, and claiming, under the constitution of Scotland, a right to be protected from the encroachments of the Civil Court. The language was firm, but according to the admission of even hostile statesmen, it was calm and respectful. Addressing the Throne, the Church made a solemn demand for relief, accompanied by a no less solemn assurance, that if her claim were refused, she could no longer continue to discharge her functions within the Establishment.

For many months no notice was taken in high quarters of the appeal thus formally made, but as summer and autumn passed away, there were ominous signs of approaching danger.

In the House of Lords the final decision in the Auchterarder case was pronounced on the 9th of August. The Court found, on the application of Mr. Young, that he was entitled to damages—estimated by himself at £10,000—due from the Presbytery on account of their decision. It was a new state of things. Presbyteries were Courts known to and sanctioned by the constitution of the country, and hitherto it had been believed that, as jurymen in their box and judges on the bench

are exempted from actions for damages, even when found wrong in their decisions, so the members of Presbyteries were equally protected, and it became a question whether the Church could remain in this position, that when she was addressing herself to the solemn responsibilities connected with the ordination of a minister, she might have an action of damages for £10,000 hanging over her head.

There was yet more serious cause for alarm. Principal Macfarlane, Dr. Cook, and the Moderates as a party, resolved finally to make common cause with the deposed ministers of Strathbogie. There were among their number, indeed, those who, like Dr. Brunton, repudiated the idea of spiritual sentences being invalidated by the decisions of secular judges. But the party, as a whole, took their stand on the civil law, as entitling them to treat the spiritual sentence as a nullity. It was difficult to view this as anything else than a combination within the Church herself for the overthrow of that sacred authority which she held from Christ, her Head; and it was obvious that this attitude of the Moderates must lead to new and yet more formidable complications.

The surviving ministers of that time may still recall the feeling with which on every side the clouds were now seen to be gathering, and all the signs of a fatal crisis hurrying on. The principles for which it was their duty to contend were never felt to be more sacred, but perplexities were rising, the path of duty was getting dark, and in many a manse men were in a season of felt need, looking up to the great Master not only for grace to be found faithful, but for wisdom to "know what Israel ought to do."

## V. THE CONVOCATION.

IN these circumstances a suggestion was thrown out and eagerly welcomed, that all the ministers who had acted together during the conflict should meet at Edinburgh for mutual conference. Thirty-two fathers of the Church issued the invitation; traveling expenses were provided; the laity of Edinburgh opened their homes to receive the ministers, and the result was, that in the wintry days of November they came from all parts of Scotland, 474 in number, the largest Assembly of ministers which up to that time Edinburgh had ever seen. They were a band of brethren among whom one felt it was no common privilege to be allowed to take a place. A keen observer from the outside, Lord Cockburn, has testified that the whole chivalry of the Church of Scotland was in that Convocation, and there was one in their own ranks, Dr. James Hamilton, himself a "man greatly beloved," who with loving hand has sketched the gathering.

"When we looked at the materials of the meeting . . . we wished that those were present in whose power it lies to preserve to the Scottish Establishment all this learning and this worth. There was the chairman [Dr. Chalmers], who might so easily have been the Adam Smith, the Leibnitz, or the Bossuet of the day, but who, having obtained a better part, has laid economics, and philosophy, and eloquence on the altar which sanctified himself. There was Dr. Gordon, lofty in simplicity, whose vast conceptions and majestic emotions plough deeper the old channels of customary words, and make common phrases appear solemn and sublime after he has used them. There were Dr. Keith, whose labours in the Prophecies have sent his fame through Europe, and are yearly bringing converts into the Church of Christ; and Mr. James Buchanan, whose deep-

drawn sympathy, and rich Bible lore, and Christian refinement have made him a son of consolation to so many of the sons of sorrow. There were Dr. Welsh, the biographer and bosom friend of Thomas Brown ; Dr. Forbes, among the most inventive of modern mathematicians ; and Dr. Paterson, whose 'Manse Garden' is read for the sake of its poetry, and wisdom, and Christian kindness where there are no gardens, and will be read for the sake of other days when there are no manses. And there was Dr. Patrick Macfarlan, whose calm judgment is a sanction to any measure, and who, holding the richest benefice in Scotland, most appropriately moved the resolution that rather than sacrifice their principles they should surrender their possessions. And not to mention 'names the poet must not speak,' there were in that Assembly the men who are dearest of all to the godly throughout the land, the men whom the Lord has delighted to honour—all the ministers in whose parishes have been great revivals, from the Apostle of the North, good old Dr. Macdonald, whose happy countenance is a signal for expectation and gladness in every congregation he visits, and Mr. Burns, of Kilsyth, whose affectionate counsels and prayers made the Convocation feel towards him as a father, down to those younger ministers of whom, but for our mutual friendship, I could speak more freely."\*

It was on Thursday, the 17th of November, 1842, that this important meeting assembled in St. George's Church, where, after an hour spent in devotional exercises, Dr. Chalmers preached to an overflowing audience one of those sermons which once heard can never be forgotten. His text, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness," went straight to men's hearts. Frankly, and without disguise, he pointed to the darkness gathering round the Church's path of duty, and then broke forth in the confidence of assured faith as he spoke of the light promised to the upright.

The meetings which followed were held in Roxburgh Church, near the University. The proceedings were strictly private. Only ministers were present, and the whole arrangements were studiously made to facilitate the interchange of sentiment

\* Harp on the Willows, pp. 14, 15.

among brethren who had this in common, that all their earthly interests were at stake. Twice a-day the Convocation met, a considerable portion of the time at each diet being spent in prayer, with occasional intervals of praise. And thus men proceeded, as best they could, to look in the face the whole difficulties of their position.

On one point there was found from the outset to be complete agreement: For the Church to recede, or in any way abandon the ground she had taken up, was held at once to be impossible.

But while this was clear, there was yet considerable difference of opinion as to the course which ought actually to be taken. Some of the more ardent friends of Evangelism regarded the whole question as already settled, and wished at once to precipitate the Disruption, as if the only thing to be done was immediately to separate from the State. Others whose Church principles were not less decided shrank from such a course, proposing to remain in the Establishment, fighting the battle as hitherto inside the Church, and leaving it for the State to take the serious responsibility of breaking the tie and driving them out. It was on the evening meeting of the 18th that the whole differences of opinion on these and other points, more especially Patronage, came into view, and they were, it must be confessed, urged with sufficient keenness—so much so, indeed, that there arose in many minds no little anxiety as to the result. The prediction of the adversaries had on one point been signally falsified. The Convocation was to be a failure, they said, because so few would attend.\* But the adversaries had another ground of comfort in reserve. Even if they came together, said the *Times*, “We may safely leave the dissensions which already manifest themselves among the Non-intrusion party to humble the pride and overthrow the power of their leaders.”† Was this, then, going to be realised? One of the members has recorded his

\* Dr. Guthrie tells how Mr. Maitland (afterwards Lord Dundrennan) meeting Mr. Craufurd (Lord Ardmillan), assured him that the Convocation was to be “a complete failure. ‘What,’ said Craufurd, ‘would you call it a failure if two hundred were to attend? Would you call *that* a failure?’ ‘No,’ says Maitland, ‘but catch two hundred of them coming up for such a purpose.’”—Memoir of Dr. Guthrie, vol. ii. p. 44.

† Ten Years’ Conflict, vol. ii. p. 392.

impression that "altogether the tone of this evening was fitted to alarm and humble. To an adverse and reproachful eye it would present, indeed, nothing but conflicting views and irreconcilable feelings. Yet, to one who looked deeper, and with no partial bias, it might have, even now, been obvious that the confusion was not that of angry feud, but of honest and courageous freedom. There was union of purpose and mutual confidence among all. They saw eye to eye, and were not afraid to look each other in the face." At the same time there was much to show the need of prayer. "And to this duty were the brethren forthwith admonished with consummate tact, and touching pathos, and gracious success by Dr. Candlish. It was manifest that the speaker himself was peculiarly solemnised."\*

With what feelings men separated late on that evening may be seen from the journal of Dr. Landsborough: "Went to my lodgings full of fears. Prayed for union and heavenly wisdom. Awoke in the morning with a sigh." Next day he notes a change. "19th November.—Went to Convocation. Dr. Chalmers began the business. He seemed sent by the Lord in answer to prayer. The Spirit of the Lord seemed to breathe on the troubled waters. All became wonderful harmony and agreement."† Another has said: "It was the same Convocation that had met the previous evening, but how different its aspect and omen. . . . Light had broken, and order was restored. Suddenly the heavens became clear, and there was a great calm."‡

These feelings prevailed and deepened through the five succeeding days that the Convocation lasted. Men were obviously in earnest in seeking light, the difficulties of each course were conscientiously weighed, and ultimately there came to be substantial unity.

The first series of resolutions—passed almost unanimously—stated, as the previous Assembly had done, the only terms on which the Church could discharge her functions in connection with the State. To this declaration 423 ministers declared their assent on the spot, and the number was largely increased by subsequent adherences.

\* *Pres. Review*, January, 1843, pp. 584, 585.

† *Memoir*, p. 174.

‡ *Pres. Review*, January, 1843, p. 585.

This was well ; but what if the claims of the Church should be refused ? Looking to such an issue as all but certain, the Convocation felt it their duty to speak out in such terms that no blame should rest with them if, when the crisis came, men were taken by surprise. By a deliberate vote, a second series of resolutions was passed, in which they pledged themselves that if the claim for redress were rejected, they would “tender the resignation of those civil advantages which they can no longer hold in consistency with the free and full exercise of their spiritual functions.” It was during the second week that this decision was come to, when many of the members had already gone home ; but these resolutions were agreed to by 354 ministers, ultimately increased by adherents to the number of 480.

Before the Convocation closed, Dr. Chalmers unfolded his scheme for a Sustentation Fund, and recommended it with such eloquence that Dr. Nathaniel Paterson exclaimed, “The life-boat looked almost better than the ship.” It is believed that few, if any, members of the Convocation had the least idea of the far-seeing sagacity, worthy of the highest statesmanship, with which the plan was devised. Could they have known the actual results, their trial would have been comparatively light, but men only smiled as they listened with good-humoured incredulity to what seemed a visionary scheme. Their trust was in the promised care of Him whose word cannot fail.

The work was now over, but before closing they adopted unanimously a formal and solemn address to Government, which was to accompany the resolutions. They appointed a committee to send deputations throughout the country. It was further agreed, on the motion of Dr. Lorimer, of Haddington, to make the state of the Church a subject of special prayer, a fixed time being set apart for this purpose in all their manse each Saturday evening. A resolution was also passed appointing Dr. James Buchanan to draw up an address to the people of Scotland ; and this when it appeared was found to be written with all his well-known gracefulness of style and power of appeal, and was widely circulated over the country.

The last meeting was in public, and was held in Lady Glenorchy’s Church, where addresses were delivered stating the results.

And so men prepared to part, and go home to their parishes with the feeling that, however hopeless might be their appeal to Government, yet there was not only the unfailing promise of a gracious God to sustain them, but they had, throughout the Church, a great brotherhood of men like-minded with themselves, on whose unflinching steadfastness in the day of trial they could firmly rely. "The scene we witnessed when as a band of sworn brothers they stood up to close and seal their work with a hymn of thanksgiving, on the evening of the 24th November, in Lady Glenorchy's Church, we shall never forget. The solemn awe of eternity had fallen upon the vast congregation. And the brethren seemed as if a sacred host of chosen warriors, who just had . . . plighted their faith to one another, and were now prepared, even unto death, to follow the Captain of their salvation."\*

It may be well now to glance at the impressions which all this made on the minds of some who took part in it, as these are to be found in the Disruption Mss. Dr. Lorimer, of Glasgow, observes: "I was present, heard the whole discussions, and gave in my adhesion without any reservation. . . . My venerable father was in the chair of the Convocation on the memorable night, or rather morning, when the final resolutions were voted upon. It might be between two and three o'clock in the morning when Mr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, called the roll. I have ever felt the Convocation to have been the real Disruption of the ministers. I was encouraged by the effects of the Convocation on the country. Down to that moment there had been an ominous and most discouraging apathy. The decision and self-denial of the ministers first aroused their congregations."†

Mr. Robertson, of Gartly, one of the faithful minority in Strathbogie, who bore themselves so steadfastly through the battle of interdicts, mentions that he "hailed with delight the circular calling the Convocation." Describing the effect of Dr. Chalmers' opening sermon, he says it was attended "with such Divine wisdom and unction as to strengthen and support me in my principles; and I firmly believe that, to the great body of ministers who had the privilege to hear it, by God's blessing,

\* *Pres. Review*, January, 1843, p. 586.

† *Dis. Mss.* i. p. 3.

it 'created the spirit it described, and conveyed the light of which it showed the need.' . . . What with this and the spirit of prayer and supplication which was evidently poured out, I felt myself enabled to address the Convocation; . . . and I have to bless the Lord that what such an humble individual as I was enabled to say . . . had, from the circumstance of my advanced years and numerous family, contributed somewhat to nerve the courage of some weak and wavering spirits." \* Such was the good man's remembrance within four years of the event. A report of what he actually said was published immediately afterwards by one who was present: "I am advanced in life, with a family of twelve yet to be provided for. Above all, if I am driven from the Church I must leave my people; for not a foot of ground will I be allowed within the parish whereon to build a place of worship. Nevertheless, my family interests, my early associations, my people, whom I have tended so long, I am willing to surrender at the call of duty." †

The remark of another country minister, the Rev. R. Inglis, of Edzell, attracted notice at the time: "Some of my brethren have a difficulty in pledging themselves to go out, because of their numerous families; I merely wish to say that that is one of my reasons for resolving to make the sacrifice. I am the father of a young family; I shall have little to leave them, more especially if we are forced to give up our livings. But I want, at least, to leave them a good name—I wish all my children, when I am gone, to be able to say that they are the children of an *honest man*." ‡

\* Dis. Mss. xvii. p. 2.

† *Pres. Review*, January, 1843, p. 589.

‡ He died 19th January, 1876, and his copresbyter and friend, Mr. Nixon, of Montrose, after mentioning the difficulties which Mr. Inglis had in the education of his family, in consequence of the Disruption, adds: "It says much for the nobleness with which difficulties can be overcome, and the blessing that rests on the right rearing of children, that the parents of the children in the Free Manse of Edzell so reared theirs, that nine sons have gone out into the world, some to the most distant regions, and are not only making for themselves good outward positions, but as regards the bulk, if not the whole of them, are remembering and exemplifying the lessons taught them under the parental roof."—*Free Church Monthly Record*, 1st March, 1876.

“Mr. M'Cheyne was never absent from any of the diets of this solemn assembly. He felt the deepest interest in every matter that came before them ; got great light as to the path of duty in the course of the consultations ; and put his name to all the resolutions, heartily sympathising in the decided determination that, as a Church of Christ, we must abandon our connection with the State if our Claim of Rights were rejected. These eight days were times of remarkable union and prayerfulness. The proceedings from time to time were suspended till the brethren had again asked counsel of the Lord by prayer ; and none present will forget the affecting solemnity with which, on one occasion, Mr. M'Cheyne poured out our wants before the Lord.”\*

There were some whose enforced absence prevented their taking part in the consultations, but whose impressions may also be noted. Mr. Taylor, of Flisk, then of Grangemouth, thus records his experience : “Often has it been said that it was the inspiring influence of the public meetings which hurried on our ministers to take the steps which led to the Disruption. My own experience contradicts this. It was home thought and home reflection which regulated every step I had taken. I sought guidance from God, and ‘with His eye set on me, He gave me direction.’” After telling how he was one of those who, in the first instance, thought “that no step toward separation should be taken by the Church herself, but that, maintaining at once her principles and her position, she should leave the awful responsibility of disestablishing her upon the State,” he goes on to mention how he came to be convinced of the untenableness of this position, “and well has it been for the efficiency of our movement that, instead of wasting her energies in fruitless litigations, the Church was led at once to come out on the ground of her Protest.” In estimating the importance of the Convocation, he says, “the Rubicon was passed.”†

A similar case was that of Mr. M'Millan, minister of Kilmory, a parish in one of the secluded districts of the island of Arran. It is said he had not much turn or taste for the business of Church Courts, and at Kilmory could with difficulty have

\* Memoir, p. 154.

† Dis. Mss. xxxvii.

attended either Presbytery or Synod. Yet he was much interested in Church affairs, and the interest deepened as there was the prospect of a serious issue. He was unable, through bodily infirmities, to attend the Convocation, but he cheerfully appended his name to both series of resolutions. "I think," he says, writing to a friend at the time, "that the Church should accept of no measure whatever which leaves her at the mercy of the Civil Court, for it is perfectly evident that the Court of Session at present takes a kind of pleasure in opposing and oppressing the Evangelical party in the Church. . . . I have received a copy of the Memorial to Government. The concluding part of it is very solemn and pressing, and our rulers must be perfectly regardless of the real welfare of the nation, and of their own responsibility to God, if they dare to set it at nought."

## VI. APPEAL TO THE COUNTRY.

A GREAT step had now been taken. Men stood pledged, if there were no redress, to give up their livings, and abandon the Establishment. It may well be believed that, on returning to their parishes, there was no little anxiety as to what impression all this would make on their people. In many cases they left Edinburgh with the foregone conclusion, not only that their demands would be rejected in Parliament, but that they themselves would have to separate from their congregations, and to leave the country. Mr. Thomson, of Muckhart, says: "My hopes of success in the country districts were but small. The tenantry, by long-continued efforts on the part of the gentry, have, in the great majority of instances, in some districts been brought into a state of complete subserviency to their landlords in political matters; and I fear the pressure has been so long continued, that even in reference to ecclesiastical matters there would be submission too." \* After referring to other discouragements, he states:—"Under these circumstances, I have been seriously turning over in my mind whether I should fix on Australia or America as the scene of my future labours."

In regard to city congregations, Dr. Lorimer, of Glasgow, had similar misgivings: "It was impossible to hide from one's self (so we judged before the Disruption) that there would not be room in Glasgow for all who were certainly resolved to come out. The next consideration with me was that those who had been longest in Glasgow . . . would naturally be the persons to remain. Consequently that for myself, and various other younger brethren, there was no course but to remove to a distance. Despairing, or at least very doubtful, of finding a

\* Dis. Mss. xxviii. p. 6.

sphere of usefulness as a minister of the Gospel at home, I seriously bethought me to what other department I could turn myself. When I thought of the ministry abroad, my mind turned towards Canada. Repeatedly did I speak of Holland as probably a cheap and pleasant residence. Mrs. Lorimer and I had been not a little interested in that country on a brief tour in 1839." \*

It seems strange that even Mr. M'Cheyne, of Dundee, should have thought there would be no sphere for him in Scotland. A copresbyter, Mr. Stewart, of Lochee, who returned with him from the Convocation, mentions that they had been consulting "as to what it might be their duty to do in the event of the Disruption, and where they might be scattered. Mr. Stewart said he could preach Gaelic, and might go to the Highlanders in Canada if it were needful. Mr. M'Cheyne said: "I think of going to the many thousand convicts that are transported beyond the seas, for no man careth for their souls." † In the same spirit Dr. James Hamilton, looking on the Convocation, and saddened by the prospect of their being cast out, takes comfort in the thought of what a blessing it would be to the world if they were "scattered abroad, everywhere preaching the Word." ‡

It was with such feelings, and in the face of such difficulties, men had to go forward. In some cases, when they returned to their parishes, it might well have seemed that their worst fears were going to be realised. At Dundee, Mr. Lewis found that the intelligence of the resolution he had taken "was received generally in solemn silence, not unfrequently, also, with a look of doubt and hesitation, as if inquiring whether we had done wisely. They were evidently unprepared for so serious an issue. The prudence and caution of the national character now showed itself as decidedly as its love of the logic and discussion of the question had in the preceding ten years. They seemed to hang back and shrink from the practical issue, as if a thing never in their contemplation. The more outspoken would say: 'I hope you have well thought of it.' 'Are you sure there is no other course?' 'Have you not been hasty?' . . . In my then state of mind, it seemed as if the people were about to desert

\* Dis. Mss. i. p. 4. † Memoir, p. 155. ‡ Harp on the Willows, p. 15.

their ministers, and they were about to be left alone in that sacrifice to principle." \* He was soon to be undeceived.

At Cleish, in Kinross-shire, Mr. Duncan mentions: "I had no reason to expect any sympathy from the greater part of the people of Cleish, . . . so that there appeared to be a moral certainty that a mere handful would leave along with me." †

At Stevenston, in Ayrshire, Dr. Landsborough's people "did not appear to take much interest in the matter. Even after the Convocation, which I attended, the interest was not greatly increased, so that when meetings were called, to be addressed . . . on the state of the Church, it was disheartening to see that few attended. As my own mind was made up to leave the Establishment if matters were not satisfactorily settled, my prospects were far from being bright. I said to some who I knew were friendly: . . . 'I think very few will follow me.' 'They will, perhaps, be more numerous than you expect,' was the reply." ‡

Even at Kilsyth, after the time of revival, and the numerous meetings called by Dr. Burns, the prospect at first was not encouraging. "When [after the Convocation] names and subscriptions were called for, preparatory to the anticipated Disruption, few seemed ready to take the step, . . . cherishing, no doubt, the hope that the dreaded catastrophe might somehow be averted. One member, a pious weaver in the village, said that 'as it was not till the people saw David going up by the ascent of Olivet, his head covered as he went up barefoot, that all the people that was with him went up weeping, . . . so it would be in this case.'" §

One great difficulty with which the Church had to contend at the time was the general hostility of the newspaper press, and its formidable power in the country. Hugh Miller had, indeed, been for some years in the field, giving powerful aid in the

\* Pres. of Dundee, Parker Mss.

† Dis. Mss. xii. p. 1. His father, Dr. Duncan, of Ruthwell, had said (Memoir, p. 286), "I hope none of my children will show the white feather. Indeed, I know they will not." He was right in regard to them all; and not even the above discouragement made the young pastor of Cleish hesitate.

‡ Dis. Mss. xxxviii. p. 1.

§ Dis. Mss. xxix. p. 6.

columns of the *Witness*. The *Scottish Guardian* and other prints were doing valuable work, but as a whole, the press was hostile. Of the sixty-three newspapers published in Scotland, only eight were on the side of the Church,\* and the holding of the Convocation seemed only to have rendered the opposition of the hostile press more bitter.† Difference of political sentiment made no difference in this. "By asserting the independent jurisdiction of the Church," said Dr. Cunningham, "we have drawn upon our head the wrath of Tories, Whigs, and Radicals. . . . There is scarcely an organ of public opinion that supports our principles. And if you attend to the public press you will find, perhaps, the attack of a High Church journal on Friday, followed upon Saturday by a Voluntary print; . . . but in spite of all this misrepresentation, . . . we are confident in the goodness of our cause."

In view of the momentous interests at stake, it obviously became the duty of the Church, by means of deputations, addresses, and otherwise, to come into direct communication with her people, and make known her principles all over the land; and such appeals, for the most part, met with the most hearty and cordial response. In dealing with the apathy of his people, for example, above referred to, Mr. Lewis, of Dundee, delivered a series of six lectures, in the course of which he remarks: "I never had a more attentive or interested auditory, the same persons making it a point of duty to hear me out. On the sixth and last night, I put the question: Leave the Established Church or remain—when upwards of 400 signed their adherence [to the Convocation resolutions]; and subse-

\* Life of Dr. Cunningham, p. 134.

† A single illustration may be given to show the spirit in which the warfare was carried on. Mr. Maitland Makgill Crichton was an active supporter of the Church. "With our two editorial auxiliaries, paste and the scissors," says the *Witness*, "we have been painfully clipping out and fastening together in a single column every vituperative scrap of which Mr. Crichton has been the subject, for the last fortnight, and find, on spreading the roll before us on the carpet, that it already extends to the astounding length of eleven feet, six inches, and three eighth-parts of undiluted abuse in one brief fortnight. Depend upon it, Mr. Makgill Crichton is a very formidable man. His efforts are telling; he strikes so hard that the blow rebounds."—Memoir of Mr. M. Crichton, p. 166.

quently the number was nearly doubled. . . . On looking over the list . . . it was obvious that both the intelligence and heart of the congregation were with us." \*

In most cases it was found that a single meeting was enough to gain the object. Thus at Woodside, Aberdeen, "the actings of the Convocation were fully explained to the people. The answer of Government to the Church's Claim was fully discussed at a meeting held on the 25th January, and an adherence of 1145 persons belonging to the congregation obtained."† At Ardoch, in Perthshire, the Convocation gave a powerful impulse to the process of preparation. "Then was my congregation," says Mr. Grant, "convinced that the Church was truly in earnest, that the principles for which she was contending deeply affected the glory of the Redeemer and vital godliness. . . . This produced a marked solemnity, and not a few made the difficulties of their minister to be their own, the difficulties of the Church their own. . . . Two-thirds of my congregation . . . signed the Convocation resolutions."‡

At Lesmahagow, "after the Convocation, considerable interest was excited throughout the parish. . . . The Disruption being now to all appearance inevitable, I deemed it my duty," Dr. Parker states, "to summon a general meeting of the parishioners on a week-day evening, that I might state what had been done, and the steps that now behoved to be taken in order to the maintenance of a Free Presbyterian Church. The meeting was peculiarly solemn. From the commencement to the close the deepest attention prevailed. Many were in tears, and when we joined in singing, Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity, &c., it seemed that the associations of many years were awakened, and the spirit of the olden time brought back again. Numbers pressed forward to subscribe their adherence to the resolutions of the Convocation, and to declare their determination of making common cause with the faithful ministers."§ The meeting was held on the 28th December, a date which was merely fixed as convenient for the parties, but it "was the anniversary of the death of one of the martyrs of Lesmahagow

\* Mr. Lewis, Pres. of Dundee, Parker Mss.

† Dis. Mss. xxvii. p. 3. ‡ Dis. Mss. xiii. p. 2. § Dis. Mss. xlix. p. 8.

(1680), Steel of Skellyhill, who was shot dead at his own door before the eyes of his beloved wife, who had her infant and only child in her arms.”\*

There were cases, indeed, in which the people went beyond their ministers in zeal for the cause. Mr. Thomson, of Wick, belonged to the Evangelical party in the Church, but as the crisis approached he felt considerable perplexity, and on returning from the Convocation he called his people together on the 28th November in order to explain, which he did at some length, why he had *not* seen it to be his duty to sign the resolutions. During his address, the congregation “sat looking at each other much astonished,” and after the meeting had been dismissed, the people, on the motion of Mr. Davidson, banker, sat still, elected a chairman, and asked Mr. Thomson to remain and listen to the proceedings. They went on to express their views with much personal respect for their pastor, but in direct opposition to the sentiments of his address. “It was then proposed that solemn thanks should be offered up to God for the grace which had been vouchsafed to the 350 members of the Convocation who had bound themselves to go out, and this was done in a most impressive manner by Mr. Donald George.”† At a second meeting held shortly after, they formally adopted the Convocation resolutions; and the result was, that Mr. Thomson saw it to be his duty to go along with his people, a resolution which was received with much satisfaction.

But what produced the deepest impression was the presence of the deputations sent forth to hold meetings and give addresses through all the parishes of Scotland. It was in the dead of winter that these movements took place, at a time when the short day left the population in country districts fully at leisure; and many a strange incident of that stirring time still lives in the memory of survivors.

The state of the weather sometimes made it difficult to carry on the work. At Moy, Dr. M'Lauchlan mentions that a meeting was called with the view of having the resolutions of the Convocation expounded by a deputation from head-quarters, consisting of Mr. Topp, of Elgin, Mr. Macrae, of Knockbain, and Mr.

\* Dis. Mss. xxxi. pp. 5, 18.

† *Witness* Newspaper, 7th Dec., 1842.

Stewart, of Cromarty. "The day, which was the 11th of January, was stormy, and although the people collected in great numbers, none of the deputies appeared, alarmed by the depth of the snow. I went in consequence to the pulpit myself, and explained the object of the meeting. . . . The resolutions were afterwards signed almost universally throughout the parish."\*

So also at Kiltarlity, in Inverness-shire: "On Friday [8th January] the deputation went to Kiltarlity. From unavoidable circumstances the intimation was very imperfect, and the parish church [the minister being adverse] was inaccessible, yet a congregation of 700 met the deputation in the open air—snow on the ground—and had a rustic tent erected for their accommodation. After an address in both languages, 584 gave in their names, and as half the parish had not heard of the visit, as many more names at least are expected. The meeting was concluded by prayer by the Catechist, an aged patriarch, the Christian father of the parish. He was so feeble that he had to be literally supported, like Moses of old by Aaron and Hur, while standing at prayer."†

Dr. Macdonald's visit to the Presbytery of Dornoch was enthusiastically welcomed. "Nothing could be more triumphant than the worthy Doctor's defence of the truths for which the Church is contending, and nothing more withering than his *exposé* of Moderate principles. The crowds which assembled were immense. . . . It showed the depth of feeling with which the Highlanders view the present contest, and no doubt also their veneration for the 'Apostle of the North,' . . . when crowds assembled to open up the roads which were blocked with snow, and when the horse could not carry through his gig, the Highlanders carried him and his gig over all impediments. Their answer was, when anything in the way of remuneration was offered, . . . O sir, when you come to preach to us and tell us of our Church which our fathers loved, the danger she is in, and that she looks to us for defence, oh, let it not be said that we would not do what we could."‡

While this was going on, various efforts were made by

\* Dis. Mss. xlix. p. 8. † *Witness* Newspaper, 11th January, 1843.

‡ *Ibid.* 29th March, 1843.

opponents to counteract the movement. Sometimes they had recourse to the circulation of pamphlets.

“Sir James Graham’s letter [to be afterwards noticed] was widely circulated in the North, but with little impression. One Highlander remarked, We see a great deal about the law in this letter, but very little of the Gospel. As Mr. Mackintosh, of Tain, and Mr. Matheson, of Kilmuir, were going through the Presbytery of Tongue, the letter was drifting along before them, . . . thick as the winter snow; but the Gospel . . . had a hold of the hearts of the people which all law could not subvert. One man, in obedience to his master’s instructions, had been seen running at a great rate distributing copies. As he went along, his neighbour accosted him. . . . O Donald, what is all this haste for? O sir, replied Donald, I am in a great hurry, for I am very anxious to be back in time to hear Mr. Mackintosh, and sign for the Church.”

Sometimes they applied to the sheriffs for interdicts. At Aberdeen the use of the city churches was interdicted,\* but others, of course, were obtained, and crowded enthusiastic meetings of each congregation were held. The whole ministers, without one exception, adhered to the Convocation resolutions, and their feelings were rendered all the more decided because of the interdicts.

“At Largs, † in Ayrshire, a meeting was about to be held on a requisition by the people, when a small laird, whose property was rated at one shilling and ninepence of yearly stipend, obtained an interdict, shutting the parish church. The result was a triumphant and successful meeting in the Relief church, filled to overflowing by a most enthusiastic audience. Mr. Scott, of Hawkhill, one of the principal heritors, was in the chair.

“At Smailholm, a meeting had been called for Monday, the 6th of March, in the barn of Mr. Dickson, of West Third. On the Sabbath afternoon, however, Mr. Dickson’s landlord, Geo. Baillie, Esq. of Jerviswood, sent him a message to the effect that the barn was not to be given to the deputation, and that Mr. B. would not allow a meeting such as that proposed to be

\* *Witness Newspaper*, 18th Jan., 1843.

† *Ibid.* 15th Feb. 1843.

held on the premises of which he was the proprietor. This announcement caused great excitement in the village, and as Mr. Dickson was a yearly tenant, the people resolved that rather than expose him to the risk of losing his farm, another place should be sought for, failing which, they would willingly stand in the open air. . . . At length, within four hours of the time of meeting, a carpenter's shop was obtained about a mile west of the village. The place was filled to overflowing, the opposition of Mr. Baillie having brought out many who might otherwise have been absent. . . . Planks had been laid across the couples of the roof, so that about a hundred individuals sat overhead listening to the speakers although they could not see them. About two-thirds of the audience were obliged to stand the two hours and a-half the meeting lasted, but not the least symptom of impatience was manifested, every one appearing to be more interested than another." \*

A similar interference was met with in the parish of Symington. Mr. Orr, assistant and successor, had experienced the hostility of the proprietors after the Convocation. "At the first meeting of the heritors, which took place about six weeks afterwards, and at which I was present, Lieut.-Col. Kelso, of Dankeith, a retired Indian officer and the principal proprietor of the parish, asked me if it was true that I had signed the resolutions of that Convocation, and when I answered in the affirmative, he said that he would cease to contribute further a single shilling of my salary. At this time my salary was paid chiefly by the minister, and partly by the voluntary assessment on the part of the heritors; and those of them who were present seemed to acquiesce in the threat of the Colonel, as they said nothing to the contrary. At that meeting I said nothing further than that if they deemed me unworthy of their support, I did not desire it, and that though they withdrew every shilling of what they had hitherto contributed, it would not move me a single hair's-breadth from the path of duty, and from the obedience I owed to the great Head of the Church. . . .

"The deputation appointed to visit Symington consisted of the Rev. Dr. Paterson, of St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow, and

\* *Witness*, 18th March, 1843.

the Rev. Mr. Buchan, of Hamilton. I accordingly intimated from the pulpit, on a Sabbath in January, that these ministers were about to visit the parish, and appointed a meeting to be held in the church on the Wednesday evening following, and asked the people to come.

“And well did they respond to the call, for nearly the whole congregation assembled . . . on a dark night in the month of January, so interested were they in the subject. But, alas, when the hour arrived, they were denied admission to the church, for on the very day after the meeting was intimated from the pulpit, Colonel Kelso went to the Sheriff at Ayr and obtained an interdict against the meeting being held, on the ground that there would likely be a disturbance in the church, and the seats might be damaged and destroyed. A short time before the hour of meeting, when sitting at tea with the deputation, three sheriff-officers entered the room, and put into each of our hands a copy of the interdict which the Colonel had obtained. Of such a thing I had never once dreamed, and was so taken aback that for a time I could not speak a word, and sat perfectly dumb. And well do I recollect the venerable Dr. Paterson clapping me on the shoulder and saying, ‘Cheer up, man, there are worse things in the world than an interdict. You may soon find that it has done you a great deal of good.’ And I believe it did, for the people were so irritated at the way they had been treated, that they became more resolute in adhering to what they believed to be the cause of righteousness and truth.

“In the meantime, what was now to be done? The people were all assembled in the street, and could not be addressed there in the dark winter night. It was decided to invite them down to my house. . . . This was accordingly done. Every room was filled, all the doors thrown open, and the ministers stood on chairs in the lobby and addressed the people, who all heard distinctly. It was a most enthusiastic meeting, and the Colonel was rather roughly handled by the speakers for the way he had acted towards the congregation of which he himself was an office-bearer.”\*

There were cases in which, instead of interdicts, opposition

\* Dis. Mss. xlvi. pp. 4-8.

came in a different form, leading sometimes to rather remarkable scenes. "At Torosay," Mr. Middleton states, "I remember when two esteemed clergymen, the Rev. P. Macbride, Rothesay, and the Rev. Finlay Macpherson, of Kilbrandon, were on a tour in April, 1843, explaining the state of Church affairs, while preaching to a congregation of from 300 to 400, at the Bridge of Loch-don-head, that Mr. ——— hurriedly rode up to the spot where the service was going on, said that he was the son of one of the heritors, that he had a deep interest in the welfare of the people, that he had a high esteem for the parish minister, and that he warned the people against those who were now going among them to seduce and draw them from the Church of their fathers, or words to that effect; and he concluded by taking off his hat and calling for three cheers for Mr. Clark, the parish minister. The officiating clergyman took no notice of this strange proceeding, and very little heed was given to it by the people in the way of response, though it created a great sensation in the audience. Only one man took off his hat—the schoolmaster—and even he, as if ashamed, replaced it immediately upon his head."\*

Mr. Wood, of Elie, describes his visit to the southern districts of Dumfriesshire:—

"In the winter of 1842-43, the Disruption being now considered inevitable, deputations were sent out, under the auspices of the Convocation which had met in Edinburgh, to different parts of the country. Among others, Mr. Jollie, of Bowden, and I were commissioned to visit Dumfriesshire. Having stayed all the previous night at Bowden Manse, I started with Mr. Jollie on Monday, the 30th January. We travelled in my gig, by a road the remarkable scenery of which is little seen now-a-days, dining at Moss-paul, and arriving at Langholm about 9 P.M. Next afternoon we were joined by Mr. Clarke, of Half Morton, who was one of the deputation, and who had the charge of the local arrangements. That evening we held our first meeting in the Secession Meeting House—U. P. was a title yet unknown, nor did the Seceders at that time call their places of worship churches. Our meeting was most successful, crowded to the

\* Dis. Mss. ix. pp. 2, 3.

very doors. One incident which occurred has fixed itself in my memory, and deserves to be recorded. I was, I think, the last speaker, and after dwelling on the encroachments made by the Court of Session, confirmed by the final judgment of the House of Lords, and on the manner in which we had been treated in Parliament, where the voice of the Scottish Members had been altogether overborne by the English majority, I said, on the spur of the moment, that such injustice was enough to justify Scotland in demanding the repeal of the Union. With that, to my surprise, and somewhat to my consternation, the meeting rose as one man, waving hats and handkerchiefs, and cheering again and again. No doubt the enthusiastic feelings of the people assisted our object, but I took care not to speak of repeal of the Union at our subsequent meetings.

“Next day we drove out to Eskdalemuir, a sort of colony of Cameronians, where we had a very good meeting in the Cameronian place of worship. We stayed all night with Mr. Walter Laidlaw, and in the morning visited Hislop’s grave, which is close by. Then we started for Ewes in a snow-storm, resting at Westerkirk on the way. At Ewes we held a meeting in a barn belonging to Mr. Comyn, with whom we stayed all night. The day after we went to Half Morton, and held meetings at Waterbeck and Gretna, and on Saturday at Half Morton itself, where I preached on Sunday, 5th February, from Zeph. i. 12. On Monday I drove Mr. Clarke from Half Morton to Lockerby, where we had an excellent meeting in the evening. Next day we started for Dinwiddie, in the parish of Applegarth. Mr. Jollie and I were in the gig, and Mr. Clarke was riding in advance of us, evidently rehearsing a speech to himself, and amusing us now and then by the involuntary action which accompanied his mental labours. The day was intensely cold, and the ‘roaring game,’ so keenly engaged in during winter in Dumfriesshire, was in full play on every pool and lakelet. As we drew near the place of our destination, groups of curlers were overtaken on the road carrying their stones and brooms. ‘Depend upon it,’ said I, ‘they have got up a bonspiel on the ice to engage the people, and prevent them from coming to our meeting.’ The case, however, turned out to be far otherwise.

The Rev. Dr. Dunbar, minister of Applegarth, indignant that his parish, hitherto as thoroughly under Moderate rule as any in Scotland, should be invaded by a band of uncommissioned agitators, sent intimation through the parish that all must attend the meeting—that he would himself be present, and would soon scatter it. Nay, so great was the interest which he took in the matter, that he had that morning gone down to the ice, and brought up a whole band of curlers, telling them that there was more important work on hand.

“This we learned on our arrival at Dinwiddie, and found that the crowds we had seen trooping along the road bearing their curling implements, were not going to the ice, as we had supposed, but were coming *from* it, many of them sorely grudging the loss of a day’s play. The barn, one of the largest in the country, was crowded to the doors; ladders, couples, the top of the thrashing machine, all were thronged, and a meeting had been got together for us by our opponents far larger than we had ever expected to see in so remote a part of the country. Mr. Jollie having opened the meeting with prayer, Dr. Dunbar rose and said that he and his parishioners had come to hear what the deputation had to say. Mr. Clarke addressed the meeting at some length, and at the close of his speech made some allusion to the reply he expected from Dr. Dunbar. That gentleman, however, declared that before he opened his mouth he wished to hear all that the deputation had to say. Of course, no objection could be made to this, and I went on with my address, stating however at the outset, that I intended to take the opportunity of replying to any remarks which Dr. Dunbar might make, and that we (the deputation) would shorten our addresses in order that full time might be given to him. Accordingly, when I had concluded, Mr. Jollie declined to make any remarks. Dr. Dunbar then rose, and after a speech, in which he never even attempted to reply to the arguments which had been adduced, proposed a resolution to the effect, that the meeting disapprove of the conduct of the deputation in intruding into other parishes; ‘and those’ added the Doctor, ‘who think with me have, of course, no longer any business here.’ Considerable excitement was occasioned by this proposition; half uttered

murmurings of 'shame' and 'unmanly' were heard, in the midst of which a farmer of the parish seconded the resolution. Dr. Dunbar then called for a show of hands, but to this I stoutly objected until the reply which I had risen to make should have been heard. 'Then, my friends,' said Dr. Dunbar, 'you have no longer anything to do here.' 'We shall be sorry,' was our reply, 'if Dr. Dunbar leaves us, but if a vote is to be taken, this can only be done after a reply has been made, according to the arrangement proposed at the outset.' Dr. Dunbar, however, was not to be detained, and left the place, accompanied, however, only by eleven persons. Some few more left the barn along with him, but returned as soon as he was well out of sight. Mr. Clarke and I then replied at length, pointing out the gross Erastianism of Dr. Dunbar's statement, and at the close of the proceedings, the people crowded round us, expressing their regret that we could not remain with them an hour or two longer. This, however, was impossible, as we had to address a meeting at Wamphray in the evening. The moral effect of this meeting was very great over a large district of country. That a man whose character was so thoroughly respected, should have been defeated in his own parish by three strangers showed plainly the direction in which public feeling was tending.

"'The battle of Dinwiddie,' as it was called, became a fertile theme for ballads, articles, and correspondence in the local papers. I am sorry that I have not preserved any of them, of which many were sent to me by friends in Dumfriesshire, during the months which followed my return home."\*

Yet another of these meetings may be noticed, and one in which the opponents were successful. The account has been thrown by the reporter into a form somewhat grotesque, but in regard to the facts themselves it is certified as correct.

"On Thursday evening, January 19, agreeably to a previous intimation by handbill, a large number of the parishioners of Fintray [Aberdeenshire], assembled at Mr. Geo. Knight's, Cothill, for the purpose of hearing addresses from the Rev. Mr. Macdonald, of Blairgowrie, and other ministers, on the subject of the position and prospects of the Church. Now in this parish there resides a

\* Dis. Mss. 1. pp. 18-21.

Mr. Strachan, who is Sir John Forbes' factor. He commanded the people to go home. As factor he did this, of course. The people refused, and stayed till the ministers came. As the ministers were approaching, they were met at a little distance from the premises where the meeting was to be held by Mr. Strachan and one or two of his friends, whose object it was, now that the meeting could not be prevented by dispersing the audience, to prevent it by sending the ministers away. They first coaxed, which was proper, and then threatened, which was natural, but the ministers did not go back, but went in. They found between two and three hundred individuals waiting to hear them. But hear them they could not. Mr. Strachan, with a large thick stick in his hand, ascended the platform, and began to use all the means he had of making a noise—*i.e.*, to bawl at the pitch of his voice, and strike with his stick as hard as he could. What between the articulate noise from his own head and the inarticulate noise from the head of his stick—the difference between the two being that his head cried, Oh, oh, and the head of his stick cried, Whack, whack—it was impossible for any other voice to be heard than his and his stick's. Three of the members of the deputation went upon the platform and attempted to obtain a hearing, but upon this Mr. Strachan and his stick called in the powerful assistance of Mr. James Crombie, manufacturer, and his stick (if he had one), who is a relative to the family of the minister of the parish (Mr. Crombie, we mean, not his stick), and six other individuals and their sticks, and thus noise was produced sufficient to deafen any voice. An offer was made on the part of the deputation to hear all the men of the party, and we suppose we may say also all the sticks of the party, in regular succession—first, a man and then a stick, then another man and then another stick, till they had all delivered their opinion, upon condition that the members of the deputation should then be heard in turn, and that no man and no stick should interrupt them. This condition the men and the sticks unanimously refused to agree to, and then the men bellowed more beautifully and the sticks beat louder than ever. By this time it was apparent to the members of the deputation that if they remained longer serious consequences were inevitable, owing

to the now excited feelings of many of the parishioners, and therefore the meeting broke up. Mr. Moir and Capt. Shepherd retired into Mr. Knight's dwelling-house, and Messrs. Macdonald and Spence remaining without, and waiting for the chance of an opportunity to address the people. This they partially obtained."\*

Even in that district, however, there was one whose appearance made its way to men's hearts amidst all the excitement and hostility which prevailed. Mr. M'Cheyne "accompanied Mr. Alexander, of Kirkcaldy, to visit the districts of Deer and Ellon, districts over which he yearned, for Moderatism had held undisputed sway over them for generations." It was no easy work. During the space of three weeks, he preached and spoke at meetings in four-and-twenty places, sometimes more than once in the same place. On 14th February, he writes: "The weather has been delightful till now, to-day the snow is beginning to drift." On the 24th, he says: "To-day is the first we have rested since leaving home, so that I am almost overcome with fatigue." One who tracked his footsteps a month after his death states that "sympathy with the principles of our suffering Church was awakened in many places; but, above all, a thirst was excited for the pure Word of Life. His eminently holy walk and conversation . . . were specially felt. . . . In one place where a meeting had been intimated the people assembled, resolving to cast stones at him as soon as he should begin to speak, but no sooner had he begun than his manner, his look, his words riveted them all, and they listened with intense earnestness, and before he left the place the people gathered round him, entreating him to stay and preach to them. One man who had cast mud at him was afterwards moved to tears on hearing of his death." †

Such incidents taking place in districts so widely separated

\* *Witness*, 25th January, 1843. Dr. Spence, of Aberdeen, states: "The scene described is one of which I have a most vivid recollection, and is literally true, though described in a burlesque style. . . . Unfortunately, I was the only one of the party who had a white neckcloth, . . . and they directed their fury mainly against me."—*In. lit.* 22nd Nov., 1875.

† *Memoir*, p. 167.

may give some idea of what was going on all over Scotland, but only those who lived through that time can understand the agitation which shook all classes of society, and the struggles and difficulties in the midst of which the cause of the Church had to be maintained.

## VII. CLOSE OF THE STRUGGLE.

It was while men were thus engaged that the answer to the claims of the Church, by the Government and the House of Commons, at last came, and gave a new impulse and direction to the movement. On the 4th of January, Sir James Graham transmitted his celebrated letter, in which the Crown, through its advisers, formally rejected the appeal of the Church, and intimated that Patronage must be maintained in its stringency. The letter was found to contain obvious misrepresentations, such as the allegation that the Claim of the Church was identical with the claims of Popery. It was mortifying to find Government having recourse to such special pleading; but whatever might be thought on this and other points, the hostility of at least one branch of the Legislature was now decisively declared. All that remained was to appeal to Parliament. An extraordinary meeting of the Commission was called for the 31st of January, when it was resolved to petition the House of Commons, and make one final attempt, even at the eleventh hour, to arrest the catastrophe. Mr. Fox Maule having, accordingly, presented this petition, proceeded, on the 7th of March, to move the House for a committee to examine and report on the grievances complained of. With singular ability Mr. Maule and others who followed pled the cause, Mr. Rutherford especially signalling the occasion by a masterly argument founded on the laws and constitution of Scotland. With no less singular unanimity did Sir R. Peel, Sir J. Graham, and other opponents evade all these grounds of fact and argument, taking refuge in vague generalities and preconceived opinions.\* But the vote was decisive. By a majority of 211 against 76 the Claim of the Church was thrown out, the House

\* This seems to have struck impartial observers, even when they did not agree with the Church. The distinguished naturalist, Dr. Johnston, of

refusing even to go through the form of an inquiry. "It is not undeserving of notice that of the 37 Scotch Members who were present at the division, 25 voted for Mr. Maule. It was not simply, therefore, the voice of Scotland's Church, but the voice of her national representatives that was that night overborne in the British Parliament. The fact is one which an impartial posterity will mark and remember." \*

Had the statesmen of that day known what they were doing, probably some *via media* would have been at least attempted, some temporising expedient to hold parties together, as in subsequent decisions connected with the Church of England. But statesmen in authority had not yet been scared by the effect of their own work in dealing with these Church questions. In 1843, they were told that a little firmness was all that was required. It was only the clergy of Scotland who had to be dealt with, and if the great Tory and Whig parties would combine to bring down all the weight of imperial authority, then, though a few of the leaders of the Church—firebrands they were called—might go out, yet the Evangelical party, as a whole, would succumb. All difficulty would be cleared away, and the great question would be settled.

Beyond all doubt, IT WAS SETTLED. On that memorable 7th of March, earnest eyes from all parts of Scotland had been turned towards the House of Commons. "An eventful night, Mr. M'Cheyne wrote, this in the British Parliament. Once more King Jesus stands at an earthly tribunal, and they know Him not." It was even so. Worldly politicians did their work,

Berwick-on-Tweed, one of the most amiable of men, writes to Dr. Landsborough, of Stevenston: "I have read the discussion in the House of Commons on your kirk question, and the result pained me. You have never since been out of my mind, nor can I dis sever your name from Stevenston Manse, though I fear you will be cruel enough to separate from it bodily. I will say nothing, but surely you will allow me to weep at such a stern resolve. . . . So far as I can judge, the speech of Mr. Rutherford was never answered, and the arguments of Sir James Graham and Sir Robert Peel were rather of what would be expedient were a new law to be made than a reply to the law of the Church, as established by several solemn Acts."—Memoir of Dr. Landsborough, p. 182.

\* Ten Years' Conflict, vol. ii. p. 427.

intelligence was sent forth over Scotland that the final blow had been struck, and it may be interesting to note one or two examples showing how the news was received, not only in cities, but in quiet, rural parishes.

Dr. Landsborough, of Stevenston, thus refers to his service on the succeeding Sabbath: "12th March, 1843.—In the afternoon my discourse was intentionally suited to the peculiar circumstances in which we were placed after the news had come that Parliament had resolved to give us no relief, and that, consequently, we must leave our churches and homes. Oh, may grace be given to us to glorify God in the fires! May the affliction be sanctified to us, to wean us more from the world, and to fit us more for heaven; and do Thou, O God, overrule the trying dispensation for Thine own glory, and for the good of Thy Church and people."\*

In the case of Dr. Mackintosh, of Dunoon, then of Tain, we get almost a photograph of one of those who, in their far-off quiet manses, were intently watching the result. "A son of one of his elders, who was but a little boy in that eventful year, and could understand little of what was about to occur, has given us a graphic account of the effect produced on his youthful mind by the minister's demeanour on the morning when tidings came. . . . One morning in the spring of 1843 I jumped early out of bed, for my head was full of marbles and pegtops, and a dozen or so of games before breakfast has its attractions for a schoolboy. To my astonishment, I found my father down before me—nay, he had evidently been there for some time, for the moment I appeared he folded up the newspaper on which he had been so unseasonably engaged, and with a break in his voice, indicating an emotion that was quite unaccountable to me, he asked me to take it at once to the manse, with his compliments to the minister. My visit was shorter than I anticipated, for I had scarcely got out of the sunshine into the manse evergreens when I found the minister in the porch, and when I offered him the newspaper he showed me that he had already got the *Times* by some unusual express, and as he spoke, he patted my head and smiled; but such a

\* Memoir, p. 175.

smile! so full of radiant kindness. I was confounded, and as I went back between the hedges, the birds sang unheeded while I thought what could have come over the minister. Had anybody left him a fortune? or had he met one of the Shining Ones walking among the hollies in that early dawn? And it was not for some weeks that I found out that this was what had happened—the newspaper that morning had brought him the vote of the House of Commons finally refusing an inquiry into the affairs of the Scottish Church, and so making it certain that within a few weeks he would leave for ever the home, at the door of which I saw him, in which his father had dwelt before him, and which he now would have to leave without stipend, and not knowing what was before him. Of course, he came out.”\*

The feeling of gladness thus expressed it was not difficult to understand. Men were thankful that the path of duty had at last been made so plain. The fear had been that Government, as Dr. Guthrie says, “would bring in a Bill which, if it won't please us, will be made so as if possible to entrap us.” It was the only danger which threatened to separate between brethren, and so make shipwreck of the cause. The refusal of Parliament even to go through the form of an inquiry put an end to all such anxiety. It was an unspeakable relief to be delivered from all harassing suspense, and to find that God had in His goodness made the way so plain, that he who ran might read. All that remained was to make ready.

While this was going on, it must not be supposed that the Moderate party, on their side, were idle. In 1841 they had already gone to Government and asked them definitely to make their choice as to whether they or their opponents were to be the Church of the nation. They knew that they were themselves safe in making this conclusive appeal to Government, and their application, therefore, was merely a request for the expulsion of Dr. Chalmers and his friends. The Government, however, declined to move.

At last the Stewarton decision, casting out the *quoad sacra* ministers, put a weapon into eager hands which was at once

\* Memoir, p. 56.

used, not only to hasten, but to antedate the Disruption. Without waiting till the decree became final—for the question of appeal was pending when Dr. Cook, at the Commission, gave the signal—they proceeded to break up Presbyteries and Synods. At the first meeting of the Presbytery of Irvine, for example, they moved the expulsion of the *quoad sacra* ministers; and when the vote went against them, they rose in a body, left the Court, with Dr. Norman Macleod at their head, held a separate meeting, and constituted a rival Presbytery. Dr. Bryce, their historian, admits, rather boastfully, that this was in “thorough contempt of all ecclesiastical authority.” In Moderate Presbyteries and Synods, where the vote went the other way, the Evangelical party refused to abandon their brethren, and had in self-defence to take a similar course. Already in her essential Courts the Church was broken up; but it should be noticed that it was the Moderate party—the men who ultimately formed the Establishment—who took the initiative, and Dr. Bryce is anxious that the glory of the first step should be reserved for those to whom it is due, the Presbytery of Fordyce.

These parting scenes, when men went asunder never again to reunite, were often striking, and in some cases painful.

At Linlithgow, when Dr. Bell moved the expulsion of his *quoad sacra* brethren, “It was mine,” says Mr. Taylor, of Grangemouth, “to reply; and although I rose with a faltering tongue, this being my first endeavour to express my views in a Church Court, I was yet enabled to speak in defence of my position to the approbation of my brethren. I challenged Dr. Bell to discuss the question as a Doctor of Divinity, and not to skulk behind the decision of a Law Court. With the ecclesiastical functions of a minister the Law Courts had nothing to do, either constitutionally or scripturally. The Church, upon scriptural and presbyterian grounds, had given me my standing as a member of Court, and upon these grounds I was prepared to maintain my position.”\* For an onlooker it must have been interesting to observe the silence with which this challenge was received, and the way in which the motion was allowed to drop.

\* Dis. Mss. xxxvii. p. 3.

At Glasgow, when Principal Macfarlane moved the expulsion of his *quoad sacra* brethren, Mr. Arnot demanded that, if this were done, they should come to St. Peter's and remove one-half of the ordination vow which they had laid on him when he was taken bound to exercise discipline in his congregation through means of his kirk-session. It must have been a remarkable thing to observe the way in which this demand was ignored.

In the Synod of Dumfries the proposal of the Moderate party was carried by vote, and only they who knew the personal attachment of the two brothers here referred to can understand the scene:—"Previous to the great Disruption, Synods felt the shock. Hot words had passed in that of Dumfries, and those who ultimately became Free Churchmen arose and left the Synod. Dr. Duncan sat still, with his face covered, till the bustle of departure was over; then rose and took leave of his old associates with the meekness of wisdom which belonged to him. His poor, dear brother, still minister of the New Church [Established], Dumfries, who had never in life before parted from him, laid his head on the table and sobbed aloud, and many were moved."

\* Dis. Mss. xvi. p. 4.

## VIII. MAKING READY.

MEANTIME the loud note of preparation was being sounded over the land. From the 7th of March till the 18th of May the weeks were few enough for 474 ministers, and a still larger number of congregations, to get ready. But not a moment was lost. A committee of the most distinguished ministers, and not a few of Scotland's ablest laymen, met daily at headquarters. Plans were matured, agents commissioned to organise the parishes, and a series of weekly "communications" sent out, and so eagerly welcomed, that an impression of 150,000 copies sometimes failed to meet the demand. As we look back on the movements of that stirring time, there is one whose well-remembered form is seen for ever coming to the front. It was the voice of Dr. Chalmers, which was heard all over Scotland, rousing the country; and it was the impetuous energy which he threw into every department that carried all before it. In these efforts he was looking far beyond a mere provision for himself and his outgoing brethren to a still nobler object, now fully in view. At last, after long waiting, the prospect had fairly dawned of Church extension in a form far different from what he had expected. "I knocked at the door of a Whig Ministry, and they refused to endow. I then knocked at the door of a Tory Ministry. They perhaps would have endowed, but they offered to enslave. I now, therefore, turn aside from both, and knock at the door of the general population." Here at last was the prospect of realising what had been the lifelong, eager desire of his heart; and with indomitable ardour he gathered up his strength for the great achievement. "Dr. Chalmers," says Dr. Guthrie, "has a kind of desperate joy in the prospect of an overthrow, in the idea that some four or five hundred churches would be built."

One of the speeches which he delivered deserves special notice, on account of two watchwords then given forth, the effects of which it would be difficult to over-estimate.

The first was a demand for "a penny a-week." A penny a-week from every family in Scotland, he announced, would serve to equip the Church, and provide ordinances over the land. Men were startled. Were we to have a Free Church, delivered from all these conflicts and trammels, with such men as Chalmers, and Candlish, and Gordon at its head, and was the sacrifice to be no more than this? But how could such a thing be? "People say," he exclaimed, "A penny a-week! that is utterly insignificant to the wants of the Church. How can you possibly transmute a penny a-week into the basis of the support of a Church which has for its object the Christian instruction of one and all the families of the land? Is it possible that a penny a-week can work such a marvel? Just as possible as that the successive strokes of the chisel should raise the pyramids of Egypt." And then followed the calculation on which this was founded.

The second watchword was more important still: Organise—organise—organise! "The time for argument is now over; the time for action has come. We have entered on a new era of deeds, which has followed the era of speeches. . . . O'Connell gave forth his watchword: Agitate—agitate—agitate! . . . Sir Robert Peel gave forth his watchword: Register—register—register! . . . Scotland seeks the Christian freedom of her Church, and the Christian good of her people; and to make out this let *her* watchword be: Organise—organise—organise! . . . We confess our main dependence to be on the prayers of the Christian people of the land, but we also know that prayer does not supersede either efforts or wisdom. Therefore I repeat, Organise—organise—organise! and without the objects of the demagogue on the one hand, or the statesman on the other, let us not cease our endeavours till, by the blessing of God, the country in which we live becomes a sacred land of light and liberty—a portion of that greatest and best of empires, the empire of truth and righteousness."

The cry thus raised was in reality a call for the forming of

local associations, in which parishes might combine for raising funds, preparing temporary accommodation, and arranging permanently for the future. Church Defence Associations had been formed at an earlier period, but Free Church Associations had now to take their place, and very cordial was the response given to this appeal. Already, on March 15th, the Church Defence Association at Woodside, Aberdeen, as Mr. Forbes states, was dissolved, for two reasons—viz., 1st, Because the attempt which had been made to defend the Church from the encroachments of the civil power had failed; and 2ndly, “Because the Church as established by law, as its constitution was interpreted by the civil powers, *was not worth defending*. The spiritual province was invaded, the Headship of Christ denied, and the people trampled on and enslaved.” Accordingly, “on Wednesday, the 15th March, a meeting was held, at which an association was formed for the support of a Free Presbyterian Church in Scotland.”\* Similar movements were common over the country. By the 19th of April 405 associations had been reported, and at the meeting of the Assembly the number had risen to 687. One of the earliest to respond to the appeal of Dr. Chalmers was Mr. M’Cheyne, of Dundee. “We are proposing,” he wrote on the 7th of March, “to organise for the support of a Free Presbyterian Church.” He asked the aid of Mr. Makgill Crichton at a meeting to be held on the following Tuesday. “All the accommodation of my humble dwelling is, of course, at your service.” The meeting was held, and the association formed. Mr. M’Cheyne was heard “pleading fervently the cause of the Free Presbyterian Church.” It was his last service—his work was done, he went home and lay down to die; and there were many in Scotland whose attachment to the cause of the Free Church was all the deeper from the fact that his latest public testimony was borne so earnestly on its behalf.

And now, as the day approached, the question began to be everywhere keenly debated—how many ministers would really go out? Nothing in all this history was more remarkable than the utter incredulity of opponents as to any large number

\* Dis. Mss. xxvii. p. 3.

standing true to their word. There was, perhaps, an excuse for some measure of doubt, owing to the signs of faltering which had appeared in certain quarters. In May, 1842, an unfortunate attempt had been made to break up the Evangelical party by a band of waverers, who came forward in the Synod of Glasgow, saying, We are *forty*; a movement really insignificant, but which made it more easy for politicians and others to believe what they wished to believe. Even after the Convocation, there were some proceedings which might well have strengthened the impression, and of these we give one example—the account of a meeting of Presbytery at Linlithgow, as described by Mr. Taylor.

“Our Presbytery of Linlithgow, at its meeting (March), secured for itself the inglorious pre-eminence of being the first Presbytery in the Church to flinch in the prospect of danger, to reverse its majority, and thus to lead in the unprincipled retreat. Our little Presbytery room was crowded, there being a large muster of members and a goodly company of onlookers. . . . The great question was introduced by Mr. ——— of ———, who moved an overture to the General Assembly for the repeal of the Veto Act. He had hitherto been a very forward supporter of reformation measures, and had advocated the overtures for giving efficacy to the call. At all public meetings in Edinburgh for Church-reform he was present. But recent events had altered his views. His speech was carefully prepared. It was written out and laid before him, and was delivered with that forced and vehement oratory which showed that the chief opponent with whom he had to contend was the conviction of his own heart. He has, since the Disruption, got the reward of his unfaithfulness, in being preferred to the desirable parish of ———. Mr. Laing, of Livingstone, replied, and replied effectively. But the most effective speech was Mr. Martin’s, of Bathgate, wherein, before the vote was taken, he reviewed the debate and the argument, and the altered position of the speakers. It was more than eloquent; but vain is every appeal to men bent on following not what their convictions but what their interests suggest.\* I

\* Mr. Martin, in a letter written at the time, himself refers to the part he took in this discussion. “The burden of the debate . . . fell on me. As I expected it would be so, I let them all speak before I rose; but,

remember distinctly, as if it were yesterday, the humbled appearance of the brethren who now openly disavowed their former principles. Mr. —, of —, sat silent, but voted right against his former party. Mr. —, of —, betrayed his folly by attempting an explanation. Poor Mr. —, of —, hung down his head, as if in agony of spirit, and refused to give a vote. Mr. —, of —, who in a fit of extreme haste had written Sir Robert Peel to say that if a right settlement were not soon given to the principles for which the Church was contending, he must resign his connection with it, and who got for answer that so soon as he resigned, Government would be prepared to present a successor to him; had a printed paper, which he circulated among the members, wherein he attempted to justify his remaining in the Church from the example of great men in former days. Mr. —, of —, said that much as he valued the Veto, he was not prepared to peril the Church's endowments for it. Mr. —, of —, a sort of Presbyterian Puseyite, though a good man, contended for his own favourite dogma, which was, that all the affairs of the Church were managed absolutely by the [Church] rulers, and that the only duty devolving on Church members was that of entire submission. Mr. —, of —, whom, as my copresbyter, I chiefly regretted leaving in the Establishment, fell the victim of his own timidity and irresolution, and urged it as a reason for repealing the Veto, that we were only putting ourselves in a favourable position for getting Government's sanction to some other preferable measure.\* By

truly, as man after man renounced his principles, amid many shameful pretences of maintaining them, it was not indignation I felt, but sorrow; and I never rose to speak, I believe, sadder or sicker at heart. I spoke long, and demolished, I think, every vestige of argument, . . . yet did not use an angry or bitter word. I do confess it was difficult to keep off."—*Life*, p. 114.

\* This was a vain idea, because the cases of intrusion—Mr. Young's, at Auchterarder, and the others—would have had to be carried out in the meantime by a series of forced settlements. In such things the Church could take no part. Besides, Lord Aberdeen's Act was all that men in authority were prepared to give—an Act which, by common consent, had to be thrown aside as an intolerable burden. It was only the existence of the Free Church which ultimately forced those in authority to go further.

a majority of votes was the overture carried, and by this *black act* was the first note of faint-heartedness and treachery sounded within the ranks of the Church." \*

But not in Church Courts only were such things going on. All over the country private efforts were being made to work on men's selfish hopes and fears, no agents being more zealous than those who had themselves deserted their colours. For honourable men one of the heaviest trials of that time was the breaking down and failure of former friends, whose principles had not been able to withstand the pressure.

When the day drew near, accordingly, estimates were being formed among all ranks of society as to the number of those who would go out; and, probably, men put their estimates at a higher or lower figure in proportion as their own sense of the importance of the principles at stake was high or low.

It is strange to observe how incapable the Moderate party as a whole were of estimating the position of affairs. In a manifesto, issued on the 1st of March, 1843, and signed by Principal Macfarlane, they assured the Government that they looked without apprehension to the threatened Disruption of the Church. "Its office-bearers may in SOME instances be changed, and a FEW of its lay members be withdrawn FOR A TIME, but the tempest will soon pass over."

Dr. Cumming, of London, who has had much experience in prognosticating future events, was very confident in this case. "I venture, on pretty accurate information, to assert that less than one hundred will cover the whole secession. . . . But I am not satisfied that any will secede." † He was certain that more than three-fourths, probably the whole of his brethren, would prove false to their pledges.

Even in Scotland, amid the preparation and bustle that was going on, many were equally in ignorance. Mr. Grant, of Ayr, states: "On my way to the General Assembly, one of the principal bankers in Ayr was in the railway carriage with me. The conversation naturally turned to the state of the Church. Turning to me, he offered to bet £5 that not forty would come

\* Dis. Mss. xxxvii. p. 4.

† Quoted in Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, vol. iv. p. 334.

out. I answered that I never betted, but that if he were to make his forty four hundred, and if I were to take it, his £5 would be mine in three days." \*

In Edinburgh they were just as little aware of what was coming. "Mark my words," wrote one of the best-informed and most sagacious citizens of Edinburgh a day or two before the Disruption, "not forty of them will go out." †

With similar anticipations, the Marquis of Bute, as Royal Commissioner, arrived at Holyrood, and nothing shows more strikingly how little the best-informed politicians knew what they were doing than a fact which has been recorded by Mr. Dunlop. In the circle at the Palace, on the evening of the 17th, within a few hours of the Disruption, the calculation was that the number who would separate would be between twenty and thirty. ‡ One circumstance, if they had only been aware of it, would have opened their eyes. Already the Evangelical party had been in conference, arranging for the final step, and that forenoon (the 17th) the Protest which Dr. Welsh was to lay on the table of the Assembly, renouncing the Establishment, had been signed by 400 ministers. §

Preparation, also, for a place of meeting had been completed at Tanfield, near Canonmills, one of the suburbs of Edinburgh. The hall there, after being built for other purposes, was occupied as a wareroom; and when visited by Mr. Dunlop in February the wide floor, with its piles of boxes, wore an "aspect of coldness and deadness." Hurriedly seated and fitted up, it now stood ready to give accommodation to fully 3000 people. On one side was a spacious platform, with its blue drapery in front, while on either hand, to right and left of the great area, the benches rose on a gentle slope. The roof was low, but, to the delight of all, the acoustics of the place were found to be perfect—speakers with even the weakest voice being heard with ease.

\* Dis. Mss. xli. p. 2.

† Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, vol. iv. p. 335.

‡ Memoir of Dr. Welsh, p. 103.

§ Including signatures to a paper of concurrence.

## IX. THE DISRUPTION.

AT last the decisive day arrived—the 18th of May. Business in Edinburgh was for the most part suspended, and all along the streets there was general excitement, as if men felt themselves in presence of some great event. Already, at break of day, an eager crowd besieged the doors of St. Andrew's Church, where the Assembly was to meet; and no sooner were they opened than every inch of space available for the public was densely crowded.\* There had been numerous arrivals from all parts of Scotland, and even from abroad. Dr. Stewart,—then of Erskine,—for example, who had been ordered for his health to the south of Europe, tells how he arrived just in time to take part in the proceedings: “I had to leave my family in London, and hurried down by mail-coach and rail to Edinburgh, to be present at the Disruption—arriving from Constantinople by uninterrupted travelling at four o'clock on the morning of that eventful day.”†

The opening scene was at Holyrood, where, as usual, the Lord High Commissioner held his levee, while “the yearly gleam of royalty was flickering about the old grim turrets.” Never had the reception-rooms of the Palace been more densely crowded, for those who were about to abandon the Establishment sought all the more to testify their abiding loyalty.

“Being a member for the last time,” says Mr. Lewis, of

\* Mr. Kerr, of H.M. Office of Works, who was placed in charge of the preparation of St. Andrew's Church, states: “On the evening of the 17th, when about to lock up the church for the night, we were informed that the door-keepers, who had duplicate keys, had been offered considerable sums of money to allow parties to occupy the pews all night. . . . Padlocks were put on the doors to prevent the duplicate keys being used.” Next morning when the public were admitted they “were very orderly and quiet; and, indeed, so obliging, that ultimately the greater number stood up in the pews, and allowed the seat-boards to be filled by others standing on them.”—Dis. Mss. lii.

† Parker Mss., Pres. of Greenock.

Dundee, "of the General Assembly of the Established Church in May, 1843, I was in Edinburgh on the appointed day, and attended the levee of Her Majesty's Commissioner, the Marquis of Bute, anxious to show our loyalty to Cæsar when about to give to Christ the things that belong to Christ. While crowding the ante-room, and waiting the opening of the door, the portrait of William III., oddly enough, gave way, and seemed about to fall, some one, as we tried to prop it up, exclaiming, 'There goes the Revolution Settlement!'<sup>\*</sup> an incident which, a hundred years earlier, had been interpreted as one of evil omen and warning; but, like other omens, it came too late to be of much use."<sup>†</sup>

At the close of the levee, shortly after noon, the Commissioner entered his carriage; the procession, with its military escort, moved round by the Calton Hill, up the North Bridge, and on to the High Church, where sermon was preached by Dr. Welsh, the retiring Moderator, from the words: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

"The discourse," says Dr. James Hamilton, "was a production which, for wise and weighty casuistry, for keen analysis of motives, and fine discrimination of truth, and for felicity of historic illustrations, would have been a treat to such a congregation at a less eventful season. With the solemn consciousness that in the full persuasion of their own minds, they had decided in another hour to take a step in which character, and worldly comfort, and ministerial usefulness were all involved, each sentence came with a sanction which such sermons seldom carry."<sup>‡</sup>

Service being over, men hurried along the streets and through the gathering crowds to St. Andrew's Church. Outside, the spacious street was an impressive spectacle, with its masses of eager spectators, while inside the Church the dense crowd, after long hours of suspense, were intently waiting for the issue.

"I was one of the first," says Dr. M'Lauchlan, "who made his way from the High Church, where Dr. Welsh preached, to

<sup>\*</sup> "The voice was that of William Howison Craufurd, Esq. of Craufurdland, the representative of one of Scotland's oldest families, and an unflinching supporter of the Church of 1690." — *Ten Years' Conflict*, vol. ii. p. 434.

<sup>†</sup> Parker Mss., Pres. of Dundee.

<sup>‡</sup> Farewell to Egypt, p. 7.

St. Andrew's Church, where the Assembly met. When I entered the seats on the Evangelical side were almost all empty. On the Moderate side they were quite full, with Dr. Cook in front—the ministers from that side not having been at the sermon. I sat beside Dr. John Smyth, of Glasgow. The galleries were packed full, and soon the whole house was crowded. When silence followed the rush of members, as we waited for the Moderator and Commissioner, I turned to Dr. Smyth. His eyes were full of tears, and he remarked, 'This is too much.'\* \*

It was about half-past two o'clock, or rather later, when Dr. Welsh was seen to enter and take the chair. Soon after there was heard the measured tramp of the soldiery outside, and the swell of martial music, with the sounds of the Queen's Anthem, announcing the approach of the Commissioner, and almost immediately he appeared and took the Throne, the whole assembly rising to receive him. When Dr. Welsh presented himself to the house all the hesitancy which often marked his speaking had left him. "He was firm and collected," writes his friend, Mr. Dunlop, "very pale, but full of dignity, as one about to do a great deed—and of elevation, from the consciousness that he was doing it for the cause of Christ." In solemn and fitting words the opening prayer was offered, and then a stillness as of death fell over the great assembly. Men held their breath—"every heart vibrated with a strange awe."

Again Dr. Welsh rose. "Fathers and Brethren," he said, and his voice sounded clear to the furthest limits of the great audience, "according to the usual form of procedure, this is the time for making up the roll, but in consequence of certain proceedings affecting our rights and privileges—proceedings which have been sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government, and by the Legislature of the country; and more especially in respect that there has been an infringement on the liberties of our Constitution, so that we could not now constitute this Court without a violation of the terms of the Union between Church and State in this land, as now authoritatively declared—I must protest against our proceeding further. The reasons that have led me to come to this conclusion are fully set forth in the docu-

\* Dis. Mss. xlix. p. 9.

ment which I hold in my hand, and which, with permission of the House, I shall now proceed to read."

Then followed the memorable Protest, in which, after briefly stating the sacred principles for which the Church had contended, the encroachments by which her spiritual powers had been overthrown, and the impossibility of constituting the Assembly under such Erastian conditions, it was declared:

"We protest that, in the circumstances in which we are placed, it is and shall be lawful for us, and such other Commissioners chosen to the Assembly, appointed to have been this day holden, as may concur with us, to withdraw to a separate place of meeting, for the purpose of taking steps, along with all who adhere to us—maintaining with us the Confession of Faith and Standards of the Church of Scotland as heretofore understood—for separating in an orderly way from the Establishment, and thereupon adopting such measures as may be competent to us, in humble dependence on God's grace and the aid of the Holy Spirit, for the advancement of His glory, the extension of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, and the administration of the affairs of Christ's house according to His Holy Word; and we now withdraw accordingly, humbly and solemnly acknowledging the hand of the Lord in the things which have come upon us because of our manifold sins, and the sins of this Church and nation, but, at the same time, with an assured conviction that we are not responsible for any consequences that may follow from this, our enforced separation from an Establishment which we loved and prized, through interference with conscience, the dishonour done to Christ's crown, and the rejection of His sole and supreme authority as King in His Church."

With these closing words, the Moderator laid the Protest on the table—lifted his hat—turned to the Commissioner, who had risen—and bowed respectfully to the representative of Royalty, an act which seemed to many as if the true old Church of Scotland were then and there bidding farewell to the State which had turned a deaf ear to her appeals. Leaving the chair, Dr. Welsh moved toward the door, and Dr. Chalmers, who all the time had been close at his side, was seen eagerly following, along with Dr. Gordon, Dr. M'Farlan, Dr. Macdonald, and the other occupants of the bench in front.

At the sight of the movement, a loud cheer—but only for a moment—burst from the gallery. At once it was hushed, for the solemnity and sympathy were too deep for such a mode of expression, and silence again fell over the house, as all were eagerly gazing at the seats to the left of the chair. It was a sight never to be forgotten, as man after man rose, without hurry or confusion, and bench after bench was left empty, and the vacant space grew wider as ministers and elders poured out in long procession.

Outside in the street, the great mass of spectators had long been waiting in anxious anticipation, and when at last the cry rose, "They come! they come!" and when Dr. Welsh, Dr. Chalmers, and Dr. Gordon appeared in sight, the sensation, as they came forth, went like an electric shock through the vast multitude, and the long, deep shout which rang along the street told that the deed had been done. No arrangement had been made for a procession, for the strong wish of the ministers was to avoid all display. But there was no choice. On either hand the crowd drew back, opening out a lane wide enough to allow of three, or at most four, walking abreast. And so in steady ranks the procession moved on its way, while all around they were met with expressions of the deepest emotion.

The writer of this was not a member of Assembly, but in that part of the House allotted to ministers not members he was in a favourable position, where all that went on could be fully seen. After the movement had been made, he remained for some time, side by side with Dr. Horatius Bonar, to witness the departure of friends, and especially to note the effect on the Moderate party who remained behind. At first, Dr. Cook and his friends were all complacency, but as the full extent of the Disruption began to disclose itself, there came an expression of perplexity, which in not a few instances seemed to deepen into bewilderment and dismay.

On leaving the church and falling into the line of procession, it was evident that amidst the crowd the first sensation was over, though tears were seen in many eyes, and other signs of emotion could be observed. But what showed most strikingly the magnitude of the movement was the view from that point

in George Street where you look down the long vista toward Tanfield, and where one unbroken column was seen, stretching, amidst numerous spectators, all the way till lost in the distance.

But now we turn to the Disruption Mss. to note what personal reminiscences there may be of a day on which men were sacrificing their all.

Some record little else than the names of the friends with whom they went forth side by side as comrades in the hour of trial. Mr. Flyter, of Alness, says: "I walked down in procession to Tanfield in company with Dr. Smyttan, late of Bombay, and General Munro of Teaninich."\* Mr. Dodds, of Humbie, records: "I walked down in procession to Canonmills along with my venerable father-in-law, Dr. Duncan, of Ruthwell, Dr. Henry Grey, of St. Mary's, Edinburgh, and my brother-in-law, Mr. George John Duncan, of Kirkpatrick-Durham."†

"The Rev. Nathaniel Paterson, D.D.; his brother the Rev. Walter Paterson; and Dr. Landsborough (Stevenston) walked arm-in-arm. What noble heads and fine countenances the three presented! Here were original genius; accurate scholarship, with varied accomplishments; and fine taste, with scientific learning. The three had in boyish days wandered together by the banks of the Ken; and now, when time had whitened their heads with the snow of age, they walked together in this memorable procession, being, by God's grace, willing to sacrifice all for the glory of that Saviour who had redeemed them with His blood."‡

Dr. Burns, of Kilsyth, goes more fully into detail: "On that memorable day, after hearing the sermon by the lamented Welsh, the writer of this walked over to St. Andrew's Church in company with a faithful man, Mr. Thomson, of Dysart. Ere he was aware, he found himself in what has been called the Moderate side of the Assembly, and was saluted by one of the Evangelicals who remained, as if he had been with them. The countenances of some old Moderates near him were very expressive of mingled astonishment and sorrow. On making egress from the house of bondage among the first, and being on the

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Dingwall.

† Dis. Mss. xxxiii.

‡ Memoir of Dr. Landsborough, p. 176.

side next the street leading down to the new Assembly Hall, he was very near the front of the procession, being joined by [his] brother, Dr. George Burns, of Tweedsmuir, and by [his] son, W. C. Burns. It was doubtless a solemn, yet felt to be a noble and soul-stirring scene. The day was clear, and the path of duty equally so. The Lord was with us, and assuredly the best by far of the Scottish Church. The incubus of Moderatism and secularity seemed to be shaken off; and though legal stipend was now gone, away also went bonds, and horn, and poind. Truly, it has been the exodus from Egypt.\*

Mr. Kerr, of H.M. Office of Works, being in charge of St. Andrew's Church, remained after Dr. Welsh and his friends had left. He states that "in the course of about twenty minutes there did not remain inside the church above one hundred human beings."† Looking at such a sight, what could men think but that it was the Church of Scotland which had gone out?

Of the procession Mr. Dunlop says: "True and great dignity and moral power impressed awe, which spoke in the silent language of respectful observance; and every now and then, as some more venerable father, or some tried champion of the cause, passed down, might be seen a head uncovered and bent in quiet reverence."‡ This struck Mr. Duncan, of Kirkpatrick-Durham, as "the deepest touch of all, showing that earnest solemnity and the spirit of prayer had its place in the gazing throng." "There were hats raised from venerable heads, and words such as these dropped into the ears of the passing ministers: 'The Lord be with you!' 'God guide you!' 'May He strengthen you and bear you through!'"

"Here and there, as the child or wife of some outgoing minister caught sight of a husband or father's form, accomplishing an act which was to leave his family homeless and unprovided, warm tear-drops formed, which, as if half-ashamed of them, the hand of faith was in haste to wipe away."§

And sometimes, under the impulse of the moment, there were yet more demonstrative expressions of feeling. As Dr.

\* Dis. Mss. xxix. p. 8.

† *Ibid.* lii.

‡ Memoir of Dr. Welsh, p. 110.

§ Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, vol. iv. p. 339.

Landsborough moved in the procession, "an aged minister was a little ahead of him. On a sudden the crowd broke, and a young lady sprang forward and caught the hand of the venerable servant of God, raised it up, and kissed it, and then, allowing it to drop, fell back into the crowd; while the old man seemed so much occupied with his own thoughts as scarcely to have noticed what had been done."\*

Nor were such feelings confined to those who were out on the street. "Elsewhere in the city, Lord Jeffrey was sitting reading in his quiet room, when one burst in upon him, saying, 'Well, what do you think of it? More than four hundred of them are actually out!' The book was flung aside, and, springing to his feet, Lord Jeffrey exclaimed, 'I am proud of my country. There is not another country upon earth where such a deed could have been done.'"+

The hall at Tanfield had, from an early hour, been crowded by an audience bound together by common sympathies, and anxiously waiting the result. Long hours had passed, and when a shout from the outside announced the appearance of the procession, the excitement grew intense. At last they entered—not only the well-known champions of the cause, but rank after rank the ministers and elders came pouring in, till all the allotted space was filled; and when friend after friend was recognised, there came from the audience an irrepressible outburst of feeling which carried all before it, and found expression in acclamations and tears.

The opening prayer of Dr. Welsh was an outpouring of devout and holy feeling, which moved every heart in a way never to be forgotten. In proceeding to elect a Moderator, all eyes turned at once to Dr. Chalmers, and at the mention of his name by Dr. Welsh, the whole Assembly rose and broke forth in enthusiastic applause. When he came in and took the chair a singular incident occurred. A heavy passing cloud had for a time cast a gloom over the Assembly, and when Dr. Chalmers rose to give out the opening Psalm, "O send thy light forth

\* Memoir of Dr. Landsborough, p. 179.

† Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, vol. iv. p. 339.

and thy truth, let them be guides to me," the cloud suddenly broke, the full sunlight came pouring through the windows, brightening the scene, and "there were some who thought of Dr. Chalmers' text but six months before, Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The opening address which followed was worthy of the occasion, vindicating the position of the Free Church, and defining the place she was to occupy.

Thus, with feelings of indescribable relief and thankfulness, the first sederunt of the Free Assembly was brought to a close. Every single step during the anxious hours of that day had been in perfect keeping with the momentous character of the event. Many a heart looked up in gratitude to God for strength in the hour of trial—the feeling which Dr. Landsborough, with expressive abruptness, wrote down at the time in his brief journal of the Disruption day: "Remained till six o'clock. Exceeding order. Halleluia! I shall never see the like till heaven."\*

Such feelings were not confined to Edinburgh. Over all Scotland, far away from the scene of action, there were many thousands of quiet homes in which anxious hearts were eagerly awaiting the tidings. "It was a time," says Mr. Taylor, of Flisk, "of unutterable anxiety, and prayer was the only relief. Eli-like, we watched and thought that they were happiest who were engaged actually in the work. Diligence itself seemed lazy until we got the newspaper which told that the act was done, and, by the blessing of God, nobly done. With a full heart we read the account, and by some of the speeches were affected to tears." †

Thus, also, it was with the aged Dr. Ross, of Lochbroom: "When the papers containing the news of the Disruption arrived, with streams of joyous tears flowing down his cheeks, he, Simeon-like, praised God that he was spared to see the day on which such an event took place, and repeatedly offered his '*Nunc dimittis*.'" ‡

\* Memoir, p. 173.

† Dis. Mss. xxxvii. pp. 9, 10.

‡ Parker Mss., Pres. of Lochcarron.

## X. THE FREE ASSEMBLY.

THE deed of the 18th of May having been thus completed, the members of Assembly at once set themselves to arrange for the building of churches, providing ministerial support, and all else that was required in their new position. With what sagacity and business-talent these affairs were adjusted has been shown by the results. But it seems impossible to avoid the conviction that the guidance and blessing of God were specially present with those who in a time of need were seeking the best methods by which to develop the resources of His Church. From the 18th to the 30th of May was a period of earnest work, into the details of which it is not for us here to enter.

Perhaps the most impressive act was the public signing of the Deed of Demission, a formal legal paper by which the emoluments and position of the Establishment were finally surrendered. This was done on Tuesday, the 23rd, in presence of a vast audience who hung in silence on the scene. Dr. M'Farlan, of Greenock, whose living was the richest in Scotland, appropriately led the way. Special interest attached to the appearance of some of the more aged ministers—to Dr. Muirhead, of Cramond, for example, who was ordained in 1788, when Moderatism was in the zenith of its power; and Dr. Somerville, of Drumelzier, whose few theological writings, apologetical and doctrinal, had been of rare excellence, and who came forward with feeble steps, leaning on the arm of his son, but firm in his determination to give that testimony for Christ. It was altogether a memorable spectacle—ministers in one day signing away more than £100,000 a-year, “a Church disestablishing herself.”

The number of the names affixed, including subsequent adherences, was 474. In November, 480 ministers (also including subsequent adherences) had pledged themselves that if the Government gave no relief, they must abandon the Establishment. For six months many an attempt had been made to tempt or terrify them, but when in May the day of trial came, the whole band, their numbers hardly diminished, stood in unbroken ranks. Not that the men were in all cases the same. Too many of the loudest talkers had been found faithless, but for every man who failed, another who had said little was ready to step forward and take his place; and so in the view of the world, the honour of the Church was intact, and her fidelity to the cause of Christ was openly vindicated.

In the proceedings of the Assembly much prominence was given to the cause of missions. It was evident that the Church would have to struggle hard for existence at home, but not for a moment was the work of missions allowed to fall into a secondary place. Two days after the movement to Tanfield the Assembly was already calling on Dr. Keith, of St. Cyrus, to report on the mission to the Jews, and often in after days has that distinguished minister dwelt with delight on the thought that it was "to the *Jew* first" the Free Church turned her regards, believing in the promise, "I will bless them that bless thee."

The whole missionary work at home and abroad was arranged in the full expectation that all the labourers in the mission-field would adhere to the Free Church. It was one of the most signal testimonies ever given to her principles when the entire missionary staff belonging to the Establishment, without a single exception, gave in their adherence. They were far removed from the din of controversy or the stir of public assemblies, and had in no way committed themselves. They might well have thought that a Church stripped of her temporalities, and having everything to provide for herself, would be little able to take the additional burden of all the missions. But not for a moment did they hesitate. The same faith and self-sacrifice which led them at first into the mission-field guided them once more. The cause of the Free Church was for them

the cause of Christ. They renounced the Establishment, and cast in their lot with their out-going brethren.

Thus the meeting of the Assembly passed away—a bright blessed time of unbroken brotherly love, of intellectual elevation and spiritual enlargement, the happy memories of which the men who took part in it can never cease to cherish.

## XI. FAREWELL SERVICE IN THE PARISH CHURCH.

THE great crisis, then, was over. The crowded meetings, overflowing with joyful enthusiasm, had to be left behind, and men parted to go home and meet, as best they might, the exertions and privations consequent on what had been done. Then it was that, in many a solitary country parish, on returning to manses and churches no longer their own, the true nature of the trial was fully realised.

“It was my privilege,” says Dr. Hanna, referring to the country ministers, the real sufferers of the Disruption, “to know one of these men, the father of a large family. He came into Edinburgh, signed the Deed of Demission, and set out—it was a long day’s journey—to travel home on foot to that family whose home and whose support he had signed away. He entered a house by the wayside. As he crossed its threshold, the remembrance flashed suddenly upon him that it was thirty years since he had entered that door, going into Edinburgh to College, a solitary and friendless youth. Quickly upon that memory the thought of piety linked itself. ‘The God,’ said he to himself, ‘who has hitherto guided me and mine these thirty years, will not forsake me now.’ His faith in his Heavenly Father put fresh strength into his heart, and he went on his way with a light and elastic step.”\*

Before leaving Edinburgh, a general understanding had been come to, that there should be no farewell sermons, no formal taking leave of the parish churches. The intensity of feeling was already so deep that it was deemed best to avoid adding to the excitement. In towns, and among the leading congregations, this understanding was generally acted on, but each minister

\* The Church and its Living Head, by Rev. Dr. Hanna, pp. 23, 24.

was left to judge for himself, and, as some of the brethren resolved to hold a parting service, it is right to notice the accounts which they have themselves given of these scenes.

For the most part they are very quietly referred to. "On the 11th of June I preached for the last time in the Established church which I had occupied for twenty-eight years, taking for a text in the Gaelic, Micah ii. and 10, 'Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest;' and in the English, Hebrews xiii. and 13, 'Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.' I may remark here, that this text in Hebrews occurred to me with particular force just as I joined the procession in George Street, on the day of the Disruption, and by the comforting impression then made on my own mind, I was led to address my congregation from it in taking leave of the church."\*

At Flisk, Mr. Taylor's statement is brief: "On the next Sabbath I took farewell of the Establishment, in a sermon on Rev. iii. 11, 'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.' I formally stated my reason for the decided step. The church was very full. There was deep silence and solemnity, and some were in tears."†

Mr. Davidson, of Latheron, gives no account of his sermon, but says: "I took the opportunity of explaining to my congregation what had taken place, . . . and my own altered situation in consequence, asking them to make up their minds deliberately and prayerfully as to the course they should adopt in circumstances so solemn. At the same time, I intimated a meeting of session for next day, in order to afford the elders an opportunity of declaring their sentiments. . . . I pronounced the benediction and left the pulpit, where I had been privileged to minister, however unworthily, for the long period of twenty-three years. That I did so with a heavy heart may readily be conceived, believing as I did that in all probability I should never enter it again. In this feeling the congregation very deeply shared, for many of them seemed affected to tears on leaving the church."‡

\* Mr. Mackenzie, of Farr, Dis. Mss. xx. p. 4.

† Dis. Mss. xxxvii. p. 10.      ‡ Dis. Mss., Parish of Latheron p. 3.

There were some of the ministers who passed through a similar state of feeling at an earlier stage, their knowledge of the world causing them to anticipate the time of trial. Writing of Dr. Duncan at Ruthwell, Mrs. D. says: "About that time [more than a year before the Disruption] I think the deepest feeling was experienced. . . . He looked on the Church of his childhood's habit and his manhood's choice with profound respect. Convinced that in her principles there was soundness and strength, it overwhelmed him with grief to see her overborne by an interference that he counted unscriptural and illegitimate. So keen was this feeling in him that more than once at the meetings he was obliged to stop. . . . It was remarkable that he never was overcome to that extent in the other villages, but in the Society room at Ruthwell he could not command himself. . . . For forty years he had wedded his affections to his people. That room he had procured for the male and female friendly societies, and there were carried on many of his useful operations. There he had helped them about their ballots for the militia in war time. There, in time of threatened invasion, he had aroused his volunteers. There, in times of scarcity, he had planned with them the bringing of ship-loads of Indian corn and potatoes, and there the stores had been distributed. There he had first unfolded his opening scheme of a savings bank for his own parish. There he had many times examined the village Sabbath school; and there, times uncounted, he had met with them of an evening to worship God. Two evenings in particular, when he was completely overcome, there sat before him those whose spiritual condition he had never been able to influence, and when he looked on them he wept. From the time, however, when the Home Secretary's harsh and ill-considered replies to all the Church's requests proved to him that we had nothing to look for from Government, his natural fortitude was restored to him. He felt that each must take their own place, and stand in their own lot. He warned his people firmly and affectionately, but he never failed again."

Bearing this in mind, we can understand the calmness with which the farewell service was quietly gone through at Ruthwell on the last Sabbath before the Disruption. "The period

seemed perilous ; small things were noted with unusual observance. As we crossed the grounds, rendered so beautiful by his taste and skill, on our way to church, the Sabbath before the Assembly, to our astonishment we found the sun-dial overturned. No part of it was broken but the stile. ‘You will never more point your people to the Sun of Righteousness in Ruthwell Church,’ remarked one by his side. ‘Very likely,’ was his quiet reply. Farther on in the lawn we found a flourishing evergreen torn up by the roots, and saw our neighbour’s herd of cattle before us, which had broken into the garden. ‘Will you say next that old James is not to work again in this garden,’ asked another. ‘Most likely,’ was the answer. We entered the dear old church with solemn thoughts, and heard him preach a sermon on Christ a Priest on His throne, in which he bore his last testimony in that place to the priestly and kingly offices of his Divine Redeemer.”\*

In certain cases the parting took place after the Assembly, but previous to the Sabbath. “At Woodside, Aberdeen, on Thursday, June 1st, a large assemblage was convened in the church for the purpose of fully discussing the whole question. After addressing the people for nearly two hours, the minister proceeded in conclusion to advert to the prospects of the congregation with reference to their place of worship, and to the arrangements necessary to be made for the succeeding Sabbath, when it was expected that the pulpit would be declared vacant by the Established Presbytery. He urged upon the people the necessity of quiet and becoming conduct on the solemn occasion of leaving their church, entreating them to show to their opponents that *their quarrel was not with men, but with principles, and to exhibit towards those that differed from them the meekness and gentleness of Christ*. He impressed further upon the people the necessity of decision, and that their next Sabbath would be the testing day as to their principles. . . . He concluded by taking a solemn leave of those walls within which they had worshipped so long, trusting that the Lord the Spirit would be with them under a lowlier roof, and prepare them for meeting at last in ‘a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’”†

\* Dis. Mss. xvi. p. 4.

† Dis. Mss. xxvii. p. 5.

Dr. Grierson, of Errol, has given his experience with greater fulness. "There was a very large attendance of the parishioners to meet with me in church on the Sabbath after my return from the Assembly. I had not thought it either expedient or natural to take leave of the place of worship before the Disruption actually occurred, and as there had been no worship in the parish church on the first Sabbath of the Assembly, I was anxious to meet with all my people there once more, although I had signed my demission as a minister of the Establishment, in order that I might under such solemn circumstances preach and press on them the blessed Gospel which many of them would never again hear from my lips, and that I might afterwards lay before them all when thus assembled a full and emphatic statement of the grounds on which I had taken that final step by which I had surrendered so many earthly attachments and advantages. . . . As the meeting was held only for these purposes, the services, though I preached twice, were all confined to that one meeting, at the close of which I took as solemn a leave of that place of worship and of many of the worshippers as I had already done of the Establishment, and intimated that public worship with the adherents of the Free Church would be observed next Lord's Day in the open air, and on the green in front of the Manse. The whole audience was most deeply affected. . . . The burst of feeling was perfectly overwhelming to myself as well as to others. After having with great difficulty of articulation pronounced the benediction, I had to remain in the pulpit nearly a quarter of an hour till every person had left the place except my chief companion in this painful trial, whom I found standing at the end of her accustomed pew in tears, the children having left her. . . . That was to me the most heartrending moment connected with the Disruption, yet the depth of the sympathy and attachment which had been manifested afforded me very precious consolation."\*

One more of these parting services deserves notice, as bringing out the testimony of a father of the Church, already referred to in these pages, who held a prominent place in the North—Dr. Ross, of Lochbroom. He was considered, it is said, the best

\* Dis. Mss. xi. p. 5.

Gaelic scholar of his day, spoke with fluency five languages, read Hebrew and Greek *ad aperturam*, a man of general culture, whom Sir David Brewster engaged to assist him when publishing the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. "He spent a most useful and honourable life among his people, who still cling to his memory with fond affection. Dr. Ross was one of those who saw, at an early stage of the struggle with the Civil Courts, that the maintenance of a faithful testimony for Christ and the spiritual rights of His people would end in the separation of the Church of Scotland from the State. They are still living to whom he said, five years before the Disruption, that it would take place, and that they would see the road leading to the door of the Established Church of Lochbroom covered with grass, as the church would be deserted by the people, because it would be occupied by such as are described by the prophet Isaiah, lvi. 10. The first Sabbath after the Disruption, Dr. Ross, then in very infirm health, attended the church as a hearer. After sermon by the Rev. Mr. Grant, Dr. Ross rose in his seat, and, with tears running from his eyes, praised the Lord for the testimony to the honour of Christ given by the Disruption party. He then exhorted the people to leave the State Church, which, almost to a man, they then did, and to this day [1867] have never returned."\*

The kind of statements, however, made from the pulpit on these occasions will be best understood from one or two examples. "In May, 1840," says Dr. Parker, of Lesmahagow, "I began a series of lectures on the Old Testament. . . . On the Lord's day preceding my departure to attend the Assembly of May, 1843, I was brought in providence to the close of the exposition of Genesis. . . . I preached in the parish church for the last time (May 28), I mentioned that I had intended that day . . . to enter on the exposition of Exodus, but the Lord had provided other work for me, and was calling on me to make a practical Exodus, and depart from the thralldom of Egypt—the Establishment, now thoroughly Erastianised. . . . I took a brief review of God's providential dealings towards our Church in the great controversy in which

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Lochcarron.

she had been engaged. I added that while, by the help of God, desirous to adhere to all the vows and obligations under which I had come at my ordination, . . . and maintaining firmly all the standards and principles of the Church of Scotland, I could no longer continue in connection with an Establishment which had virtually denied the kingly office of Christ, and submitted its spiritual jurisdiction to the control of Cæsar.”\*

In closing his sermon at Crailing, Mr. Milroy put the question: “Why is our relation disturbed? . . . Why, so happy, so peaceful, so united, do we not remain so? . . . Why shall the simple music of the church-bell not summon us again together into this house of prayer, awakening devout feelings, solemn retrospect, heavenly anticipation? Think not, dear brethren, that I am a stranger to these ties. . . . Mine is not the heart to be insensible to sweet associations and solemn recollections, neither do I disregard the manifold advantages of the position I have held. . . . But there is something dearer to the Christian’s heart than outward peace, . . . and that is the honour of his Lord and Redeemer. . . . By events, in hastening which I have had no part, the point has been raised, whether or not we shall continue to retain the civil advantages of our position as an Establishment on grounds which, to say the least, set aside and merge the glory of the Redeemer as King of Zion and sole Head of the Church. . . . I have preferred to resign worldly advantages, rather than retain them on wrong conditions. I am not insensible to the sacrifice, neither are my hopes sanguine as to the future, but the present path of duty only is ours.

“Ever since I came amongst you, . . . I have set myself against that accommodating religion which will go so far with Christ, but will not follow Him wholly. And now I am called myself to set you the example. Interest and feeling stand ranged on one side, principle on another. I choose the latter. I cleave to Christ’s supremacy, and I trust to be remembered among you even after my body shall slumber in the dust, as one who honestly urged you to give yourselves wholly to Christ, and who himself set you the example by sacrificing his earthly advantages for Christ’s crown and glory. . . . Between me and

\* Dis. Mss. xxxi. p. 5.

not a few of this flock I trust the bond will yet subsist. . . . With others I fear the pastoral connection is to cease, because of their mistaken, I question not, conscientious attachment to the walls and notion of an Establishment. Such, in my estimation, prefer the outward shadow to the inward substance, these external circumstances to the grand principles on which the Church of Scotland has been based. These principles we retain. . . . With us, then, is the Church of Scotland; with others are the civil advantages she once enjoyed.

“For yourselves, I entreat you to consider well the part you act. As for me, God forbid that I should cease to pray for you. . . . When I look back, dear brethren, if I feel regret, it is the regret of not holding forth with sufficient fervour the overwhelming love of Jesus, of not being touched enough with the misery of perishing souls. Oh! that I may live henceforth under this twofold impression of the love of Jesus, and the value of immortal souls. Him, having not seen, do I love. He is a blessed Master to serve. This has been my testimony when the candle of prosperity has been shining; it is my testimony now that the cloud of adversity is overhanging. Come, oh, come into the service of this Master. Away with coldness, away with formality, away with deadness. Arise, arise, and return to your God. . . . Come, O Spirit of the living God, and breathe on these slain, that they may live. Amen and amen.”\*

\* Extracted from Mss. furnished by his son, the Rev. A. W. Milroy, M.A. Oxon., Reader at the Rolls, London.

## XII. FIRST SERVICE IN THE FREE CHURCH CONGREGATION.

IF there was pain in leaving the old churches, the loved scenes of former labour, yet the real point of anxiety was the first meeting of the several Free Church congregations on the succeeding Sabbath. On the numbers who might then rally round the pastor depended his whole prospects of usefulness, and, indeed, of support, through life. In many a manse men looked forward with much misgiving to that memorable Sabbath morning when, all over Scotland, the hitherto united congregations were to be seen breaking up and going in opposite directions. In giving some examples of the scenes which took place, it will be seen how calmly, for the most part, the circumstances are spoken of.

There were parishes in which the results went far beyond what ministers had expected. At Roslin, for three months after the Convocation, Mr. Brown states, the aspect of matters was very dark and discouraging. About the end of that period he tried privately what could be done in the way of collecting money for building a new church, but he found no one willing to do anything. Subsequently, matters were more promising, and, after the Disruption, "the first meeting was held, on the 28th of May, in the old graveyard near Roslin Castle, in the presence of a very large congregation, though the intimation of the meeting there had been made only on the preceding day. He conducted public worship on each of the next eighteen Sabbaths in succession in the same beautiful and romantic situation, with the exception of one Sabbath, which was rather unfavourable." Of 240 communicants, 200 came out, and 40 remained in the Establishment.\*

\* Dis. Mss. xiv. pp. 1-3.

Dr. Landsborough, of Stevenston, had, as we have seen, declared that very few would follow him, and had received the reply, "There will perhaps be more than you think." Accordingly, he tells the result: "When I returned from the General Assembly, it was arranged that I should preach in the Freemasons' Hall in the forenoon. . . . In going to the hall I met few coming to the Established church, and I saw few going on their way to the hall, so that I knew not how matters were going on. When I reached the hall I found that it was completely filled, and a crowd standing about the door who could not gain admission. The Rev. Gilbert Laing, who unexpectedly arrived, readily consented to officiate in another hall. . . . In the Freemasons' Hall, for the first time as a minister of the Free Protestant Church of Scotland, I preached to a densely crowded and most attentive congregation."\*

Sometimes the meeting was held in the minister's house. At Morningside, Dr. Chalmers opened his own dwelling-house, and converted it into a church; and "perhaps he never occupied a more picturesque position than when, planted midway up the staircase, he preached to a disjointed congregation, scattered into different rooms, all of whom could hear, but not half of whom could see, the clergyman."†

At Innerwick, near Dunbar, the first Free Church service was held on 11th June in the manse. The congregation, amounting to about the usual number, filled the rooms and staircase, while the minister, Mr. Forman, stood in the lobby. When, at the close, he intimated that in the course of the week he would remove with his family to the town of Dunbar, and that he was as yet uncertain where a place would be found in which to address them next Lord's Day, there were many of his hearers whose stifed sobs and watery eyes expressively testified the intensity of their feelings.‡

For the most part, however, it was in the open air that the first meetings were held. At Monkton, Mr. Burns and his adhering people retired to a stackyard at the back of the farm of West Orangefield, where for many months in the

\* Dis. Mss. xxxix. p. 3.

† Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, iv. 357.

‡ *Witness*, 14th June, 1843.

memorable summer of 1843 they heard the Word with gladness.\*

At Moy, Inverness-shire, Dr. M'Lauchlan states : "The first Sabbath after my return from Edinburgh and the Disruption Assembly was the 4th of June. The day was cold and discouraging, the only one of the kind during the summer. The place of meeting was chosen by the people themselves in the Ballintraan Wood, about the middle of the parish. This day was to test the feelings of the people, and I was anxious ; but the attendance was good, embracing every man of any consequence in the parish at the time, and several from the parish of Duthil. My text was from Ps. lxxxiii. 4. I was much encouraged to find the people so hearty." †

At Ruthwell, on the second Sabbath of the Assembly, "the Rev. Horatius Bonar, of Kelso, preached on the green hillside [on the farm of Mr. Rogerson], to between 2000 and 3000 people [Dr. Duncan had written from Edinburgh, giving directions to have the whins removed]. Vehicles of many descriptions were there from great distances. Solemnity, curiosity, and anxiety occupied the feelings of the crowd. They expected much of Church affairs; but it was too good an opportunity for preaching the everlasting Gospel. . . . The Plant of Renown was his subject; and I have heard some who say that in eternity they will bless the Lord for having heard the Plant described that day." ‡

At Ayr, the church of Mr. Grant was one of the *quoad sacra* churches, built chiefly by the Evangelical party; and he says : "We were inclined, if possible, to retain the building. . . . The first Sabbath of August, 1843, was to be my first communion [Mr. Grant had been ordained 23rd April, 1843]. Eight days previously, an interdict from the Court of Session was handed to me, forbidding me the use of the church. This quite took us by surprise. We were not aware that such a step had been proposed. At the instigation of the parish minister of St. Quivox, a few members of the congregation, who had not contributed one sixpence towards the erection of the church, had

\* Dis. Mss. xxxiv. p. 3.

† Dis. xlix. p. 6.

‡ Dis. Mss. xvi. pp. 5, 6.

been induced to apply for an interdict; and the matter had been pressed on quickly, for the purpose of excluding us from the church on our communion Sabbath. This was done, as we afterwards learned, under the idea that, as my people had never partaken of the Supper with me, they might not consider themselves bound to my ministry; and, if prevented from participating at that time in their own church, might detach themselves from me. It proved a great mistake; for not a few of my people who were at that time irresolute, regarded the interdict as an insult to the congregation, and dishonouring to the Lord's Supper, and at once gave in their adherence to the Free Church.

"The interdict was received at the end of the week—I think, on Saturday. On Sabbath, when the congregation assembled they found the doors locked. The elders directed them to a school-house close beside. When I entered, it was crowded. Among others, I recognised the well-known face of Alexander Murray Dunlop, then on a visit in Ayr. After the first Psalm, we adjourned to the street, and kept our preparation Sabbath in the open air. I well remember the relief I felt when, during prayer, a lady held her parasol to shelter my head from the blazing sun. . . . On the sacramental Sabbath we assembled in Mr. William Alexander's woodyard. The logs were arranged for seats for the congregation, and the pulpit and tables were placed under cover of the sawpit. Rain having come on, some old sails were stretched out as a covering for the people. It was a day much to be remembered. Some of my people still surviving [1875] often speak of it, and especially of the evening sermon by the Rev. P. Borrowman, of Glencairn, on the white stone and the New Name."\*

The venerable Dr. Burns, at Kilsyth, on returning from Edinburgh, had preached his farewell sermon in the churchyard, "near the tomb of Mr. Robe, of pious memory, to a very large assembly, from 1 Peter iv. 17, 'If judgment begin at the house of God,' &c. . . . The day was favourable, the sun shone bright, the scene was truly affecting and impressive." It was on the succeeding Sabbath, 4th June, that the Free Church congregation first met. Public worship was conducted on

\* Dis. Mss. xli. pp. 6-8.

“a beautiful sloping bank on the side of the Garrel Burn, . . . near the church now left after twenty-two years' occupation, and within the walls of which scenes ever memorable and sweet and solemn had been witnessed. The morning had threatened rain, but many prayers had been put up for a favourable day. By eleven o'clock the day cleared up. Within the house of Mr. Thomas Shaw the minister's Bible was deposited, and this godly man accompanied him to the tent carrying the Bible under his arm, and as the church-bell sounded to declare a vacancy, the Free Church hearers were thronging to the tent brae, where, for two hours, they heard the Word from their outed minister—the text, 2 Cor. ii. 9. He was carried through the work of the day comfortably, though it is not easy to describe the feelings of himself and family on that occasion.” “We trust the Lord was with us in the field, by the stream from the mountain, while there were some falling tears when we thought of the Sabbaths gone by.”\*

Such scenes as these were taking place in all the country districts of Scotland. Even in the larger towns the first meetings of the Free Church congregations were often held in striking circumstances.

At Woodside, Aberdeen, it was resolved to meet “in the open air, in the spacious playground of the school, which was accordingly seated for the purpose, and was capable of containing upwards of 1500 persons. A small pulpit was placed at one end, and an awning spread above it as a protection from the weather. The morning of Sabbath, 4th June, was cold and ungenial. Dark clouds overspread the sky, and a cold wind blew from the north. Long before the hour of worship the people began to assemble in the playground, and by eleven o'clock it was densely filled by more than 1500 persons, many having come from a distance to witness so novel a spectacle. The minister commenced by singing the first four verses of Psalm xx., and after prayer, preached from Acts xxiv. 14-16, ‘But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers,’ &c. The service closed with the baptism of two children. The whole proceedings were con-

\* Dis. Mss. xxix. pp. 9, 31.

ducted in the most orderly manner. A spirit of deep solemnity pervaded the assembly."\*

Mr. M'Bean, minister of the Gaelic congregation at Greenock, attempted at first to keep possession of his *quoad sacra* church, but the Established Presbytery were prompt in their action. On Saturday, 24th June, he was at their instance interdicted from entering his pulpit. "This was the crisis in the history of the Gaelic congregation, . . . a time of great anxiety. . . . The office-bearers, in the emergency, agreed to ask the magistrates for the use of the Duncan Street burying-ground, the right of management being in the corporation. Their application was at once granted, and the people assembled there the following day at eleven. This Sabbath, June 25th, will be ever memorable in the history of the Free Gaelic congregation. The burying-ground presented a scene that day which can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. It was a bright, warm, sunny day, so that the people experienced little inconvenience by worshipping in the open air. Let us hope it was also a day in which the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing on His wings to many. A tent was erected near the centre of the ground, from which Mr. M'Bean preached in the forenoon in Gaelic, from Hebrews xi. 25, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,' &c. ; and it afforded him unfeigned satisfaction to see that the people had all adhered to the Free Church, with only one or two exceptions. In the afternoon many from other congregations joined in the services, being drawn together partly from sympathy with the ousted minister and his people, and partly, no doubt, from the novelty of the scene, so far at least as Greenock was concerned. His text on this occasion was Hebrews x. 34, 'For ye had compassion on me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods,' &c., from which he preached an eloquent and powerful discourse ; and in the evening the Rev. John Glass, of Bracadale, afterwards of Musselburgh, preached from Hebrews ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation,' with his characteristic earnestness and zeal, to a large and attentive assemblage." †

\* Dis. Mss. xxvii. p. 5.

† Parker Mss., Pres. of Greenock.

So far as the town congregations, however, were concerned, open-air services were the exception. A much more frequent case was such as that of St. Andrew's congregation, Glasgow, so well described by Dr. Paterson. On returning from the Assembly, he states that he found "the elders in a pother, totally unprovided with a place for the remnant to meet in next Sabbath, and it was then Friday evening . . . Instead of going to my sermons (I had counted on only one, but a scheme of exchange had failed), I must set out in quest of the elders, to see what must be done in such an emergency. I had only gone a little way when I met an angel with a smiling face—Meekie, who, with her brother, was hieing to our house. She is my jewel, I should rather say God's, and the world will never go ill with me as long as she is in it. She had that day more joy than a kingdom could have given her. One of her nearest friends had become serious. After a brief welcome, she told me a place was procured, and an advertisement sent to two newspapers, placards ready, and circulars, which were to be sent to some hundreds of the congregation. It was justly said by one of the best of our session, that Miss M. was better than six elders. I immediately turned with the party to see the place. It was the very room where the same congregation gave me a public dinner on my installation in Glasgow. . . . This room of the Black Bull Inn had been obtained at the request of Miss M. The landlady is decidedly with us; her husband wavering; the family belong to my flock. Mercy is twice blessed. The hostess consented with tears, saying that my angel had been sent by God, for they had been in doubt whether to remain with the walls, and this had come just to confirm them. On Sabbath morning, instead of the vestry, I was accoutred in the parlour of a public-house. I could not help asking an elder who was present, whether anybody had come. He said, with a grave countenance, there were some. My text was, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.' This subject for both diets was suggested by Meekie on her seeing a millenarian placard to that effect on the posts of the doors within which we were to assemble. My use of the text, no doubt differing from that of the millenarian, was, *Go out*, for the Bridegroom

will not *come in*. When the bells had rung their last peal, the grave elder returned with a bright face, and said the hall was choke full, and that one of the audience had just been to St. Andrew's for his books, where Mr. Smith, of Cathcart, a sympathiser, was to preach, and where, at five minutes to eleven o'clock, only three persons had assembled. This was something like going out ; my heart rose like a balloon, and I never went to a pulpit with more comfort, or preached with more freedom. They say that listeners never hear good of themselves, and it is as probable that spies see as little. In our hall, a boy was heard counting away at heads behind backs, and the vile work came afterwards to be explained. The boy is a boarder with Mr. Allan, a teacher, a probationer, a rampant Moderate, and an elder of St. Andrew's walls. The boy knows my boys, and told them he was sent by his master to count both congregations. His report was : in the hall, 456—alas, it could hold no more ; in the church, 35—alas, it could hold 1200. . . . And now, having done with this wonderful day, I am grateful to add, that never had I more content or a frame of spirit more disposed to praise the Lord for His goodness. I shall have less money, but many retrenchments will now be honourable, and I have no fear of suffering want."\* [It may be added, Dr. Forbes, of St. Paul's, in a letter of date 10th August, 1874, not long before his death, characterises the above statement as an admirable account of the proceedings of the first Sabbath, and adds, that it may be taken as a lively account of the general proceedings of that day in Glasgow.]

At Errol, Dr. Grierson's expectations of the numbers who should adhere to the Free Church were not great. The place of meeting was the green in front of the manse. "When the day came (June 4th), the appearances at first were very unpromising. I had shut myself up in my study," he says, "that I might not have my thoughts distracted or my feelings agitated by what was passing without. I learned, however, that even when the time appointed for our public worship was almost come, an earlier hour than usual having been found necessary, no hearers had come to occupy the seats placed for them on the green

\* Mr. Nath. Paterson's Letters, with Memoir, pp. 149, 150.

except two widows in humble life, each of whom as she passed the collection plate, dropped into it her consecrated mite. But shortly afterwards, the people began to assemble in considerable numbers, when it appeared that they had lingered in the neighbourhood, and had not taken their places till almost the last moment, as if they had felt that their assembling in such a spot before the worship was about to begin was somewhat like invading the privacy of domestic life.

“The place of meeting was extremely picturesque and retired. It was immediately in front of the manse, in the form of an oval, and entirely enclosed by tall shrubs, chiefly laurels, interspersed with lilacs and laburnums—the former lifting their fragrant and massy tufts, and the latter hanging forth their golden and waving tassels over the others. The scenery of the immediate neighbourhood was all shut out, except the tower and pinnacles of that church which we had so lately left. The pulpit, which had been brought down the evening before on the willing shoulders of some dozen of the young men, was placed with its back to the east, so that the occupant might be sheltered from the wind blowing from that quarter, and was flanked by a tall and taper young yew-tree, whose solemn verdure harmonised well with the nature of the services which were to be celebrated so near it.

“The pulpit itself was that which had belonged to the church that was taken down after the present one had been erected. It had been presented to me by the heritors as the one from which I had been addressed on the day of my ordination, and from which I had preached for nearly the first fourteen years of my ministry; and, as was noticed at the time, the person who by appointment that day occupied the pulpit I had left was the very individual who had presided when the Presbytery ordained me. A few of my parishioners, not quite two years before, though not in anticipation of the events which had now occurred, had presented me with a handsome family Bible and Psalm-book; and when these were carried before me, and placed in the pulpit by my youngest child, a boy of seven years of age, who had requested permission to perform this service, many in the meeting, as I was afterwards informed, were sen-

sibly affected. When I walked through the rows of the people, some seated on forms, some on the grass, and many of them standing, and took my seat in my old pulpit, I was at first much overpowered; but during the singing of the psalm, which in ordinary course happened to be the 65th, I regained my composure, which was not again disturbed, although in the course of the first prayer the bell of the parish church, which had then ceased to be under my control, kept ringing for the whole of the usual time.

“My text was Hebrews xi. 24-27, which occupied me the whole day. The people were extremely attentive, and when I came to the application of the subject in the afternoon, having by this time obtained a lithographed copy of the Deed of Demission, with the signatures of all the 470 ministers, I threw it open over the side of the pulpit, as a recent and practical illustration of the noble principles embodied in the text, which seemed to produce a very powerful impression. It was calculated that between six and seven hundred persons were present. Some of them, as I was fully aware, had been attracted merely by the novelty of the occasion, or some such motive, and without any intention of adhering to our solemn Protest; while others who really intended to do so would, as it was to be feared, and ultimately proved to be the case, be intimidated, importuned, or enticed to withdraw from us. The first time that I had any leisure to attend particularly to the numbers that were present was at the dismissal after the forenoon service. Being called up to the staircase window, I saw the road from the manse to the village, a distance of fully two hundred yards, covered with people for nearly its whole extent as closely as they could walk. They were generally of the humbler classes; but their liberal collection—about eight times the amount of the average before we left the Establishment—showed that their hearts were with us. At this sight I burst into tears, thanked God, and took courage.”\*

Dr. Simpson, of Kintore, had looked forward to the Disruption with painful emotions on many grounds. “Though I never failed,” he says, “to record my vote in the Church

\* Dis. Mss. xi. pp. 5-7.

Courts, and to keep the subject in the view of my people, yet the controversy became to me extremely unpleasant; and, strange as it may seem, I sought refuge from it in a course of study altogether unconnected with its immediate bearing. . . . I was all the while, however, . . . determined to stand or fall by the principles I had conscientiously espoused, leaving events to God.

“I was perfectly aware that a considerable number of my people favoured the cause to which I adhered; but I did not expect that more than a small section of them would take the decisive step of seceding from the Established Church along with me. I had even some doubts whether it would be practicable or expedient to form a Free Church congregation in Kintore. But these unworthy misgivings were speedily dissipated. The event showed that I did my people great injustice in the opinion I had formed of them. I shall never forget the feelings I experienced on first entering the Farmers’ Hall, in which we held our meetings for public worship till the new church was erected. Mrs. Simpson had been taken ill that Sabbath morning, and I felt very much the want of her cheering support in the trying duties of the day. I therefore left the manse with inexpressible sadness of heart. Such was my extreme depression of spirits that I fancied I derived strength and encouragement from the presence even of my two eldest children [both under ten years of age], whose little hands I grasped with eagerness as I walked along. But, oh, how my almost fainting heart was revived and sustained when I surveyed the interesting assembly, and saw so many of those of my former flock, whom I loved most dearly, seated around my humble pulpit, and bending on me intent looks of the tenderest attachment and kindest sympathy. The only tears I shed in connection with the Disruption burst from my eyes at this moment, and they were not tears of grief, but of lively gratitude and joy.”\*

Even in localities where the Free Church proved to be exceptionally strong, that Sabbath morning was a time of anxiety and misgiving, as may be seen from the experience of Mr. Craig of Rothsay:—

\* Dis. Mss., Dr. Simpson, Kintore, pp. 2, 3.

“The parish manse of Rothesay stands on the slope of a hill by the side of the road, called the Minister’s Brae. . . . It looks across the valley in which the town is situated. . . . From the upper windows a fine view is obtained of the entire town and bay, . . . the entrance to the Kyles of Bute, and their varied and attractive scenery. It is surrounded by trees, all of which were planted by Mr. Craig, among which he had often walked with delight, pruning-knife in hand, and enjoying instructive, playful, and exhilarating conversation with a friend. Each of them might almost be looked on as an old acquaintance. . . .

“The parish church is situated about a mile out of town, at the lower end of Loch Fad. . . . The road that conducts to it from the town resembles an avenue, a row of elegant trees lining it all the way. Arrangements had been made for conducting worship, on the first Sabbath after Mr. Craig’s return, in the Gaelic Church. Its accommodation was small, but it was not known to what extent the congregation might assemble round their minister on this occasion. It *was* known that at least a few decided and faithful witnesses would be found, true to their principles and true to their friend. Sabbath, 4th June, was a calm and lovely day. The sun shone bright and clear. The air was balmy and pure. Scarcely a breath of wind was felt, or the slightest rustling of the foliage observable. The bay was still and peaceful as a lake. . . .

“As he was wont, Mr. Craig left the manse about half-an-hour before the time of beginning public worship. It is scarcely possible for any one who has not passed through a similar experience and mental state to enter into the feelings of a minister’s heart on such an occasion as this. He has left for God’s and conscience’ sake the place wherein he has proclaimed for years the grand doctrines of salvation to a large and affectionate congregation. He has cast himself on the care of a gracious and loving Providence, not knowing what shall befall him. Principles are at stake, a testimony for which is to be lifted up, and in the defence of which, for the Lord’s sake and their own, he *would* be joined, if possible, by those whose happiness is dear to him as his own soul. The hour of trial is

come. He may have his misgivings. Who are the faithful ones? How many will be on the Lord's side? Like Eli of old, trembling for the ark, his heart trembles for the honour of his Lord. If *that* be evidently safe, all selfish considerations entirely laid aside, he is happy and glad. Some such emotion as this may have passed through his mind on the present occasion.

“For many years past, a long continuous stream of men and women and children was to be seen each Sabbath morning wending their way solemnly and thoughtfully along the road, literally as in the case of Israel, ‘*going up* to give thanks unto the Lord.’ The minister walks down the avenue from the manse, and goes out upon the highway. Not a creature is to be seen. A single remark is made to his friend accompanying him, and then he is silent. Passing onward, he reaches the High Street, and changing his usual route—formerly to the left—he turns down to the right. A solemn silence reigns. Not a human being has yet been seen. Into what channel has the usual stream been directed? ‘There are to be few in church to-day—the next corner will disclose something surely,’ and again all is silence. Not a word is spoken. The mental excitement is intense. Curiosity is fully awakened. Hope has been wound up to the highest pitch. The given spot is reached, and *the* discovery is now to be made. He turns off to the left, and at right angles to the High Street. Now a cheering sight greets the eye and fills the heart with devoutest gratitude to God. A dense multitude crowds round the door of the Gaelic Church, vainly expecting admittance to what was already a packed house. The lobbies, the passages, the pulpit stairs, all are filled. Every inch of standing room is occupied. His former beadle, John Macdonald, is waiting to attend him *as usual*. The greater number of his attached elders surround him *as usual*. His congregation, too, is there *much as usual*. With great difficulty, from the density of the crowd, the pulpit is reached. After praise, prayer, and the reading of the Word, in all which exercises his own spirit was deeply moved, he discoursed with remarkable unction and power to the joy and edification of his people, from Psalm cxxvi. 3: ‘The Lord hath

done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' This was indeed a day never to be forgotten. There was not a little of the Spirit's presence and the Spirit's power, and thus began his ministry in the Free Church of Scotland." \*

In connection with the services of that day, there occurred in one of the northern parishes a remarkable interposition of Providence, which must have made a deep impression on the surrounding population.

"At Rosehall, Sutherlandshire, the Established Church fell in on the first Sabbath after it had been vacated by the congregation. The whole area and pulpit were covered with slates, stones, and rubbish, which must have occasioned much loss of life if the congregation had been assembled, the church having fallen during the hours of the usual Sabbath service." †

It was one of those incidents which might not unnaturally have been viewed as ominous of evil, and interpreted by some to the disadvantage of the Established Church. But apart from all such views, the people had great reason for thankfulness to God on account of that providential care which had permitted them to worship in safety in their parish church up to the time when, under a sense of duty, they had been compelled to assemble elsewhere. Such an event in the history of the parish could not fail to leave a deep impression behind it.

\* Memorials of the Rev. R. Craig, pp. 216-220.

† Parker Mss., Pres. of Dornoch.

## XIII. THE PREACHING OF CHURCHES VACANT.

AFTER the removal of a minister by death or otherwise, the custom in Scotland is, that a member of Presbytery is sent on an early Sabbath to preach the church vacant, as it is termed—that is, to read at the close of the usual service a formal document announcing the vacancy. At the Disruption there was, of course, much of this kind of work to be done, and, not unfrequently, it was carried out under somewhat remarkable circumstances.

The difficulty in some cases was to get together an audience sufficient to witness the ceremony. At Langton, in Berwickshire, when Dr. Brown left, the member of Presbytery who came to preach, found it impossible to get a single parishioner to listen to him, and it was believed that he had to return without holding any service, or even reading the intimation at the church. What made the matter more noticeable was the circumstance, that a proclamation of banns had to be made that day, and the session-clerk found that no witnesses could be got to go near the church till the people had made sure that the representative of the Presbytery had fairly left the village, and was well on his way home.

At Bolton, in East-Lothian, when the day came, Mr. Abernethy was on his deathbed. The Presbytery had selected for the work one who formerly had professed non-intrusion principles. He “put the horse into the stable, and went to the minister’s room to announce his mission. He then proceeded to the church, but the bell-man and precentor were absent, and not one individual appeared. In this extremity, he invited the hinds of a neighbouring farmer to be witnesses that the church was declared vacant, but they refused to come. He then insti-

tuted a search in the village, and at length lighted upon two old men, whom he invited to 'come this way,' who did not know what his purpose was. Taking his stand in front of the church, the rev. gentleman prayed, and before proceeding to read his document, said, 'Stop, I see a dressed man coming, perhaps he intends to hear sermon.' The dressed man, however, passed on, and the rev. gentleman read his paper. . . . In this case the parishioners have anticipated the Presbytery by saving them the trouble of declaring the church vacant."\*

Throughout the North of Scotland there was much reluctance to engage in this work. It is believed, indeed, that in some cases it was never done, and in others, it was only after long delay. In the island of Lewis, it was the 3rd of September before a beginning was made by preaching vacant the church of Lochs. The minister of Stornoway, who was sent to officiate, had first himself to perform the office of beadle, and then conduct the service in presence of his own domestics—the ground officer of Stornoway and his manservant, the entire audience having been brought from a distance.†

At Sheildaig, the whole attendance consisted of three, only one of whom was a parishioner.‡

At Poolewe, the delegate of the Presbytery officiated to an audience of one—"his own gillie."§

At Killearnan, in Ross-shire, the attendance was more extensive, consisting of thirteen strangers and nine parishioners, five of whom belonged to one family. When the minister of Avoch arrived to do duty, it was found that there was no bell-rope, but a beam was procured, and with it the minister's man was "forked up" till his hand reached the residue of the rope, when the bell was rung, and the service went on.\*\*

At Skirling,†† near Biggar, intimation had courteously been sent that service would be held at four o'clock, on Sabbath, 2nd July. In this way, "any of the parishioners who were at all anxious to be present had ample opportunity, as the Free Church service was over by two. Shortly after four o'clock the

\* *Witness*, 21st June, 1843.

† *Ibid.* 20th September, 1843.

‡ *Ibid.* 26th August.

§ *Ibid.*

\*\* *Ibid.* 19th July.

†† *Ibid.* 5th July, 1843.

Presbyterial delegate drove into the village, attended by his man, and from the turn out of the villagers at their doors, there was, no doubt, good reason to expect a well-filled church. The rev. gentleman alighted and took a turn back and forward on the green, expecting every moment to hear the bell summon the villagers to church; but the bell maintained an obstinate silence, and the people doggedly kept their places at their doors, and as he was unable to account for this anomalous conduct, he had recourse to the schoolmaster. 'Where's the beadle?' was at once asked. 'Oh! there's no beadle,' was the reply. 'Where's the precentor, then?' 'Oh! there's no precentor neither.' This was certainly very embarrassing; but the happy thought immediately struck the rev. gentleman that a precentor might be got among the congregation after they were met, and his own man might perform the important functions of beadle for a day. So Sandy got the Bible and the keys, and repaired to the church to open the pews and ring the bell, and the minister followed. Soon after he entered, the bell was seen by the watchful villagers to commence swinging with great vehemence. 'Come and see how the bell's gawin,' was the general cry; but the bell had just uttered five tolls, when, as if questioning Sandy's right to handle her so roughly, she suddenly and simultaneously became mute and motionless, without assigning reasons. Several vigorous jerks were then observed, but they made no impression on the bell; there it stood, and there it still remains perched on the top of the vestry, with its mouth turned upwards, and there it may remain till the residuary Presbytery appoint a committee to deal with it, *if haply it may be brought round*. What passed within the church is known to no human being but the minister and Sandy. The service, if any, could not have been very long, for, after about seven minutes, they were both seen to issue from the church in great haste. Sandy did not appear to relish the duties he had so lately undertaken, for, declaring he 'didna like the job ava,' he left the Bible to be lifted and the doors to be locked by any individual who chose to install himself into the office. 'We take you to witness,' said the minister to some of the parishioners as he passed, 'that we rung the bell and preached the church vacant.' 'We a'

witnessed the ringing o' the bell,' was the reply, 'but what was done in the kirk nane but your twa sel's car tell.'"

Sometimes untoward incidents occurred, and attracted notice. At Watten, Caithness, "the congregation adhered to the Free Church, and cheerfully followed their minister to worship in the fields; only two or three persons remained behind. . . . The minister who was appointed to intimate the vacancy was afraid he might not have the fragment of a flock to be hearers and witnesses on the occasion. A man was despatched on horseback to summon a few individuals, and urge them to be present in Watten Church on the Sabbath. This man's horse, on his homeward ride, fell; and, in consequence of the fall, died. A cartful of people were gathered in obedience to the above summons, and were proceeding to the church, but the horse also stumbled and fell, and did not long survive."\*

Hugh Miller was in the North when the vacancy was declared at Resolis, and writes, 18th July:—"Mr. Sage was preached out on Sunday last, and, by dint of superhuman exertion among all the lairds, a congregation of thirty were brought together to see that he was; . . . and of the thirty, two whole individuals, a man and his wife, were stated hearers in the parish church. There could be found no one to ring the bell, and no one to be precentor, though twenty shillings were offered as remuneration; and a man and gig had to be sent rattling to Cromarty an hour ere service began, to procure both out of M'Kenzie's congregation. The story goes, that with the first tug the bellman gave, a swarm of angry bees came down about his ears with wrathful fizz, and that, to avoid their stings, he had to quit his hold and show them a clean pair of heels. The Moderates are in a perilous state, when every untoward incident that occurs is regarded as an omen, and interpreted to their disadvantage."†

It is not to be supposed that in all cases it was their adherence to the Free Church which led the people to absent themselves on these occasions. Even those who meant to adhere to the Establishment had in some instances so much of personal respect and regard for the outed minister, that they felt little inclination to witness the final act by which the last tie was

\* Parker Mss., Rev. A. Gunn.

† Life, vol. ii. 375.

formally severed. At the same time there can be no doubt that the specimens which we have given from widely separated districts of Scotland, represent truly the feelings which to a large extent pervaded the country, more especially in the North. For years the Moderate party, while refusing to abate their policy, had been calling aloud for peace; and in many a parish, while declaring the vacancy, it might well have seemed as if they had got their wish in the old Roman fashion—*Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*

## XIV. THE LICENSED PREACHERS OF THE CHURCH.

ONE fact of great importance was the adherence to the cause of a numerous body of students and probationers. Already, in 1840, a memorial had been presented to the General Assembly by 107 students of divinity, intimating their resolution to maintain the principles for which the Church was contending. When the Convocation of November, 1842, drew near, a still more decided step was taken by a large body of probationers. It was well known that if the threatened Disruption took place, many parishes throughout Scotland would be left vacant, and the licensed preachers of the Church might well have looked forward to obtaining positions not only of comfort, but of influence. Unaffected by such considerations, a numerous band of young men resolved to cast in their lot with the outgoing ministers.

The Rev. W. Grant, soon afterwards settled at Ayr, narrates the rise of this movement. "The origin of the movement was as follows:—The Convocation of ministers having been summoned, I was strongly impressed by the conviction that the probationers who sympathised with the Evangelical party should be invited to meet to consider the propriety of issuing a public and united declaration of their approval of the principles contended for, and of their determination to adhere to those who maintained them.

"Being at that time assistant to Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown, of St. John's, Glasgow, I had occasion to walk home from church (I think after sermon on the Monday after the communion) with the Rev. Dr. Patrick M'Farlan, of Greenock. I availed myself of the opportunity to ask his opinion of my idea. I well remember the warm manner in which he gave it his

hearty approval, encouraging me to proceed. His son, then his assistant, has often afterwards assured me, that nothing had more encouraged his father to face the difficulties of those days than the helpful and hearty spirit with which so large a body of probationers entered into this movement.

“Encouraged by Dr. M’Farlan’s kind words, I wrote to my dear friend, John M’Farlan, to come and consult with me in regard to the matter. . . . Having met and formed our plan of procedure, we invited the only probationers we knew of in the neighbourhood who sympathised with us to join in calling a meeting of probationers to be held in Glasgow. These were Eric Findlater, now Free Church minister at Lochearnhead, Andrew Cunningham, now Free Church minister at Eccles, and Rev. James Porteous, now minister of Free Church at Ballantrae. . . . It is important to observe that this was the origin of the movement of the probationers, inasmuch as it shows that this movement was their spontaneous act. It was not at the call nor by the suggestion of ministers that it was begun; and, as Dr. Chalmers’ letter . . . in the minute-book proves, the movement was persisted in although cold water was thrown on it by some of the ministers of the Evangelical party, and much dissuasion and cajolery was employed by many ministers who then belonged to that party, but who at last stayed in. Though Mr. M’Farlan and I only knew of three probationers already named as sympathising with our views, yet by consultation with them, and with others whom they knew, our list speedily began to increase. Responding to our first circular, 28 probationers assembled in Glasgow to our first general meeting, and 19, who could not attend, sent in letters approving of the proposal to call a convocation of probationers. At the convocation of probationers in Edinburgh on 14th December, 1842, our numbers had increased to between 70 and 80. And 192 gave in their names to the first General Assembly of the Free Church. . . .

“I remember that we then estimated that there were about 500 probationers who held licenses in the Established Church. Many of these had become teachers or farmers, or were employed in other secular callings. Besides, our difficulty was to

ascertain who were likely to sympathise with us. I think we must have corresponded with considerably above 200 probationers.

“I wish I could have gone over the names, . . . marking their subsequent history or steadfastness. This I have not leisure to attempt, but many of their names are now well known as holding, or as having held, prominent places in the Free Church. Some have fallen away from their profession, but most of them have laboured faithfully amid the quiet of their own congregations. I can unhesitatingly say that, with one exception, I never heard any of them express regret for the step they then took.”\*

The meeting of Convocation on the evening of 23rd November, at which the preachers were received, was one of the most interesting diets of that Assembly. Complete unanimity had just been reached in regard to the terms of the address to be sent to Government along with the resolutions. Men were rejoicing in the fact that the last trace of diversity of opinion had disappeared, when the probationers were introduced. They were represented by a deputation consisting of Mr. Grant, Mr. John M'Farlan (now of Greenock), Mr. Islay Burns (afterwards Professor), Mr. Patrick Muirhead (now of Kippen), Mr. William Makellar (afterwards of Pencaitland), and others. After a short address from Mr. Grant, stating the substance of the memorial which they had come to present, Mr. M'Cheyne offered up the prayer which made so deep an impression on the House. In name of the Convocation, Dr. M'Farlan, of Greenock, gave a warm welcome to the preachers. Dr. Cunningham also spoke, and congratulated them on the honest and manly course which they had taken, and assured them that no effort would be spared in order to provide opportunities of usefulness. He referred with much interest to the fact that Dr. M'Farlan, who had himself done so much, and was ready to sacrifice so much for the principles of the Church, had now a son standing in the front rank of the rising generation.

During the following month (14th December) a general meeting of the preachers was held in Edinburgh, and passed

\* Narrative by Rev. W. Grant, of Ayr, Dis. Mss.

still more decided resolutions. How cordially the movement was welcomed may be seen from a communication written by Dr. Candlish, in name of the committee of Convocation, and addressed on their behalf to the meeting of probationers. "We heartily welcome the accession to our number of so many ardent and youthful spirits ready to make common cause and cast in their lot with us in this time of trial; and as we have already taken encouragement from the reflection that, among the adherents to the resolutions which have been adopted, we may reckon so large a proportion of aged and venerable servants of Christ, whose lengthened ministry has been that of men willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, and who now, drawing near the close of life, have not hesitated to put their earthly all in peril for the great love they bear to His kingly throne and His free Church; so, on the other hand, we cannot but be cheered by the prospect of so goodly a company of the youth of our Zion—worthy, as we trust, to be the children of these men of God in spirit, as some of you are in the flesh—coming forward in the fresh prime and enthusiasm of opening manhood to take up in active service the testimony to which these fathers have consecrated the prayers and patience of their declining years. . . .

"We are well aware of the sacrifices which many of you may be called to make of worldly prospects of advancement which hitherto you have been warranted in cherishing, and remembering well our own sentiments and feelings when we were in your position, and being fully aware of the exaggerated value which hope is ever apt to set on untried good, we can well imagine that it may be in some respects more difficult and painful for you to forego those rewards of honourable ambition which the influential position of an Establishment holds out, than for us to relinquish them after having proved what is in them. In all these elements which must mingle with your deliberations, we assure you of our earnest sympathy; and we cannot but regard it as a noble and generous spectacle, fitted to tell on an age incredulous of the reality of great principle, if a considerable body of the pious and devoted candidates for the ministry among us, who otherwise might have commanded the highest

prizes of their profession, and might have found, perhaps, some plausible plea to justify their silence at least, if not their submission, shall be found fearlessly speaking out on the side of truth and integrity—willing to go forth unto Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach.”\*

When the Assembly came, it was found that 192 probationers gave in their names as having resolved to take part in the Church’s trials and toils ; and it soon appeared that the devoted band were all too few for the many fields of usefulness which the adherence of the people opened up in all districts of the country.

\* *Witness* Newspaper, 28th December, 1842.

## XV. LEAVING THE MANSE.

IT is remarkable that so many of the ministers have said nothing as to the actual removal. Only they who have known the quiet happiness of these manses can tell what sadness there was in parting from the old home, and the pain of recalling that time of trial may have been one reason why the circumstances have been passed over in so many of the narratives. In other cases, however, such feelings have evidently been lost in the far higher thoughts which filled the mind. "Is it not difficult to give up all this?" the writer asked Mr. Mellis, of Tealing, as we were walking round his garden, three weeks before the Disruption. The spring flowers were bursting into beauty, the manse and its surroundings were bright in the morning sun. "No," he replied; "I am thankful to feel that I have something to give up for Christ."

In the same frame of mind, Dr. Duncan, of Ruthwell, "took joyfully" the actual leaving of his manse. "On the previous evening his eldest son and two little grandsons had arrived to look again at the birthplace of one and a scene which he wished the other two to remember if they should live to be old. On the next day we had agreed to meet and eat our last mid-day meal in the dear old parlour, which for forty-three years had witnessed much hospitality and kindness. But Dr. Duncan and his son had gone to look after the workmen at the rising church. Noon, one, two, three o'clock passed. We were in despair it would be night. The people who were working suggested the idea that he could not bear to take leave of the house, and did not mean to return. We dined without them, and the last chair was placed on the cart, when, cheerful and hungry, they returned to the door of the dismantled dwelling. A message

from a sick man had drawn them to a distance of eight miles, and, little occupied about where or how he should be lodged, he had pursued his ministerial work as if no removal had been in the way. Yet he was bent on making the best of our discomforts. Next morning, when he found rain pouring into our new pantry, he returned quietly to the home of his early happiness to bring a bit of lead, which he had observed in the rubbish of the garret, that with it he might stop the hole that was adding to our discomfort. We smiled at the incident, as proving how far they were mistaken who thought he indulged in anything like sentimental sorrow for what he had resigned." \* [Dr. Duncan was at that time nearly seventy years of age.]

On the part of many besides Dr. Duncan there is little disposition to make much of these trials. Mr. Thomson, of Muckhart, dismisses them as briefly as possible. His "experience in connection with the change has not been one of special trial. The last sermon to my old flock, the roup, and the flitting, no doubt, were trying enough, but these were trials common to nearly all." † So, also, at Walls, in Shetland, Mr. Elder quietly remarks: "The circumstance of leaving a comfortable manse, and coming to a cold, damp house, was a little trial to myself and family," ‡ and then he goes on to speak of his mercies.

Others, who were not less willing for the sacrifice, yet seem to have felt more keenly the breaking of the local tie. "After the business of the Assembly was over," says Dr. M'Lauchlan, "and the deed of demission signed, I returned home, and perhaps the greatest pain I suffered connected with the Disruption was as I walked down from the coach to the manse, and realised that the tie between me and this place, where I was born and bred, and which I had latterly done much to beautify, was now for ever at an end. The pain was but momentary, but it was severe, for I have by nature a strong attachment to places." §

"I write at the distance of six years from the Disruption," says Mr. Taylor, of Flisk, "and every time I look back I am

\* Dis. Mss. xvi. pp. 8, 9.

† *Ibid.* xviii. p. 1.

‡ *Ibid.* xxviii. p. 8.

§ *Ibid.* xlix. p. 9.

filled with thankfulness to God for the part He led me to act at that trying time. No regrets or longings even for the temporalities have ever disquieted my mind. The only time I felt somewhat overcome was in the evening of leaving the manse, when, having sent every person and thing away, I remained behind, and the empty house resounded to the departing tread, and I turned the key on the outer door, and my back upon the house and church, in which I had hoped to have spent years of usefulness and happiness, and as the shadows of evening were falling thickly and gloomily, so also did the uncertainties of the future. But these were passing feelings. They soon gave place to brighter feelings when I considered the blessed results which God speedily brought out of the Disruption to this neighbourhood."\*

Family ties, as might have been expected, often gave additional sadness to the act of parting. Of Mr. Martin, Bathgate, it is said: "After the Assembly of 1843, he returned to the manse, in which nearly twenty of the most eventful years of his life had been spent, and began to prepare for leaving it. How little the mere spectators of these manse-quittings could understand the wounds thereby made on some of the strongest and most homely affections of our nature. There was the study, where his soul had been ripening both in heavenly and earthly knowledge, and there he had borne his people so often on his heart before God ('If you knew what prayers were offered up for you in the study,' said a domestic to one of his people, 'how you would prize the minister'); the garden, where, year after year, he had watched the growth of trees planted by his own hand, and tended the large white daisies which he had brought from the manse garden of Kirkcaldy (years after, when passing with him one bright moonlight night, he said, 'Well, you may smile, but I felt it hard in 1843 to leave these trees'); and the home into which he had brought the beloved wife of his youth, and which had become the home of his children. . . . The procession from the manse was touching enough. The elder children and furniture had been sent on before; Mrs. Martin followed, with her fifth boy, William, in her arms; and her husband walked

\* Dis. Mss. xxxvii. p. 12.

beside her with the large family Bible under his arm. 'We hoped that we would not meet any one,' said Mrs. Martin, afterwards, 'as we could not have spoken.' They moved along in silence to the small upper flat which they had rented, and which was the only dwelling they could then obtain. The prayer that night at the household altar told of a soul at liberty, and satisfied with God for a portion."\*

Mr. Findlater, of Durness, writes, on 20th July, 1843: "I could not possibly leave the manse till a fortnight ago, waiting an opportunity of conveying my furniture and part of my family by sea, from near the shores of Cape Wrath to Thurso, and my wife and the younger branches of my family by land, being a distance of at least 70 miles. Not a house or hut could be got nearer for their accommodation. I have taken a room in the only inn in the district, where I at present sojourn. . . . My feelings, and those of my family, on leaving the manse, after a residence of thirty-one years, I cannot describe. Though painful in some respects, yet I trust it was a willing sacrifice. . . . Jehovah-Jireh is a strong tower. . . . My wife was born in the manse she lately left empty, left two of our children's dust behind, and accompanied by six, all hitherto unprovided for, to sojourn among strangers, has displayed a moral heroism which is soothing to my feelings."†

The fitting at Kilsyth is very simply noticed: "June 14th.—Returned home [from the settlement of his son, Dr. Islay Burns, at Dundee]. Found the manse vacated, as expected—the removal having been completed on the evening preceding. On passing from the canal boat, went into the manse—not quite sure how matters were. Found emptiness. Mrs. Rankin, of Boynbie, and Mrs. Kennedy, both friendly, were there, who were much moved at the unusual meeting. The family were comfortably located in our hired house, Charles Street—all well after the fatigues of fitting. . . . Twenty-three years in the manse left; in manse of Dun, eighteen years. Psalm cxix. 9: 'I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.' . . . *Slept sound in the new lodgings.*"‡

\* Memoirs, p. 117.

† *Witness* Newspaper, 25th October, 1843.

‡ Dis. Mss. xxix. p. 11.

Mr. Duncan, of Cleish, states : " I left the Manse of Cleish on the Monday immediately succeeding the General Assembly, and after all my family had been despatched to the apartments prepared for them at Kinross, three miles off, and the last cart was nearly loaded with the remaining furniture, I entered my dismantled study for the last time, and on looking around me, with feelings which I shall not attempt to describe, I saw one of the little printed tickets which I was in the habit of using in the Sabbath School lying on the mantelpiece. Impressed with the idea that the texts which it contained might be charged with a message suited to the solemn occasion, I lifted it, and read the following verses :—' But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you,' Matt. vi. 33. ' But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus,' Phil. iv. 19. That ticket, I need hardly say, I have carefully preserved, notwithstanding the dingy appearance which, in consequence of passing through so many hands, it had come to bear. The words came on my heart like a voice from heaven." \*

At Latheron, Mr. Davidson writes : " The last load of furniture being despatched, I deliberately visited every room in the house for the last time, with very solemn feelings, and then took my departure—locking the door, and sending the key to the nearest proprietor—never, in all probability, to enter it again. That I felt this to be a very trying moment I have no wish to conceal. The loss of my stipend—which was the largest in the county (except the towns), and that of the glebe, which was of the same description, and upon which I had expended fully £200 in enclosing and subdividing it by stone fences, and otherwise ornamenting it—scarcely gave me a passing thought ; for I believed we should be provided for, though by more limited means ; and to this I felt perfectly willing to submit. But the leaving of the residence where I had lived for so many years, and in which I had enjoyed so much comfort and happiness, mingled, no doubt, with occasional heavy afflictions, did indeed deeply affect me at the time. Still, upon entering the cottage, where all things were speedily set in order, I felt cheered in

\* Dis. Mss. xii. p. 2.

contrasting my own lot with that of many of my less favoured brethren, who were far worse accommodated; and especially that of the Saviour Himself, who, though Creator of all things, had not where to lay His head. With these reflections, we united in pouring out our hearts to God in grateful thanksgiving for enabling us to pass through this trying ordeal, and in committing ourselves to His fatherly protection for the future.”\*

Another remarkable case was that of Dr. Grierson, of Errol: “My stipend was one of the largest belonging to a country charge; my family was rather numerous; . . . their education being not only unfinished, but, in the case of the younger members, not advanced beyond its earlier stages; while the length of time that we had enjoyed the advantages of a liberal income . . . all served to increase the painfulness of the sacrifice which, from a sense of duty, we were constrained to make. I hope I shall be excused when I add that the external amenities of the home which for more than twenty years I had been seeking to improve, together with the richness and splendour of the extensive landscape of which it commanded a view, did not give it so strong a hold on my heart as that which it possessed from being the birthplace of all my children—the scenes of all their youthful joys and sorrows—and the house of mourning, from which I had successively conveyed the mortal remains of nearly one-half of their whole number to that resting-place on which my eye used to fall from Sabbath to Sabbath as I entered the house of God.

“When the last cart-load of furniture was despatched, and while the vehicle which was to convey my family to their new residence was getting ready, I went out, and took a last turn round my garden walks, and a farewell gaze on the scenery which I had so often viewed with admiration and delight. On returning, I went through every room and apartment of the house, as if to gather up the endearing or interesting associations with which they were connected. All was empty and desolate—the last fire was extinguished on the blackened hearth. The younger part of my family had entered the vehicle, but my

\* Dis. Mss., Latheron, p. 3.

partner, waiting to enter it when all was ready to move, had sat down exhausted on the lower steps of the stair—the only seat then to be found. I raised her up, and placed her beside her children, and having locked the door behind her, I gave the key to the person who had been appointed to receive it. As the road at first was somewhat steep, I walked for some distance, . . . but looked not back with any desire to remain. I felt as if I heard the words of the prophet: ‘Arise ye, and depart: for this is not your rest,’ Micah ii. 10.”\*

The effect of these manse-flittings in a district cannot be understood without knowing what manner of men they were who sacrificed their all, and what place they held in the affections of the people. The Rev. Angus M’Millan was a native of Glen Sannox, in Arran, and working at his trade for self-support, had fought his way through a regular course at the University of Glasgow, studied divinity in Edinburgh, was licensed and appointed in 1812 to Lochranza, in Arran, a mission station, supported by the Duchess of Hamilton, where his income, without house or glebe, was £34 a-year. There he found himself in the midst of a remarkable revival, which spread over a large portion of the island, and of which he afterwards wrote an account. Of this movement he was for many years the centre, and his usefulness was still more marked when, in 1821, at the urgent entreaty of the people, he was presented to the parish of Kilmory. From 1821 to 1843 his ministry was greatly blessed, and when the day of trial came, he was found faithful. The leaving of the manse has been described by his early and attached friend, the Rev. A. Macbride, of North Bute:—

“The aged minister, his locks thin and silvery, his countenance pale and placid, his frame frail and emaciated, his whole appearance betokening a man who had seen length of service in his Master’s vineyard, and . . . who had faithfully borne the burden and heat of many an anxious day, looked on till room after room was dismantled, and cart after cart had wound down by the side of the old churchyard, as calm and composed as if no change were taking place in his circumstances; and when the last cart returned to take himself away, he asked if all were ready. Being

\* Dis. Mss. xi. p. 8.

told it was, 'Well, come in for a little; and entering the empty parlour which for twenty-two years had been his sitting-room, his study, and his sanctuary, he said, 'Let us pray.' The prayer chiefly consisted of adoration and praise, but towards the conclusion he earnestly implored that the same goodness and mercy which had hitherto followed them, might follow them till they reached the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. When engaged in prayer, he was frequently interrupted by the sobs of those around him; and once he was himself so overcome that he had to pause. When he finished prayer, he walked out of the house with his usual step, and having been assisted into the cart, he proceeded to the little thatched cottage at Clachaig, which devoted friendship had prepared for his reception—a cottage which he was soon to exchange for a mansion in his Father's house."\*

Among the aged fathers of the Church, there were some whose great anxiety arose from a fear lest the hand of death should overtake them in the old manse, and so prevent the completeness of their testimony to the principles of the Free Church. There were three instances in which the wish of their hearts in this respect was denied. One was Mr. Abernethy, of Bolton, in East Lothian, a godly minister, "held in the greatest respect by all the brethren in the Presbytery and the people generally in the district. His health began to decline in the spring of 1843, and it was soon ascertained that he was labouring under an internal malady from which there was little or no prospect of recovery. . . . The parish church was preached vacant a few Sabbaths before his death, or, rather, was pronounced vacant, for no audience could be got to witness the ceremony."† He died in the manse, after severe suffering, on the 26th July, 1843, in the sixty-third year of his age.

A similar case was that of Mr. Logan, of Eastwood, born in 1759, a distinguished classical scholar at the University of Glasgow, and presented, at the instance of the celebrated Dr. Balfour, to the parish of Eastwood. He had proved himself a minister eminently learned and devoted in his Master's service. "His age had prevented his taking part in the struggles of the

\* Parker Mss., Rev. A. M'Millan. † *Ibid.* Pres. of Haddington.

‘Ten Years’ Conflict,’ but he warmly espoused the cause of the Church. There were not wanting friends who endeavoured to turn the aged servant of the Lord aside from the path of duty, alleging that it could not be expected that, at his age, lying, as he was, on a bed of languishing, he should leave the house where he had lived so long. He replied that he was simply obeying his Master—discharging a plain duty which love to his Lord demanded. In the spring of 1843 a friend [the Rev. Mr. Gemmell, of Fairlie] preached for him, and after sermon went in to see him, now confined entirely to bed, and began to speak with him on the perils of the Church. ‘Yes,’ said Mr. Logan, ‘but I trust we shall at all hazards maintain the spiritual rights of our Zion. When Cæsar was crossing the Adriatic in a small vessel, the boatman hesitated and was afraid. Cæsar said, “*Ne timeas, Cæsarem vehis*” (Fear not, you carry Cæsar). Much more reason have we to say, “*Nil timendum Christo duce*” (There is nothing to be feared with Christ for our leader). The old man, in repeating these words, elevated himself in bed, and, having pronounced them with a firm voice, immediately sank back, and laid his head upon the pillow, breathless and exhausted with the effort.” “He died on the 2nd day of July, 1843, in the eighty-fifth year of his age and the fifty-eighth of his ministry.”\*

The third case was that of Dr. Ross, of Lochbroom. “When the Disruption came, he was very earnest as to sending up his signature and having it added to the Deed of Demission, and himself enrolled as a minister of the Free Church. He was anxious also to follow up the step by removing as soon as possible from the old manse. But what was to be done? . . . To attempt to remove him, even to the nearest house, would manifestly endanger his life. . . . God in His gracious providence solved the difficulty. He died in the old manse of Lochbroom, a sufferer from paralysis, on the 21st day of July, 1843, before the arrangements which were begun for his reception in another place could be completed. He expired in the seventy-fifth year of his age and fortieth of his ministry.”†

Similar interest attaches to the case of Mr. Ferguson, of

\* Parker Mss., Rev. G. Logan.

† *Ibid.* Pres. of Lochbroom.

Marytown, near Montrose. He had been minister of the parish for about fifty years, and was from the first an adherent of the Evangelical minority in the Church at a time when it was weak in numbers. He cheerfully demitted his civil status as a parish minister at the Disruption. Not being able, from age and infirmity, to go to Edinburgh to sign the Deed of Demission, his signature was taken in his own manse a few weeks after the Disruption. Aware of his intention, two of his copresbyters called upon him, and urged him to remain in the Establishment, especially pressing his advanced age and the hardship of leaving his manse at his period of life; that in his circumstances none could reasonably expect this of him, and offering their services to get an assistant who should be acceptable to him. "He told me," says his son, "that he replied to them, 'I cannot abandon the principles I have held, or separate from the friends with whom I have acted through life.' The circumstances of his death were these:—The farm-house of Baldovie (the birthplace of Andrew Melville, and scene of his youth) was fitted up for his reception. On the day preceding his death, he left his manse, intending that evening to take up his abode at Baldovie, after spending a few hours at Marytown farm-house, which is about half-way between the manse and Baldovie. Here he was taken suddenly ill, and died next day at ten P.M."\*

In connection with these "flittings" from the manse there occur, as was natural, various references to the minister's wife, on whom so much of the trial fell. Those opposed to the Church in her contendings calculated largely on men giving way out of feelings of regard for wife and children. In the last Strathbogie case, pled before the Court of Session in January, 1843, Mr. Hope, the Dean of Faculty—by no means given to the melting mood—grew pathetic as he appealed to the ministers of the Church, urging them to have regard to "the imploring looks and tearful eyes of their wives and children." He little knew those of whom he spoke. In many a manse, when the hour of trial came, the faith of the wife was at least as fearless as that of the husband. At Lesmahagow, Mrs.

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Brechin.

Parker writes, in that same month of January: "So far as I can judge, . . . the Church in her present struggles is doing no more than her duty to her great Head; and I trust she may be strengthened to go boldly forward. . . . No doubt the sword of power is against her, and, to all human appearances, about to fall on her; but that is no reason why any of her faithful ministers should swerve from the principles for which their fathers suffered. . . . I trust you will give me credit for being sincere in what I say. . . . No one values more than I do my present comforts, and few are less qualified for making sacrifices and enduring hardships, and sometimes my very heart is sore when I look at my dear children; but I trust that God in His providence may prepare a place for us—a sphere of duty where my dearest husband may exercise those gifts with which God has endowed him." Thus wrote the wife and mother, when the prospect was looking dark; and then, two months later, she returns to it: "Every day that passes only shows more clearly the necessity there is for leaving the Establishment. Oh! I hope it may issue in the purification of the Church, and the enlargement of our Redeemer's kingdom. We cannot look forward to be here now (I mean, in this house) much beyond May, and we are looking out for another. . . . I am expecting my aunt and sister next week, to take farewell of the manse."\*

Dr. N. Paterson, of Glasgow, mentions an anecdote connected with the Convocation: "I was much strengthened by a conversation with an old college acquaintance, and now a faithful minister in the city of Aberdeen. We had spoken of the number of our children, and with respect to his own family he said—'If we are driven out we shall be as poor as any wanderers on nature's common, but I had a letter from my wife this morning, and she exhorts me to stand true, Give up all for Christ, and your peace shall flow like a river.'"<sup>†</sup>

In the manse of Farr, when the prospects of the Church were getting dark, Mrs. Mackenzie lay on her dying bed, "with seven children all unprovided for." "About nineteen months

\* Dis. Mss. xxxi. pp. 7-9.

† *Witness* Newspaper, 7th December, 1842.

before the Disruption," her husband states, "it pleased the Lord to remove my wife by death, depriving me of a most affectionate and dutiful partner, and our children of one of the best of mothers. I trust it will not be considered irrelevant to mention here in regard to my wife that she felt a deep interest in the great Church question. That day on the evening of which she died, we had a prayer meeting in reference to the proceedings in the West Church of Edinburgh in August, 1841, and although exceedingly weak and much pained, yet quite collected, she insisted on my attending the meeting in church, and not to leave it until we concluded, unless she sent for me. But although the separation, after a union of twenty-five years, was to me and the children most painful, yet, when the Disruption came, I saw much of the Lord's goodness toward my partner, in removing her from the trials and privations which I with my children had to bear, as, from her delicate health, she could not so well endure them." \*

One more example we give to show what brave hearts were in many of those manses. The Rev. Roderick M'Leod states: "When many were pleading with ministers the argument *ad misericordiam* to dissuade them from the final and decisive step out of regard to their wives and children, she [Mrs. M'Leod] wrote to her husband to Edinburgh, encouraging him to hold on in the course before him, adding that when some of her neighbours came to condole with her on her prospects, she having at the time twelve children entirely dependent on a scanty income, 'I got courage to tell them that I would rather hear of your death than of your denying your principles.' Truly she was a wife that did her husband good and not evil, all the days of her life." †

\* Dis. Mss. xx. p. 2.

† Parker Mss., Rev. R. M'Leod.

XVI. REASONS FOR GOING OUT AS GIVEN BY MINISTERS  
AT THE TIME.

THE Disruption was now complete : stipend, church, and manse had been given up. We shall speak of the hardships which followed the sacrifice ; but before doing so, some account must be given of the reasons which led men thus to abandon the Establishment. There has been much debate as to what were the true grounds of the Disruption. It would surely be best to let men speak for themselves, not merely the great leaders, but still more those ministers who took little part in the controversy, and whose statements were written down in their quiet homes either in 1843 or shortly afterwards.

Although the Deed of Demission was signed, as we have seen, firmly and without a murmur, and though the sacrifice brought its own satisfaction and relief, yet there are not a few statements in the Disruption Mss. which show the inward struggle through which many had to pass before the resolution was finally taken.

Thus a young minister wrote at the time—Mr. Stewart, of Aberdeen, who soon afterwards died, in early manhood, to the grief of many : “How many overpowering associations crowd on one’s mind when thinking of leaving the Establishment ! The Established Church of Scotland has been to me an object of idolatry. To be one of its ministers, to be received into the goodly company of its pastors, and set upon one of its watch-towers, was long the very crown of my ambition. And now, to be told that on account of the very principles which constitute its peculiar glory, and in my estimation always did so, I must quit the position to which, though most unworthy, I have been raised, goes to my very heart. How grievously our Legislators

misunderstand us. . . . I love my country. . . . I would die for her hoary institutions, and yet I am told that I am an enemy to order and social happiness." \*

Dr. John Bonar, then of Larbert, states his own feelings and those of many others in view of the sacrifice: "Already poverty and destitution stare every minister in the face who will hold to the noble place which, by the grace of God, the Church has taken. Family, friends, dependant relatives, sickness, death, destitution, neglect, rise oft to the fancy. . . . Do people think we are not men? Do they think we are not men of like passions? Do they not know the weakness of human nature, and with such fightings without and fears—not for ourselves, but for what shall come on *them* who are more to us than ourselves on the earth—within, do they not think we eminently need the sympathies and prayers of all? But higher interests are at stake. 'Take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.' This swallows up everything else." †

Dr. Buchanan, of Glasgow, addressing his brethren in the Convocation, said that "the thought of a Voluntary Church was to him as darkness; but the pillar of fire would be there, and he would go as led."

Dr. Gordon, of Edinburgh, declared, "I do it most unwillingly, I am compelled by a force far more terrible to me than the baton of the constable, or the musket of the soldier—I am compelled by my conscience."

It has been the dream of many that the leaders of this movement were recklessly determined to urge on their own ambitious designs, and that their followers were hurried along under the impulse of blind partisanship. Nothing can be more fallacious.

On the part of the leaders, it is recorded that when Lord Aberdeen came forward with what professed to be a healing measure, "a friend, calling on another Church leader, found Dr. Cunningham and him going over the Bill. The former [Dr. C.] was in the deepest anxiety, and again and again

\* Parker Mss., Rev. J. Stewart.

† Reasons for Religious People, &c., by the Rev. J. Bonar, p. 8.

returned to the Bill to pore over its clauses, as if he could not make up his mind to the cruel conviction that it kept carefully short of the essential and indispensable provisions, and that all the consequences of rejecting it must be faced." \*

At the time of the Convocation, Dr. Candlish publicly declared that the position of the Church had not been hastily taken up: "On the contrary, I will say for myself, and for many of my fathers and brethren, that it is a position which we have most reluctantly taken, against the necessity of which we defended and guarded ourselves by all kinds of argument, and to which we shrank from committing ourselves. . . . But now, not of our own seeking, for God knows that we have sought anything but this, we have listened to every proposition, to every suggestion but this, we have been ready to conciliate, I fear we have been ready to compromise,—not of our own seeking, then, but in the leadings of God's providence, and by the teaching of His Spirit, we have again got that glorious watchword with which our fathers were so familiar." †

In regard to the more retiring country ministers, it is certain that never were there men who had greater reason to look narrowly to the grounds on which they were called to act; and we find them accordingly giving to the whole subject the most conscientious and thoughtful consideration. "I felt," Mr. Mackenzie, of Farr, writes after the Convocation, "the necessity of close application in private study, . . . especially in reference to the Supreme Headship of Christ. I felt the necessity of closer attention than ever to this infinitely important subject, as brought to light in the Scriptures, and, as stated, illustrated, and confirmed in the writings of godly witnesses in England and Scotland, who, for their adherence to the Redeemer in His Divine Headship over His Church, suffered persecution, imprisonment, and death. I felt the necessity of this, and that, by the Divine blessing, I might obtain to greater clearness and a firmer faith. . . . I have to confess, that in such exercises I felt much satisfaction." ‡

Mr. Mather, of Stanley, states: "I was led to reflect much

\* Life of Dr. Cunningham, p. 152. Note by Dr. Rainy.

† *Witness*, 26th November, 1842.

‡ Dis. Mss. xx. p. 3.

on the great principles that were involved in the controversy, and to feel that no Church which abandoned these principles for the sake of secular advantage could expect the Divine blessing. And as the controversy proceeded, all hopes of an honourable and scriptural settlement of the question being taken away, my way was hedged in, like that of my brethren, to leave the Establishment. . . . It was a solemn season, and I often felt deeply awed and impressed during the Convocation, at the Disruption; and most of all, while signing the Deed of Demission, at the honour put on me, His unworthy servant, by my Divine Lord, in making me a witness for His truth." \*

The results of such consideration appear in various statements which we meet with in the narratives.

Dr. Moody Stuart, of Edinburgh, presents the Bible aspect of the great question that was involved in the struggle: "While preaching in the district of Strathbogie," he says, "the labour and exposure had brought on a severe affection of the throat, for which I was ordered to Madeira. . . . Distance, time, quiet, sickness had altered or modified many of my thoughts. . . . In the silent retrospect of life, with the prospect of a possibly near eternity, much that had seemed first was now last, and the last was first; but the truth and magnitude of our Church's testimony to the Headship of Christ over His own house—even unto separation from the State—had only stood forth in greater clearness. After every deduction for the elements of earth that had mingled in the conflict, the great principles looked still greater than before, and the broad lines of procedure more brightly shone upon by the Word, by grace, and by Providence." †

His testimony was made yet more distinct by a brief address, delivered in remarkable circumstances: "The first verses of the 23rd of Luke were read and explained. Christ's kingdom is in the world, yet not of the world: the Church is subject and responsible to Him alone in the appointment and removal of pastors, and in the entire rule and discipline of His house. And she is unfaithful to her Head if she resigns that trust to

\* Dis. Mss. v. pp. 2, 3.

† Life of the Last Duchess of Gordon, p. 263.

any other, or executes it at the command of the highest power on earth. Nor was the question a light one, since on it had hinged the death of our blessed Lord Himself. This truth was not the end for which He died, but it was the turning-point of His death. It was the good confession He had witnessed before Pilate, and it was because He would not retract His declaration that He was a King, that He was led to crucifixion. *If this truth was great enough for our Master to suffer death for declaring it, it could not be too little for us to accept as a ground of suffering, of imprisonment, or of death itself.*\*

Mr. Thomson, of Muckhart, was clerk to the Presbytery of Auchterarder, and, as was natural, he dwells on the legal and constitutional aspects of the question. Almost from the outset of the great lawsuit he had anticipated an adverse result. One circumstance which specially prepared his mind for the Disruption "was a clear exhibition of the hopelessness of our position, unless we were to prove traitors to Christ, brought before us at a private meeting of the brethren, held under St. George's Church in August, 1842, by our valued friend, Mr. John Hamilton, advocate, when he directed our attention to the circumstance, that all the decisions of the Supreme Civil Court rested in reality, not upon a rigid interpretation of the various Statutes, but upon this: 'There cannot be an *imperium in imperio*.' The whole truth, the peril, the hopelessness of our position then fully flashed upon my mind, and I saw the certainty of the coming event." †

Three years after the event, Dr. Burns, of Kilsyth, reviews his position. He is not insensible to the sacrifice he has made: "The breaking up of intercourse with the gentry of the vicinity, the loss of a commodious manse, where, for twenty-three years, much comfort was enjoyed, a good glebe of ten acres, a living of about £300 per annum, an elegant church, a status in society, &c.;" but he adds: "What is all this compared with the approba-

\* Life of the Last Duchess of Gordon, p. 269.

† Dis. Mss. xxviii. p. 3. This view, asserting the supremacy of the civil power over both the civil and spiritual spheres, goes much deeper, it will be seen, than anything merely connected with the Patronage Act as an individual statute.

tion of conscience, and the peace of God keeping the heart and mind, the honour of taking a part in upholding the Crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of co-operating with the best of the ministers and elders in this land, the freedom from the most galling yoke of servitude being forced upon us, and last, not least, deliverance from the incubus and unequal yoking of what has been called Moderatism, impeding us in every spiritual and zealous movement, hedging us up from every attempt to benefit the poor people of any conterminous district. The incongruous union has continued by far too long, and coalition in future cannot be contemplated as possible." \*

The sermon which Dr. Sievewright, of Markinch, addressed to his congregation on the first Sabbath after the Disruption will show how vigorously those country ministers, who took but little part in the conflict, were able to think and speak on the great questions at issue. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" was the text from which he addressed his people. "We are not willingly here. Nothing short of a great moral necessity has severed ties long and fondly cherished, involving an amount of sacrifice the incredulous world did reckon far beyond . . . our limited virtue to attain, . . . to renounce what toiling industry pants to acquire—a desirable home, an honourable competency, a certain and sufficient provision for life, together with an official position which, unless misconduct disgraces it, has usually commanded respect."

But, turning to the parishioners, he repeats the question, "What doest thou here?—here, in this limited and incommensurable place, that little resembles a place of worship, and has many ideas associated with its ordinary uses that ill accord with the sanctity we fondly attach to a temple. Hard by, too, stands an edifice of more seemly appearance, . . . of old consecrated to the rites of Divine worship. There your fathers adored their fathers' God. There yourselves and your children were baptised into the faith and privileges of the Christian Church. There many of you have kept solemn holy days. . . . And is it, brethren, to you no sacrifice to turn your backs on so hallowed a spot, endeared by tokens of a Divine presence, by

\* Dis. Mss. xxix. pp. 29, 30.

recollections of the living, and of the dead who sleep round its ancient tower, waiting for the restitution of all things? We are not here by a willing and costless transition. Wherefore, then, have we come? A great moral necessity enforced our removal. . . . The day has come when the Church Established has forfeited a just pretension to be regarded as the Church of Scotland, because she has departed from that Church's constitution and principles in two leading particulars—the supremacy of Christ as actual and acting Head of the Church, and the spiritual independence of the Church, which is His body. The regal supremacy of Christ is a doctrine written as with a sun-beam on many a page of Scripture. . . . His kingdom is not of this world, as Himself witnessed before Pilate; but yet that He was a King, and had a kingdom, He shunned not to avow in the presence of that imperious Roman. And if this be so—if Christ is living Head of the Church, and reigning King of Zion—what recognition and reverence are due to His Majesty, what respect and submission to His every ordinance and enactment! and has He given power to His servants to administer the affairs of His house, and shall these servants disclaim the power and forego the exercise of it in deference to secular usurpation? . . . And hath it come to this that a Christian Church . . . shall be treated as a mere civil corporation? . . . Shall we turn away from the King that God the Father hath put upon His holy hill, the King whom our ancient worthies there worshipped and obeyed? . . . From Him shall we go to Cæsar for redress, as if He who shall judge the world were of no account or estimation? Shall we ask leave of civil judicatories to bind and loose, to open and shut, ordain or depose, making diligent suit to them to tell us precisely what is right and what were wrong in questions of Church order and spiritual jurisdiction? Because we would not consent to this disparagement and defection, we stand before you this day divested of . . . all parish immunities.”\*

In addition to such sermons, a large proportion of the ministers, at the time when they left the Establishment, assigned

\* A Protester's Apology for Quitting the Established Church, &c. pp. 4-10.

their reasons in the form of addresses, printed and circulated among their parishioners. Looking back from the distance of thirty years on this great array of pamphlets, one is struck by the prominence which they give to the one subject of the spiritual independence of the Church in connection with the Headship of Christ. Approaching the question at issue, as they do, in many different methods, this is the central point on which they all converge. We can give only a very few examples to illustrate the views which then prevailed.

One of the pamphlets which attracted notice was by Dr. M'Cosh, then of Brechin. He began by stating that he would find little difficulty in proving two things—"first, That the judges and statesmen of the land do hold that the Established Church is bound to obey them in spiritual matters; and second, That the Established Church has in its deeds (whatever may be its professions in words) taken orders from the Civil Courts in the most sacred spiritual matters, and given unto Cæsar the things that be God's." By an overwhelming array of proof he establishes the first of these positions, and then proceeds to inquire "how far the Church has acquiesced in that law. . . . Those who remained in the Establishment did so on the express understanding that they were to submit to the supremacy of the civil law. Where is now the party in the Church protesting against the acts or the language of our statesmen and judges? There is no such party, and there can be no such party; for the law and constitution are now settled, and it is in vain for persons to remain in any society, and protest against its constitution.

"How, then, did the General Assembly deal with those acts [of the Church] when the protesting party left in May, 1843? . . . The Assembly did not retain so much as the semblance of independent authority. It hastened to fling itself in abject prostration at the feet of its master. It declared that, because the Civil Court said so, the Veto was no law, and never had been a law of the Church, and that the Strathbogie ministers never had been deposed. . . . Was the Church obeying Christ or obeying the House of Lords in intruding Mr. Young into Auchterarder? We can point to the orders of the House

of Lords to this effect; but it is more difficult to point to the command of Christ in His Word. . . . Was the Church obeying Christ or obeying the Courts of law when it declared that between two and three hundred pastors of *quoad sacra* parishes, with their numerous elders, all elected according to Scripture, had no power to hold kirk-sessions, to admit communicants, to exercise discipline, or generally to rule in Christ's Church? We can point to many passages of God's Word in which it is said to be the duty of ministers and elders to rule in conformity to Christ's laws. . . . Where, then, was the Assembly's authority for declaring they should not rule? . . . I know they can give us the authority of the Court of Session; and if they say they were obeying that authority, I believe them. . . . Here we have a state of things in which the commands of Christ and those of the civil authority were manifestly opposed; and the Assembly, by obeying the latter, declared, in the face of the whole world, that they acknowledged it to be the true master of the house and head of the kingdom." . . . "It was because they felt that the fundamental principles and very constitution of the Establishment had been changed by the recent decisions that so many were constrained to abandon it by the highest of all compulsions—the compulsion of conscience and of duty."\*

The address of Mr. Taylor, of Flisk, was called forth in remarkable circumstances. His settlement in the parish took place on the 14th of April, the very eve of the Disruption. "The manner of my entry at Flisk was very stormy, but God overruled it for good. Dr. Anderson, of Newburgh, officiated at the induction, and as he regarded himself as the mouthpiece of his party, he considered that something would be expected of him. . . . After putting the questions and receiving the suitable answers, the Dr. politely asked me to sit down, and in a carefully prepared address of about an hour's length, he condemned the agitation movements of the Evangelical party, and the Convocation deliberations, and praised the Church of Scotland as shaped and modelled by the decisions of the Law Courts, he took

\* Does the Established Church Acknowledge Christ as its Head? By the Rev. J. McCosh, Brechin. 1846.

me bound by the solemn vows then administered to me not to leave the Church as by law established, and not to meddle with those who are given to change. The address to the people was much in the same strain. During its delivery the congregation locked on with a sober unmeaning gravity. Many of the Moderate brethren seemed to enjoy a great satisfaction as the roll of the Dr.'s artillery was directed against their opponents. One little incident there was which enlivened and gave character to the scene. An old man, blind Jamie Blyth, whose intellectual perceptions were keener than those of his neighbours, and who was most keen in his abhorrence of anything that savoured of Moderatism, listened patiently until he discovered the drift of the Dr.'s address, and then indignantly rising, he called, 'Hand me my hat, and let me to the door, for I canna thole this.'"

At the close of the address an animated discussion took place, in the course of which Mr. Taylor disclaimed the interpretation put on the ordination vows, and subsequently he published a reply to the address under the title of "A few words to the Parishioners of Flisk." He shows the change effected by recent decisions on the constitution of the Church of Scotland. Of that Church as set forth by Dr. Anderson he says: "This is not the Zion which was of old, . . . which Knox<sup>o</sup> founded and Melville built up. These are not the bulwarks which Henderson, and Welsh, and Guthrie raised. This is not the carved work which the hands of Rutherford, and Boston, and Willison formed. This is not the Zion which was lately attacked, and on the battlements of which were seen the venerable forms of Chalmers, and Gordon, and Brown, and the day of whose danger called forth the youthful defence of Candlish, and Begg, and Buchanan, and gathered round her the weighty and talented support of such elders as Dunlop, and Crichton, and Spiers, and Monteith, and Buchan, and Collins. . . . That Establishment was an Establishment which claimed the power to do what Christ wills, and not the power of doing merely what the State allows. . . . Sooner far join with the Voluntary in saying, 'No Establishment,' than join with the Erastian in seeking a shackled and secularised one. . . .

“I have no interest in leaving the Establishment. Considerations of worldly interest call upon me to remain. There is not a morning I wake amid the song of early birds, there is not a time I saunter in the enclosures of this sweet solitude, every one of which tells of the taste of him who designed them, I never recline in its den, soothed by the soft sound of its falling waters, I never look forth to the distant hills which seem as a frame to the picture formed by Tay’s broad waves, and the rich mansion-studded fields of Gowrie—but I feel the rising desire, here to stay. The harmonious and happy nature of my settlement, so far as you were concerned, your own kindness, of which I am daily receiving fresh instances, and instances the most abundant from quarters where they were least looked for, the size of the church and the extent of my parish, and the fear that if I am forced to leave this sphere of labour, my weakly health may be unable to contend with the excitements and increased labours of a secession state—all these things move me. But much as I value these things, I would wish to value my principles more. I would wish to prefer the honour of Christ as King in Zion, and the time-honoured testimony of the Church of Scotland, ‘that she is free in her government from all other jurisdictions except Christ’s,’ and the Christian rights of her Christian people. To these principles I am pledged: from them I cannot, I dare not—God strengthening me—I will not go back.”\*

In addition to the addresses from which these extracts have been taken, there is a long series, in which the questions at issue were ably handled. One by Mr. Wood, of Elie (then of Westruther), was widely circulated. It contained an elaborate discussion of the kingly office of Christ in the visible Church, with an explanation of what is meant by “the power of the keys,” and after showing how the spiritual authority thus conferred on the Church had been invaded and overthrown by the Law Courts, he argued that, “If the Statutes warrant these decisions, then no Church of Christ can remain without sin in connection with the State under these Statutes.” †

Another which met with much acceptance was by Mr. Gregory,

\* A Few Words to the Parishioners of Flisk, pp. 14, 15.

† Present Duty, Pastoral Address, &c., fourth thousand, p. 7.

of Anstruther, then of Roxburgh Church, Edinburgh, in which the meetings of the Convocation were held. He enters fully into the matter of Christ's Headship, explaining clearly the great principle of spiritual independence, and then points out the state to which the Established Church had been reduced. She holds her emoluments on this condition, that she "shall take laws and directions from the civil authorities, instead of Christ, in spiritual things, and shall, through her office-bearers, settle ministers over reclaiming congregations. There is no disguising or denying this. . . . We dare not hold by State endowments, as we should be free of the fearful sin of selling our allegiance to our King for filthy lucre." \*

Enough has now been said to show the general drift of these addresses, which came from many of the ablest and most devoted ministers all over the country. But there is one additional statement which must not be omitted—the letter of an aged minister, Mr. M'Kenzie, of Tongue, whom the trials of the Disruption sent to his grave, under painful circumstances, to be afterwards noticed. The reader will observe how the firmness of his decision was great in proportion to the painful struggle through which he had to pass. Addressing Mr. Pitcairn, clerk to the Convocation, he says, under date 29th December, 1842 : "I write to intimate my adherence, as minister of Tongue, to all the resolutions of the late Convocation at Edinburgh. I resolved this from the first communication to me, but immediately thereafter, being assured by local authority that no separatist would be permitted to remain as officiating minister within the bounds of the Presbytery, all the property of the Duke of Sutherland ; agonised at the thought of parting with my beloved, sympathising, and attached parishioners ; haunted by the denunciations of Scripture against the shepherds who leave their flocks, suffering them to wander on the mountains and hills, to be meat for the beasts of the field, my resolution was staggered for a time, and I paused to examine the subject more fully by the light of Scripture, by meditation and prayer, more especially as from my age and infirmities, obliged lately to engage an assistant, I could

\* Good reasons for leaving the present Ecclesiastical Establishment, &c., sixth thousand, pp. 7, 8.

expect no other sphere to exercise my worn-out faculties in my Master's vineyard, and could not readily reconcile myself to be wholly excluded, silent, and useless. At length, with clear light and a good conscience, I said, Come what will, and whatever the sacrifice I must render, that no proposed good can sanction doing evil to attain it, that nothing can warrant my remaining in an Erastian Church, and allying myself with ministers who would consent to make the Church of Christ a creature of the State, . . . and its servants only to be the slaves of a worldly tyranny—not the commissioned office-bearers of Zion's King, teaching only the doctrines of His instruction, and ruling only for the glory of His name, and the spiritual interests of His purchased inheritance. With unceasing prayer for the success of the objects of the Convocation resolutions and memorial, from God and man, and fully resolved to embark and keep embarked with them, assured theirs is the ship in which Christ is, and which shall be safe, however tossed or likely to perish, when He sees meet to interpose and give the command to be still."

We close these statements with one remarkable case, in which *old age* is assigned as one reason for going out. "For fifteen months previous to the Disruption, Mr. Anderson, of Kippen, suffered from a severe illness, which laid him aside from ministerial work. In 1843 he demitted his charge, and preached during the summer in the open air, and occasionally in a barn. The outward hardships, however, which he underwent were slight compared with the scorn of former friends. He 'suffered shame' for his Master—he became 'a fool for Christ's sake;' for those who had no sympathy with his principles could only brand his sacrifice as an act of aggravated folly, especially considering his advanced time of life. Such objections, however, were thoroughly met by his own words, 'The older I am, I have the more need to be faithful.' He lived only a year and a-half after the Disruption. . . . He died on the 27th of March, 1845, in the 66th year of his age, and 34th of his ministry. It is but just to state that the painful opposition referred to wore away with his life, and disappeared in his grave. His funeral was a remarkable evidence of this. All, without exception, united in the last tribute to his worth, while his widow and his son gladly acknow-

ledge their obligations to his memory. They deeply feel that much of the favour withheld from him during his trial has since descended on them for his sake. 'Them that honour me I will honour.' \*

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Stirling.

## XVII. REASONS FOR GOING OUT AS GIVEN BY THE PEOPLE.

WHAT made the Free Church movement so formidable was the extensive support which it received from the laity, not only among the leading elders, but among the general population. Their reasons were various. Personal attachment to the outgoing ministers was a strong inducement on the part of many ; but it is obvious that if that had been all, the movement, instead of being what we now see it, would soon have lost its hold amidst the changes of succeeding years. There must have been some far more deeply-seated and powerful impulse which swayed the popular mind. And this is all the more obvious when we consider the numerous cases in which respected parish ministers remained in the Establishment, while the people took their own course, and formed Free Church congregations.

One reason which powerfully influenced many was their opposition to the preaching and policy of what were called "the Moderates." The origin of this Moderate party (the name is of their own choosing), is usually traced back to that class of ministers who changed from Presbytery to Episcopacy, and from Episcopacy to Presbytery, as each party rose into the ascendant. After the Revolution of 1688, the presence of such men ("the court party," as Dr. M'Crie styles them) was felt as a great weakness to the Church. Unfortunately, as time went on, their influence increased, till, in 1734, they cast out the Erskines and other Seceders ; and by a still more flagrant abuse of power in 1752, deposed Gillespie, the founder of the Relief Synod. Then the free-thinking spirit of the age began to prevail in their ranks, till, publicly and privately, all strictness of doctrine was discarded. It is now known that if it had been safe, they would have thrown aside the Confession of Faith. In

1796 they passed an Act of Assembly condemning Christian missions, and in 1799 another forbidding the pulpits to all ministers of any other denomination; their object in thus cutting themselves off from Christendom being to exclude the earnest Gospel ministrations of such men as Simeon of Cambridge.

All through the Ten Years' Conflict this party identified themselves with the proceedings of the Civil Courts, and at the Disruption the Established Church passed into their hands, with its constitution moulded according to their Moderate views—the old scriptural constitution of the Scottish Establishment being thus completely and, it is feared, finally overthrown, as regards the vital question of spiritual independence.

From the commencement of the century the Moderate party had begun rapidly to lose ground before the rising power of Evangelism, led on by the late Sir Henry Moncreiff, Dr. Thomson, and Dr. Chalmers. Some of their number—not a large section—became themselves evangelical in sentiment and zealous in action, while still holding the anomalous position of being Moderates in policy. There were others who held by the doctrines of the Confession in all their strictness, but who had little zeal in their ministerial work. The great mass of the party, however, still continued to be what they had been before. There was much ground for the strong view taken by Hugh Miller: “We have but one Bible and one Confession of Faith in our Scottish Establishment, but we have two religions in it; and these, though they bear exactly the same name, and speak nearly the same language, are yet fundamentally and vitally different.” In Church politics the single rule of the Moderate party was to uphold the views of the Civil Courts and to maintain patronage; while, in regard to the usual style of their pulpit ministrations, the following estimate may be accepted as a close approximation to the truth: “In theology the Moderate inclines to what is loosely styled Arminian doctrine, although Arminius himself would have disowned it, but what may be more properly called legal doctrine. He exhibits the precepts of Christianity apart from the remedial and strengthening grace of Christianity. Somehow, although he may not state it, he leaves his hearers to think that man is

the author and finisher of his own salvation. Even many of the Moderate clergy who profess a sounder creed than that we have described are most confused in their statements of what the Gospel is. With them it is a Yea and a Nay Gospel, compounded of alternate averments and retractations."\*

Such was the class of ministers whose preaching and policy had for long been distasteful to the Scottish people; and, as may well be understood, the feeling of dislike became only the more intense in proportion as the revived spirit of religious earnestness spread over the country. For two or three generations many of the more earnest members of the Church had been gradually going over to the Seceders, and even among those who clung to the Establishment there were large numbers who did so with extreme reluctance and dissatisfaction. In Lesmahagow, Dr. Parker thus describes the situation: "In this quarter a change took place to the worse, similar to what has been observed in other districts of Scotland. . . . The Upper Ward of Lanarkshire was for many years previous to the Disruption characterised by a painful apathy on religious subjects. The ministers belonging to the Establishment were for the most part of the Moderate school; the few who professed different principles did not manifest much zeal in their propagation and defence. . . . Meetings for prayer and fellowship were almost wholly unknown, and the discipline of the Church had sunk in many cases into a vain and lifeless form. It must not be forgotten, however, that, while many a pulpit gave forth an uncertain sound, and little was done by direct ecclesiastical agency to advance the cause of Christ, there were families not a few in which pure religion found a home. The children were diligently instructed in the Scriptures and the Shorter Catechism, domestic worship was regularly observed, the writings of the old divines were eagerly and assiduously perused, and everything contrary to good morals was carefully repressed. They remained reluctantly within the pale of the Establishment, little edified by the Sabbath lessons to which they listened, but indulging the hope that better days would come—that God would again visit the vine which His own right hand had

\* Memoir of D. M. M. Crichton. By Rev. J. W. Taylor, p. 206.

planted, and revive His work in the midst of the years. They watched with growing interest the advance of evangelical sentiment in the Church of their fathers. They rejoiced when these sentiments gained the ascendancy in the General Assembly, and they were gradually prepared, when the day of trial and the hour of separation came, to cast in their lot with the protesting minority of her faithful ministers.”\*

In the North, we find the Duchess of Gordon, after her widowhood, thus lamenting her isolation at Huntly: “It is really a trial to feel that the truth is preached in the dissenting chapels; but then they are Voluntaries, and here am I on a hill. O for wisdom, and, above all, grace and love!” †

Now, it should be remembered that, up to the time of the Disruption, Scotland was still, to a large extent, in the hands of this school of divines, and they had the people at their mercy; for by a law of the Church no minister could preach in the parish of any other minister without his permission. It is well known that Dr. M'Donald, of Urquhart, narrowly escaped rebuke at the bar of the Assembly, for having, without leave from the parish minister, preached to people who were longing to hear the Gospel from his lips.

How irksome this state of matters was in many of the parishes need not be said. There were some of the ministers who felt it keenly, as may be seen from an entry in the diary of Mr. M'Cheyne: “Have been laying much to heart the absolute necessity laid upon the Church of sending the Gospel to our dead parishes during the life of the present incumbents. It is confessed that many of our ministers do not preach the Gospel—alas! because they know it not. Yet they have complete control over their own pulpits, and may never suffer the truth to be heard there during their whole incumbency. And yet our Church consigns these parishes to their tender mercies for perhaps fifty years without a sigh.” ‡

Here, then, was one ground on which the Disruption was heartily welcomed by many of the people. It broke the monopoly. Ministers and laymen, in regard to the preaching of a free Gos-

\* Dis. Mss. xxxi. p. 2.

† Life, p. 226.

‡ Memoir, p. 140.

pel, escaped from under the trammels of Moderatism. Ministers might preach and the people hear the message of salvation whenever there was an opportunity.

This, indeed, was a change for which it appears many had been longing and praying. It was so at Luss, in Dumbartonshire. ‘The people of the parish were church-goers, and nothing more. There were a few, however, who mourned over the prevalent apathy, and as they talked apart with each other on the Sabbath day among the gravestones in the churchyard, cried out, ‘What a dead place this is!’ or, after they had thought over it in their dwellings, ‘How long is this to last?’ Surely those who were thus sighing for spiritual life . . . were inwardly preparing for what was to come.”\*

In a similar way, in Strathbogie, it is stated: “I have been often told by humble Christians in Huntly, who were brought to the love of the truth, that, just before the suspension of the seven ministers, many among them felt a craving for something they did not well know what; and when the Assembly’s ministers were sent down, . . . I believe it was the almost universal feeling—This is the very thing we needed. . . . This is the thing we have been seeking.”†

In the same district there was one who spake yet more emphatically. “‘Nobody need tell me about the Moderates,’ said the Duchess of Gordon. ‘I know them well. I should never think of consulting them on any religious subject, or asking them to my house for spiritual profit. All I can do is to invite them to dinner, when the Duke of Richmond is here, with the farmers at the cattle show.’ . . . In the end of December, 1837, soon after her return to Huntly Lodge, we find her writing these striking words: ‘We must pray very, very hard for more labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, and that He may send us pastors after His own heart. I do not see where they are to come from at all, and therefore I think I can pray with the more entire faith, and feel sure that the Lord will give them in His own time and way.’”‡

At Huntly, a young woman from the country said: “The

\* Dis. Mss. xxx. pp. 1, 2.

† *Ibid.* x. p. 2.

‡ *Life*, p. 226.

rich folk talks about la', la' ; we puir folk ken naething about the la', but we ken fine fa's the best preachers."\*

Further to the North, it is stated that "all the people throughout the whole county of Caithness, who had been noted for their piety long before the Disruption took place, most cordially embraced the principles of the Free Church. This knowledge of our having an interest in the prayers of these Christians most undoubtedly had a very powerful effect in sustaining us in the path of duty." †

But, apart from the question of evangelical preaching, there were many of the humbler ranks who well understood the great question that was at issue, and were as ready as their forefathers to repudiate the policy of Moderatism. Mr. Lewis, of Dundee, says of his own congregation: "Many were doubtless carried away by personal liking for the minister, and many of the young by national feeling and generous sympathy with those about to make a sacrifice for what they regarded as principle and duty; but, on looking over the list of adherents, it was obvious that both the intelligence and heart of the congregation were with us. . . . All who had been most ready to do aught for the young through weekly and Sabbath schools—all who took an interest in missions in our Church at home and abroad—all who were readers of Scottish history, or ever took any interest in questions peculiarly national and Scottish. The older members were with us almost to a man among the working classes, recognising the contest as the old question, and not being able to understand how a Church of Christ could part with her right of self-government for any civil or State advantages. The new name for an Established Church, '*the creature of the State,*' seems to them inexpressibly odious. Nothing less than denying its Divine origin, and shrivelling it up into a mere instrument of civil government and police." ‡

At the close of his farewell sermon at Latheron, Mr. Davidson summoned a meeting of session, to be held next day, to afford the elders an opportunity of declaring their sentiments on a matter so important. Accordingly, he states: "Met in session

\* Life, p. 240.

† Dis. Mss. LXXV. p. 2.

‡ Parker Mss., Pres. of Dundee.

as proposed, and the elders having been asked to declare their sentiments as to the altered state of matters, and their own intention thereanent, George Mackay, the senior elder, after a pause and prayer for direction, said that he had no hesitation as to the course they should take, that he approved heartily of the manner in which their ministers had contended for the liberty with which Christ had made His people free, and prayed that grace might be given them to persevere, and cast their burden upon the Lord, who would not fail them in the day of trial. He blessed God that they had been privileged to witness for His cause, and pitied the poor Moderates who, like Esau, had sold their birthright for their stipend, but expected no better of them. He cordially adhered to the Free Protestant Church of Scotland, and would only say, Jehovah-jireh. All the other six elders expressed themselves in similar terms, and without the least hesitation." \*

It must be admitted that there were cases of a different kind. Some of the people were sorely perplexed by the movement. Speaking of the farmers generally in the neighbourhood of Flisk, Mr. Taylor remarks: "The Disruption was to them a mystery. It seemed in their eyes madness that men should give up temporal advantages, glebes, and stipends, when no man was touching them, and when we could preach what we chose without interference. A Flisk farmer speaking to a friend of mine about the folly of my leaving the Establishment, my friend said that it was right that I should follow the light and guidance of my own conscience. 'Conscience! conscience!' said the farmer, 'it's a puir conscience that'll no rax' [stretch].†

A second story from Dunbog sets the matter in a similar light. "A month or two after the Disruption, a Moderate farmer, in a parish whose minister had remained faithful to Christ, was making some inquiry as to how his former minister was getting on, and, amongst other things, was told in reply, he was preaching better than ever. 'Indeed! well, that is too bad. He had a good stipend with us—was well paid for preaching—and if he didn't do his best it was too bad. And now,

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Latheron, p. 4.

† Dis. Mss. xxxvii. pp. 11, 12.

when he gets less for it, he is preaching better. It's a great shame.'” \*

It would appear that some of those who remained in the Establishment had a secret consciousness that they were not following the path of duty. When Mr. Manson, of Fyvie, on the third Sabbath after the Disruption, was driving in his gig to the barn where he was to preach, he tells us: “I met an aged parishioner wending his way to the parish church. As my gig neared him, with a respectful salutation, and apologising, evidently under deep feeling, he laid hold of the bridle reins of my horse, and looking up to me, said, ‘Turn, Mr. Manson, turn.’ ‘Ah, no, J——,’ I remarked, ‘it is you that should turn. My course is taken, and I stated the grounds of it to you in the church a few Sabbaths ago. ‘Well,’ was the reply, ‘we are maybe nae a’ richt; I dinna say that I think it, but couldna ye jist come back and tak’ yer place amongst us again, and be as Naaman was, when he bowed himself in the house of Rimmon, saying, The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.’” †

Another incident, which took place at Muthill, Perthshire, illustrates the same truth in yet more striking circumstances. “A farmer, a man advanced in life, and with a large family, had all along shown an enmity to us of an almost incredible kind. His wife and family were friendly to our cause, and were determined at all hazards to join us. This made him furious. When any of his family failed to attend the parish church and came to ours his rage knew no bounds. He was a man of very violent temper, and he spoke and acted on such occasions in a way which made his neighbours ashamed, and filled them with alarm for the consequences. Every week added to his rage, and he had almost succeeded by sheer violence in making his family desert the cause. This continued for three months or so. The neighbours at last interfered, but only made matters worse. All his rage was, however, suddenly and remarkably subdued. One day while he was blasting stones, a shot exploded in his very face. He was dangerously hurt, his eyes almost destroyed, and his face fearfully disfigured. Almost the very first use he made

\* Parker Mss., Rev. Mr. Murray, Dunbog.

† *Ibid.* Rev. Mr. Manson, Fyvie.

of his speech was to assure those who came to his assistance that he would never speak any more against the Free Church, and never object to his family attending it. Accordingly, they have had full liberty and peace to attend ever since.”\*

There were many who hesitated long before they could take the step. “One of the most zealous adherents in this parish (Deskford), desirous of persuading as many as he could to enlist themselves on what he believed to be the Lord’s side, was answered by some of them that they would wait till they saw. He replied that it was not very like valiant soldiers, to lie behind a dyke and leave others to bear the brunt of the battle.”†

At Kilsyth, on the morning after the farewell sermon at the Established Church, a meeting of the elders and friends was held at seven o’clock. “About forty came. After joining in prayer and praise, various resolutions were passed. . . . Previous to this, a few minutes past 6 A.M., Matthew Adam, the beadle, who had adhered for one day to the Establishment, . . . came to the manse, declaring that he had stayed in too long, comparing himself to the son who said at first, ‘I will not,’ but afterward repented and went.”‡

In the midst of all this, however, the strongest encouragements by which, under God, the ministers were sustained, was the intelligent support of so many of the best of their people. Even those in the humblest ranks often knew, and could state in few words, the great truths that were contended for; and if the mode of expression was sometimes homely, it often bore the true stamp of Scottish character.

Thus, in one of the Ayrshire parishes, a plain man settled the controversy in a simple way: “Wha would think o’ going to the Court o’ Session to ask the way o’ salvation for a sinner, and why should men think o’ going to that Court to ask how to govern Christ’s Church?” §

Dr. A. Bonar records a statement found on the blank-leaf of a Bible, belonging to a poor woman in Collace, who had borne more bodily pain than could well be believed, and who expected

\* Dis. Mss. viii. p. 11.

‡ *Ibid.* xxix. p. 35.

† *Ibid.* xv. p. 9.

§ *Ibid.* i. p. 6.

soon to be taken to Him who had given her the heart to love Him. It was her testimony to the Crown-rights of Christ. "I write this 22nd May, 1843, after a long time of extreme pain and sore temptation, out of a full heart, feeling the love wherewith the Lord has loved me. It was on Tuesday, after all the beloved servants of God and people left the Established Church of Scotland, because the laws of Christ were denied in her. So, in the strength of Jesus, I desire to stand by my Father's cause. This I write to comfort my mother when I am gone."

Mr. Robertson, of Gartly, tells of a poor woman in his congregation who took a deep interest in the question. "When a paper was being sent round the parish for ascertaining the number of our adherents, she said she would sign it if she had a hundred hands." †

"William Weir, one of the outgoing elders (Lesmahagow), who was very frail at the time of the Disruption, and who has since been removed by death [1846], was pressed to remain in the Establishment on the ground that his days could not be many. He replied, 'It's never too late to do weel. I canna remain in the house when my Master is shut out.'

"An aged widow, a warm advocate of Moderatism and the Establishment, called on one of my elders (Lesmahagow) soon after the close of the Assembly of 1844. She remarked to him that both Assemblies got on very well—she saw no difference between them. He said he thought there was a little difference, for in the old Assembly, when any difficulty arose, they referred to Lord Aberdeen's Act to see what *it* said, but in the Free Assembly they referred to the Word of God. The old woman . . . rose abruptly, and left the house." ‡

But not only could they thus express their views in brief and homely words, they could, when occasion called for it, argue the question at length. At Ochiltree, in Ayrshire, Mr. Boyd, the parish minister, saw it his duty to remain in the Establishment; and after doing so, he complained publicly from the pulpit, and afterwards in print, that so many of his people had

\* Dis. Mss. xxi. p. 4.

† *Ibid.* xvii. p. 7.

‡ *Ibid.* xxxi. p. 30.

left him without giving their reasons. A working man, Mr. John Andrew, a hand-loom weaver, undertook to supply the omission in name of himself and his friends, and it is to be hoped that the parish minister was pleased with the result. His letter deserves to be read by those who wish to judge whether the common people of Scotland understood the question then at issue. "You are right, reverend sir, . . . in supposing that we are not guided by any personal dislike to you. . . . When you remember that we always cherished and manifested a becoming respect, esteem, and affection for you, . . . and were ever ready to aid and assist you in every Christian enterprise, you cannot but be convinced that we are actuated by higher than personal considerations. . . .

"You speak of attempts . . . to convert your peaceful parish into a scene of strife and warfare. We recognise no such melancholy state of things. . . . The liberty we take to ourselves in leaving the Church, that liberty we willingly give to our brethren who stay behind us. We are disposed for charity, and are willing to believe their motives good, and if they act on the same principle, and walk in the same spirit, all bitterness . . . must soon die away. . . .

"In speaking of yourself as a minister of the venerable Church of Scotland, you say you are as *free, unfettered, and independent* as ever. . . . The assertion seems more bold than true. Pardon us, reverend sir, if we say we do not believe it. . . . We know, indeed, you are free to preach, administer the sacraments, marry, visit, and the like. These are parts of the ministerial office, with the liberties of which the State has not as yet interfered. But here your freedom ends, for as a member of Presbytery in the settlement of ministers, . . . you are bound, under pains and penalties, to act, it may be not according to your own conscientious view, but according to the independent will of the patron, and the determination of the Civil Courts, and to place a minister not only against the conscientious objections of the people, but against the conscientious objections of the Presbytery itself—a state of things diametrically opposite to the original liberties of the Established Kirk of Scotland, subversive of our natural birthright, and at variance with the Word of Almighty

God. . . . The plain, unvarnished truth is, that by the late decisions of the Civil Courts, . . . the freedom and independence, such as it was which you enjoyed two years ago, has been totally uprooted and taken away. . . . *The State has declared itself your master, without a check or limit to your servitude, save its own good pleasure.* . . .

“And now, in taking farewell of you, reverend sir, permit us to entreat you to reconsider the subject. . . . We can and we do appreciate your good qualities as well as others, and sorry would we be to say one word unnecessarily to wound your feelings. . . . May the God of love and peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, make you perfect in every good work; . . . and may He promote between us and our brethren who remain under your care the spirit of love and goodwill.” \*

The earnestness, indeed, with which the people made the cause their own is seen especially in those parishes where, as in Ochiltree, the ministers remained in the Establishment. We give one of these cases in full detail, in order to illustrate the way in which the matter was conducted when in the hands of the laity.

At Johnstone, Renfrewshire, it is stated that in March, 1843, “two elders from Bridge-of-Weir, Mr. Gemmill, teacher, and Dr. Munro, along with two elders from Paisley, Mr. Archibald Gardner, writer [and Mr. Archibald Hodge, banker], met by agreement in Johnstone, in the shop of Mr. Archibald Watson, along with four Johnstonians, Messrs. Nesbit Thomson, baker; John Maxton, joiner; James Laird, boot and shoemaker; and Mr. Archibald Watson, boot and shoemaker, tenant of the place of meeting. At this meeting steps were taken for diffusing information on the Church question throughout the town and neighbourhood. Mr. Alex. Steel, minister of the Free Church at Dalry, and then a preacher, had a school in Quarrelton, beside Johnstone. The second meeting of the committee was held in it. The original committee, joined by Messrs. Joseph Laird, teacher; Robert M’Nair, spinner;

\* Farewell Address of the Free Presbyterians of Ochiltree to the Rev. James Boyd, their late Pastor.

Mr. Richard Gardner, and others, was very active. They obtained parties to lecture on the subject. . . . The town was divided into districts, and carefully visited, when it was found that about 140 expressed their intention to leave the Establishment unless the demands of the Church were granted by Government." At the first meeting of the Free Church Presbytery, the Court was induced to take Johnstone under its fostering charge. "A hall in M'Dowall street was obtained as a place of worship for the infant congregation, in which it regularly worshipped for about two years. The Rev. Mr. Makellar, son of the Rev. Dr. Makellar, of Pencaitland, was sent to labour in Johnstone, and there he laboured faithfully and diligently for about two months. . . . Shortly after my induction, a church was built on a favourable site, granted free of feu-duty by Mr. Graham, of Fernese. The opening collection amounted to £103, a large collection for a few poor people, and the largest ever made in Johnstone. A certain party would not believe we had made such a collection, and observed some of us had put the greater part of it in the plate in order to make a show, and had had it returned on Monday morning. I said the Free Church knew better than to return what was given to her. The Johnstone Free Church cost about £1100, but it had subsequently to be repaired at an expense of £500. In three years there were 250 members and 120 adherents." \*

Nothing was more touching in all that time than the zeal and self-sacrifice with which even the poorest of the people threw themselves into the work—widows, in many instances, casting their mite into the treasury unasked. Three of the cases recorded in the Disruption Mss. will show the kind of spirit which pervaded the country.

At Deskford, Mr. Innes remarks: "Some of my congregation, who are very poor, must, I am sure, exercise no inconsiderable degree of self-denial to enable them to contribute as they do. I may here mention a small anecdote of one of them who, though in very sober circumstances, values herself not a little on her being of the same family with the great and good Samuel Rutherford. When the time of the Disruption was

\* Dis. Mss. xlii.

drawing nigh, . . . she called one morning upon one of my elders, and put into his hands a crown piece (5s.), saying, 'There, tak' this, John; I have been makin' an eedol o't [making an idol of it]. That's hansel to your new kirk.' . . . It is almost unnecessary to say she has been contributing since with distinguished liberality in proportion to her means—giving very much in the spirit of her who gave her two mites; and she says she was never better off than since she has been doing so.'\*

Mr. Murray, at Newburgh, in Fife, says: "Margaret — was a saving, thrifty woman. As her former minister was a Moderate, and she rarely ever saw a newspaper, she knew nothing of the Disruption till it took place; but when it came it stirred her whole soul, and, as in many other cases, it opened her heart. Her new minister, having recently come to her neighbourhood, knew at first but little of her. One day he saw an elderly woman without her bonnet, with a white cap and a black ribbon round it, coming towards his house. She had her apron drawn together as if containing something rather heavy. He could not guess what her errand would be. On sitting down, she opened out her apron, and there were twenty pounds, seven in one-pound notes and thirteen in silver—the gatherings of many a day's, or rather of many a year's, winding of pirns—all which she now offered to the Lord, to be divided among the schemes of the Church. It was all her living." †

At Dundee, Mr. Lewis, after mentioning some of the higher contributions, states: "The largest in the eye of Christ was one offered by an aged woman, little removed from pauperism, who, at one of my ministerial visits, produced from its many wrappings a piece of gold which she had received recently from America. I thought to refuse it, but remembered that Christ would not have denied her the pleasure of contributing to His cause out of her poverty, 'more than they all.' Her name—the only one by which she was known in the congregation—was 'Betty.'" ‡

\* Dis. Mss. xv. p. 5.

† Parker Mss., Mr. Murray, of Newburgh.

‡ *Ibid.* Rev. G. Lewis, Dundee, p. 18.

It was thus that people of all ranks, rich and poor, showed their earnestness on behalf of the cause which they had at heart; and when this spirit was abroad there was little cause to wonder at the way in which the money was provided. Already, in February, 1843—three months before the Disruption—Dr. Chalmers speaks of it as coming in “like a set rain at the rate of a thousand pounds a-day.” \*

\* *Witness* Newspaper, 18th February, 1843.

## XVIII. A CONFIRMATION.

ONE of the most striking confirmations of Free Church principles was given in 1843 by the General Assembly of the Establishment itself. On the 18th May, as we saw, Dr. Welsh read from the chair a solemn Protest, formally stating the grounds on which the constitution of the Establishment was held to have been fatally vitiated. When in the act of retiring, he laid that Protest on the table, and left it lying openly there for all who remained behind to answer it if they could.

To do the Moderate party justice, the challenge was accepted bravely enough. When they found themselves masters of the situation, and had taken the Established Church into their hands, Dr. Cook, their leader, brought the subject formally before the House. "It will be proper," he said, "that an examination of the minutest kind should be made of this Protest, that a formal answer to it should be drawn up, which should be widely circulated through the country." A committee of Assembly was accordingly appointed, who, no doubt, after doing their best, reported to a subsequent diet. It appeared that three separate forms of answer had been prepared, but after due consideration, the House had no difficulty in coming to a unanimous decision: *These answers would not do.*

On this, Mr. Robertson, of Ellon, afterwards Professor Robertson, of Edinburgh, proposed a resolution (a most reasonable one in the circumstances), to the effect that "a paper so important as the Protest under consideration requires to be answered with greater care, and with fuller leisure for mature deliberation, than it was found possible to give it during the pressure of business, that the General Assembly recommit the whole case for the further consideration of their committee, and instruct them accordingly to report on the whole case to

the Commission in August." This proposal was supported by Dr. Cook, who suggested that "the best wisdom of the House" should be given to the matter, and in order to secure this the committee was enlarged.

The challenge, then, had been publicly accepted, and the Established Assembly had pledged themselves to answer the Protest. Nearly three months were allowed for mature deliberation, the best wisdom of the House was engaged, and what was the result? *Will it be believed that the whole ended in failure?* The more the committee looked at the Protest, the less they seem to have liked it. The appointed time came, the meeting of Commission in August was duly held, other business was disposed of, and a separate diet was fixed for hearing the answer to the Protest. *But no House was made*, and nothing more was ever heard of the subject, either in the Commission or the Assembly. After bravely pledging themselves to frame a reply which was to be "circulated widely through the country," engaging "the best wisdom of the House," and taking time "for mature deliberation," the whole thing collapsed. Not even the strongest supporters of the Establishment could feel surprised if, in these circumstances, men very generally drew the inference that THE PROTEST WAS LEFT UNANSWERED, BECAUSE IT WAS FOUND TO BE UNANSWERABLE.

The truth is, that the proceedings of that Assembly itself in 1843 had made it an exceedingly awkward thing even to attempt an answer. It would never have done to go before the public without claiming for the Established Church some kind of spiritual independence and freedom. But there lay the difficulty. The Assembly had resolved after consideration not to repeal the Veto Law, not to rescind the Act admitting *quoad sacra* ministers, nor to take off the sentence of deposition solemnly pronounced by the Church on the ministers of Strathbogie, but to hold that all this had been effectually done for them already by the civil judges—the Court of Session. If the Church had herself passed a rescissory Act there might have been some semblance of a claim to spiritual independence and freedom—she might have frankly avowed a change of opinion, and proceeded herself to undo what had been done.

But instead of this, she simply abdicated her own spiritual functions, and sat down at the feet of the Court of Session. There was no need to reverse her decisions—the Civil Courts had reversed them for her. Everything she had done was null, and had been null all along, because the civil judges so decreed. Without reserve, the Church seemed to have taken on herself the badge of Erastian servitude.

What made all this the more serious was the manifestly spiritual nature of the functions so surrendered. The case of the *quoad sacra* ministers affected the power of a pastor, in conjunction with his elders, to take the spiritual oversight of his flock. The Auchterarder and other cases affected the formation of the pastoral tie by the sacred act of ordination, while the cases of deposition came in contact with one of the most delicate and solemn acts in the whole range of the Church's sacred functions. If the Established Church gave over such matters into the hands of the Civil Courts, and allowed them THE RIGHT OF EXPUNGING her sentences, was it not plain that her whole spiritual independence was gone—she had yielded up the rule and discipline of Christ's house into the hands of secular judges.

It may well have been the consciousness of this which formed the real difficulty—found to be insuperable—in the way of answering the Protest. But it is a far more serious consideration for the members of the Establishment that the whole series of these precedents have been so homologated that they must be held to be now in full force, and to have settled the constitution of the Church on what is obviously an Erastian basis. In any case, it must be allowed that the members of the Free Church have had good reason to view such proceedings as affording a signal confirmation of the soundness of the course which they followed.

## XIX. THE DWELLINGS TO WHICH MINISTERS RETIRED.

ONE great trial which pressed immediately on outgoing ministers was the want of house accommodation—"a place," as one of them expresses it, "where to lay my own and so many other heads dear to me."

In the larger towns this was easy, though even there the change was often sufficiently marked. Dr. M'Farlan, of Greenock, had held a conspicuous place in the counsels of the Church ever after the debate on Pluralities in 1825. So early as December, 1839, he made, at a public meeting, the remarkable declaration: "It has pleased God, in His providence, to fill me, as far as stipend is concerned, a fuller cup than has fallen to any of my brethren; but this I say—and I say it advisedly, so help me God—holding the views I entertain on the subject, and regarding it as impossible without a sacrifice of conscience to submit to and acquiesce in that decree to which I have referred, I would rather cast that cup to the ground than I would taste it again, embittered, as it would be, if I were to yield, by the consciousness of having deserted what I believe to be my duty to God and my duty to the Church."

Accordingly, at the Disruption, he made the sacrifice, and his friends remarked that "he seemed as one relieved of a heavy burden, . . . cheerful and happy." He left the spacious house he had, and retired to a flat.\* Those who had seen him in his former residence will remember how bright his presence made it, but all who had intercourse with him after the change will testify that a yet fairer sunshine seemed to rest on his new home, as if more than ever the joy of the Lord was his strength.

In country districts the trial through which ministers and

\* Parker Mss., Rev. Dr. M'Farlan.

their families had to pass was often of a kind the full details of which will never be told on earth. The few examples now to be given may serve in some measure to show what was going on.

When Mr. Lumsden, of Barry, afterwards Principal Lumsden, of Aberdeen, removed from the manse, he had to retire to a labourer's cottage. Dr. M'Donald, of Ferintosh, the most venerated and influential minister in the North of Scotland, was not allowed to remain in the house to which he removed after leaving the manse, but was compelled, along with his family, to occupy a small, uncomfortable cottage in the neighbourhood.\*

So long as health was not affected, such changes were accepted with all cheerfulness. Mr. Innes, of Deskford, states: "My experience in connection with the change has not been one of special trial, but of very great encouragement. I have felt the goodness of the Lord in a variety of respects, both to myself and to those in whom I am most deeply interested." He makes nothing of the fact which he afterwards states incidentally, that "the accommodation with which upon leaving the parish manse I and my family were glad to put up was, on account of its meanness, and the little respectability of our neighbours, made the subject of scorn and derision." Nor is he troubled by the fact that, in his old age, he had to walk three miles to the barn in which he preached, and three miles returning, sometimes having to do this twice on the Sabbath. He merely adds, "Through the Lord's great goodness, I have never, from the state of the weather, nor from the state of my health, been prevented from preaching on any one Sabbath, and never . . . have I been the worse for doing so, though I be now in my sixty-ninth year, and have a delicate frame and constitution."†

At Roslin, near Edinburgh, the circumstances were trying. After occupying for eleven years a very comfortable manse which was built for him, the minister "was obliged to rent two small cottages in the village of Roslin, having been decidedly refused the only houses in the vicinity which were suitable, though they were offered to be let to the general public. One of the two cottages, containing a single apartment, with a tiled

\* Parker Mss., Rev. Dr. M'Donald.

† Dis. Mss. xv. pp. 7, 8.

roof and an earthen floor, the minister occupied as a bedroom till he lost his health. At present [1846] that room is occupied by part of his family, who retire to it at night by going out of the door of the one cottage and into the door of the other, there being no internal communication between them. The floor of this room is covered by a piece of felt, obtained by purchase from a neighbouring paper-mill, and as one piece becomes rotten another piece is procured. Chairs and other articles used in the manse are hung round the walls of the room somewhat in the mode of a broker's warehouse, the two cottages being too little to contain the furniture in the usual way. As may well be conceived, the valuable furniture which was in the manse has been much deteriorated."\*

So also in the case of Mr. Lamb, of Kirkmaiden. "Of all the incidents of 1843, none produced such a deep and general impression on the minds of men of all denominations in the district as the demission of Mr. Lamb. His family were delicate, and himself unfit for any but the quietest . . . duties, yet he left his manse for a comfortless dwelling with a loveable cheerfulness equalled only by the gentleness which had beautified his uncompromising firmness of principle during the whole course of the Ten Years' Conflict."†

In some cases the distance to which men were forced to remove involved much trial, and in others it is believed to have sent them to an untimely grave. "After leaving the manse, Mr. Aitken, of Dyke, was put to much inconvenience. . . . He was obliged to remove to the town of Forres, which was four miles distant, and here he continued for ten years. The visitation of his people and the performance of public duties were the occasion of much labour and travelling, both by day and by night."

"In 1852, a site was at last granted by Mr. Brodie, of Brodie, and a manse built in 1853, but the harassment and fatigue to which Mr. Aitken had long been subjected now began to tell on his constitution, and in 1855 his health broke down. . . . He was soon completely laid aside."‡

\* Dis. Mss. xiv. p. 4.

† Parker Mss., Pres. of Stranraer.

‡ *Ibid.* Pres. of Forres.

Mr. Roderick M'Leod, of Skye, writes, in 1867: "Perhaps Dr. Candlish may still remember his visit to Skye with the late lamented Dr. Makellar, when, after breakfasting with us and looking on our accommodation, he called Dr. Makellar to show him a curiosity, . . . the small dimensions of a room where six or seven children were packed together. . . . To the discomforts of these flittings, especially the first, I have often thought that the seeds of the fell disease that has made my company so desolate were mainly to be traced."\*

The Rev. Thomas Davidson, of Kilmalie, Abertarff, had a still harder struggle. After leaving the manse, he had, down to May, 1844, two or three apartments in Annat House, but after that "the only accommodation he could obtain was a hut twelve feet square and six feet high, and so open that it was necessary by means of blankets and bedcovers to stop out the wind and rain. After this he got two small rooms in a Highland ferry-house, and when a friend came to visit him, he was obliged to part with one of these, and his wife and children slept on the floor. Even this accommodation he was compelled to surrender. . . . In March, 1847, he and his wife paid a visit to Glasgow, chiefly with the view of obtaining medical advice. Mrs. Davidson's case was one in which medical skill was unavailing. She died in Glasgow, on the 24th May, 'another victim,' says her husband, 'to the cruel oppression of the site-refusing proprietors of Scotland.'"+

In those parishes where the land was in the hands of a single hostile proprietor, the difficulties were much enhanced. In the Presbytery of Arbroath, the first Lord Panmure was well known as a site-refuser, and several of the ministers on his estates were driven to live at a distance. Dr. Wilson, now of Dundee, then at Carmylie, was obliged to reside about seven miles from the scene of his labours, "at an old farm-house, given," as he states, "rent free, through the generous kindness of Mr. David Anderson, Westhaven." For two years he had to walk those seven miles going and returning in the discharge of his duty.

So also Mr. Kirk, of Arbirlot—father of Dr. Kirk, surgeon to the expedition of Dr. Livingstone, and now Consul at Zanzibar--

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Skye.

† *Ibid.* Pres. of Abertarff.

had to leave his parish and live in Arbroath. On the 31st December, 1846, he writes: "Another year has gone. Shall I live through that which succeeds? I feel myself carried forward to the first rank—exposed more, as it were, to the arrows of death. Three years and seven months have elapsed since I left the manse. I have walked to preach the Gospel on Sabbath during this period one thousand and fifty-six miles, week-day duty requiring much more. I have thus had, in three and a-half years, to walk upwards of two thousand miles to do ministerial work; yet I may set up my Ebenezer." The following is a specimen of the week-day work: "Spent the forenoon visiting sick; home; left at four to attend a meeting announced on Sabbath; the night damp and roads bad. After the people met, a storm of wind and rain came on. In a lull of the storm, set off at nine to return home. The lull was short. I had to brave the blast from the sea, cold and wet. The rain penetrated every part of my dress. The frost still bound the earth, which refused to admit a drop of rain. The night dark: came upon a large body of navvies; dashed on one of them, then on another. Reached home by eleven at night, in a state of weariness not well to be conceived." Other notices of excessive fatigue, and frequent sickness and fainting, follow; but the work goes on until, in February, 1847, he is laid up with severe illness—fainted. His reflections were at this time very solemn. After years of such exposure, he was able to leave Arbroath and return to the parish; but it was with broken health, which took the form of heart-complaint, under which he became gradually weaker, and ultimately sank in 1858.\*

The account of the refusal at Shildaig shows the feelings with which the Free Church was too frequently regarded. At the Disruption, says the Rev. Colin Mackenzie, "the whole population, with one exception, adhered to the Free Church and to my ministry. After my return from Edinburgh in June, 1843, I did not preach in the parish church, but did not, like most other ministers, quit the manse, just because there was no house of any kind to be got within the bounds of the parish, or within many miles beyond it, to which I could remove with

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Arbroath.

my aged mother and other two members of my family. . . . Meantime I made several applications to the proprietor of Shieldaig, . . . by letter, who always replied with a positive refusal, at the same time assuring me that the Free Church would get no footing on any part of his property. Before going south to the General Assembly, which met at Glasgow, I determined to make one more attempt to obtain a site by applying to him personally at his residence at Applecross House, hoping that, from the intimate and friendly terms on which he and I always were from boyhood, that on my own account, as a near relative, he might consent. On the contrary, he received me coldly, and expressed his wonder that I had taken upon me to call upon him, and expect that he would receive me, after acting so foolish a part as to bring myself and family to beggary at the very time when, as M.P. for the county, he had it in his power, and was determined to promote me to a better living; at the same time giving me to understand that he would not only not grant my request, but that I must quit the manse and remove myself from the parish of Shieldaig and from his estate, otherwise he would make my life bitter to me, as he was determined to interdict all his tenants from giving me so much as one apartment in any of their poor dwellings. Perceiving his hostile feeling towards me, I got up to get quarters for the night at a miserable inn not far from the mansion-house; but he objected, stating that I should have Highland hospitality for the night, but that I must be off after breakfast next morning, and he hoped that I should never again use the same liberty of calling upon him, since he could not now recognise me as a minister, nor yet as an old friend.”\*

But of all such cases the most conspicuous was that of the Duke of Sutherland. Mr. Mackenzie, of Farr, describes the circumstances: “However numerous the adherents, yet the people were poor, and in a state of dependence as tenants-at-will and cottars. Against them there was a powerful Duke, supported in his disapproval of the Free Church by his array of factors and agents, the minor heritors in the county, and all the wealthy sheep and corn-farmers, who acquired fortunes by occu-

\* Dis. Mss. xlvi., Rev. C. Mackenzie, Shieldaig.

pying the lands from which the peasantry had been expelled. . . . I, in common with all the members of this Presbytery who adhered to the Convocation resolutions, had a trial before the Disruption as to our fidelity. It was stated, soon after the Convocation, by one of the Duke of Sutherland's officials, that should our resolutions be carried into effect, not an inch of ground would be given within the bounds of our Presbytery whereon to build a church and manse. . . . At the hour of the Disruption, perhaps in no county in Scotland was there a darker cloud over the prospects of the Free Church."\*

It is painful to tell how these forebodings of trial were realised. The account of the two Mackenzies, of Tongue—father and son—attracted much notice. The family had occupied the manse, a very beautiful residence, for nearly a hundred years. At the age of seventy-two the elder Mr. Mackenzie, afflicted with asthma, had to leave his house and send his family forty miles away to Thurso, because the only accommodation he could get for himself and his son (his assistant and successor) was a room and bed-closet in a mean cottage, for which the rent was four shillings a-week. In these circumstances the son was attacked by fever, and both died—the father on the 30th of June, and the son on the 26th July, 1845. During that illness, Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh had gone to see them, and afterwards described his visit in an address to the General Assembly.

"I fancy most of the members of this House are aware that I had the pain—the exquisite pain—and I must at the same time say, the very high privilege, of seeing that noble father and his no less noble son witnessing, under the most affecting circumstances, a good and blessed confession. I shall never forget to my dying day the scene I witnessed at the manse at Tongue; or rather—I forget myself—in a mean, at least a humble cottage, to which that father and son had retired, parting with family, rather than part with their flock. I say, I will never forget this. I was never so unmanned by any sight I ever saw, if I may call it being unmanned, for I am not ashamed of being affected by such a sight. I shall not venture to describe what I saw. I shall only say, in the words of Scripture,

\* Dis. Mss. xx. pp. 5, 12.

that they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided. I rise to bear my humble testimony to the worth of these men, I should rather say, to the worth of these martyrs for those great principles for which we abandoned our earthly all. They lay on their dying beds in peace. Never shall I forget the sight of that venerable old man, a man who would have adorned any church, who would have adorned any society. Never shall I forget seeing him in his mean cottage, nature exhausted, buried in the sleep he had not tasted the livelong night, his venerable locks streaming over the chair where he was sitting asleep, for in the bed he could not sleep. I went up to him and intended to awake him, but thought it cruelty to do so. I passed him over and over again in the room, and still he slept on, and after seeing his son lying in an adjoining closet on a fever-bed—a son that had never closed his eyes all the night long either, for his father's groans were like daggers in his heart—I left the house, and the last words I heard that son say on this earth were: 'Mr. Guthrie, this is hard enough, but I thank God I do not lie here a renegade. My father's conscience and mine are at peace.' Yes, sir, they are now at peace, both of them. They are gone to the place where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. I believe that the memory of these two men will live fresh in the minds of the people of the parish of Tongue for generations yet to come." \*

Another of these sufferers was Mr. Baird, of Cockburnspath. "I went out last winter," says Dr. Guthrie, "and found him in a mean cottage, consisting of two rooms—a but and a ben—with a cellar-like closet below, and a garret above. Night came on, and I asked where I was to sleep. He showed me a closet. The walls were damp—no fire could be put in it. I looked horrified at the place, but there was no better. 'Now,' said I, 'Mr. Baird, where are you to sleep?' 'Come,' said he, 'and I will show you.' So he climbed a sort of trap-stair, and got up to the garret, and there was the minister's study, with a chair, a table, and a flock-bed. A few inches above were the slates of the roof, without any covering, and as white with hoar-

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Tongue.

frost within as they were white with snow without. When he came down the next morning, after a sleepless night, I asked him how he had been, and he told me that he had never closed an eye from the cold. His very breath on the blankets was frozen as hard as the ice outside. I say that man lies in a martyr's grave."\*

Hardly less painful was the case of Mr. M'Vean, of Iona, who was exposed to many hardships after leaving the manse. First he crossed over to the Mull coast, to an old house, which, with the exception of one unoccupied room, had been used only as a granary for many years. It proved so open to wind and cold, that all winter there was illness in his family, and after the death of one of his children he was driven to seek shelter elsewhere. The schoolmaster in Iona let him his house, but was so severely handled by his Presbytery (Established Church) for the countenance shown to the Free Church minister, that he was obliged to give Mr. M'Vean notice to quit. Rather than remove to Tobermory, a distance of forty-five miles, Mr. M'Vean took refuge in a small and most uncomfortable hut. It was there he was found by the well-known Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, who could not refrain from tears at the sight. "When entering," he says in a letter to Dr. Chalmers, "one of the miserable huts on the shore, I heard that there, almost exposed to the inclemency of the weather, the minister and his family had taken refuge. . . . Then I better understood the Free Church. I better understood the devotion and the sacrifice of so many of your friends."†

These trials were not rendered less difficult to bear when one took into account the obvious design which the opponents had in view. In returning from the fever-stricken cottage at Tongue, Dr. Guthrie says, "I confess I felt my corruption rising." But afterwards, he adds, "The object was to crush the minister—not for the sake of injuring him—God forbid that I should say that—but to compel him to leave the district, that thus the flock of the Free Church might be scattered." It was the old policy of the persecuting Stuarts revived, and adapted to modern circumstances.

\* Memoir of Dr. Guthrie, ii. p. 89.

† Parker Mss., Rev. Mr. M'Vean.

Were ministers, then, to be driven from the post where God had set them ?

An old military officer, Charles Maitland Christie, Esq. of Durie, once said, in the General Assembly: "You are aware, Moderator, that when two hostile armies come into the vicinity of each other, it is not unusual to place pickets of defence in front of the main body. . . . I, sir, have had the honour of being placed in such a picket, and when I was told by my commanding officer to consider it not as a picket of alarm, but as a picket of defence, I felt that if the enemy should advance upon that picket of the line, it would be my duty to fight there and to die there."\* It was with something of this feeling that the men of 1843 prepared to face the hardships of the positions in which God had placed them. How much they were prepared to endure rather than flinch may be seen from the above examples, but one more instance—painful enough in some of its details—may be given, to show how hard the struggle sometimes became.

Mr. Campbell, the minister of Berriedale, in Caithness, relates his experience: "We suffered much hardship as a congregation. We could not get sites for our church and manse for eleven years. . . . The teacher and myself lived in a most miserable place. The people would not dare to receive us into their houses. The teacher, therefore, put a temporary roof upon the ruin of an old cottage. In that miserable place we lived for seven years. . . . If there were heavy rain during the night, there was a pool of water before my bed to welcome my rising in the morning. If there was high wind, the ashes were blown up in my face. The wind had free course under the foundation, the house having been built upon a heap of stones. It was so damp and cold that I had to wear my greatcoat at the fireside. I felt, by degrees, that my life was in danger. My feet began to swell much from the dampness of the place. . . . I walked about a great deal, to prevent my getting worse, if possible. One night I was awakened from sleep by a tremendous noise on the roof of the house, very like the noise of people in danger of shipwreck on the sea-shore. There was a great storm of wind,

\* Ten Years' Conflict, vol. ii. p. 175.

which was carrying away the roof. The noise was made by men, who came together to keep the roof on the house, if possible. They raised their voices to the highest pitch, the wind was so high that they could not otherwise hear each other. But, in spite of all their exertions, the roof was carried away, and the curtains of my bed had enough to do to withstand the storm. They have been more than once, upon other occasions, flapping about me like the sails of a ship in a storm.

“Feeling my life thus exposed to danger, I set about building a school-house and teacher’s dwelling-house—the teacher’s house first. We entered the teacher’s house before it was plastered. We had to remove from one room to another till it was finished. It was very damp and uncomfortable, but better than the place we were in.”

These trials passed away. Twelve years after the Disruption saw the congregation in a new church and the minister in a comfortable manse. Though he had been thus successful after a fight so hard, he shows little disposition to take credit either for his trials or his success. “We are apt,” he says, “to complain of our trials and losses, but what are they in comparison with those of the first preachers of the Gospel? We have suffered much, yet it is not impossible that some may have suffered as much for His sake, and have forsaken His service at last. We have need of praying, like David, ‘Lord, search me, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.’ We have need of the operation of the Holy Spirit to number us among the blessed.”\*

It is interesting to notice how calmly many of the sufferers were prepared to make the best of the circumstances in which they were placed. One of the most beautiful manses in the south of Scotland was that at Ruthwell, formerly referred to. The garden and all the grounds round the house and church had been laid out in exquisite taste, showing not a few objects of singular interest. At one point stood the far-famed Runic cross, which Dr. Duncan had restored and made known to archaeologists, while at another there had been built into the walls of a garden-house the sandstone slabs from Corneockle

\* Parker Mss., Pres. of Caithness.

Moor, showing those footprints which, at their first discovery, had startled the geological world. How cheerfully all this was left by the old minister, we have already seen. At first the difficulties in the way of obtaining accommodation had been great. "At last the heart of an old neighbour was inclined to offer shelter to her old minister; and though no Free Churchwoman herself, Miss Dickson packed herself in one end of her cottage, and allowed us to pay a rent for the other; which we did thankfully, though the accommodation was inconvenient for both parties." After a time this arrangement had to terminate. "We used to console each other by saying that our Father knew we could not in our climate live under a hedge. We felt much at a loss, and having looked all around in vain for help, we committed it to Him, and waited for direction. We had promised to remove on the 1st of May. It wanted four days of the time, and was Saturday night. Dr. Duncan was called to hear the will of an old lady read, whose death produced some changes. At eight o'clock he came in and said, 'We are to have a house to cover us. W. B. is to remove into the large house, and on Tuesday, at noon, we may begin to clean his cottage.' I do not stop to say that it is damp, very smoky, and part of it unceiled. There were so many people glad for us, and we ourselves were so filled with thankfulness, that we seemed to have found a palace. We saw that we had been left to the last moment, that we might discern more clearly the hand that provided. It seemed far more the people's concern than our first removal. They came and cleaned and scrubbed, whitewashing the very outside of the cottage. Then they carried furniture, and by mid-day on the 1st May, we had entered our new resting-place. No one of all who helped us on that occasion would receive anything for their labour. Indeed, we felt that this little event of the cottage drew into exercise more faith on our part and more love on the people's than all that had preceded it. The only pang in it was the parting word of those who had helped us with such a free heart—'Now, we hope there will be no more heard of removing to Edinburgh.' A man who had a field behind our house, without saying anything about it, opened his hedge and put in

a gate, so that we could walk in a very pleasant place, and often escaped from the smoke of the house to the green field, with its little plots of wild roses and honeysuckles ; and there, with our books, we were as happy as we could have been in the garden, whose every graceful nook was so endeared to us.”\*

The reader may feel some interest in comparing this narrative of Mrs. Duncan with the account of another observer : “Dr. Henry Duncan, the originator of savings banks, left a manse which his taste during forty years had made a paradise. He took up his abode in a labourer’s cottage on the side of the turnpike road from Dumfries to Carlisle. It contained a room, a kitchen, and a bed-closet. Behind it lay a great old quarry, with unsightly rubbish mounds, and deep pools of water. I saw the fine old gentleman in his roadside cottage about the year 1846. He entertained his company, a few ministers in the neighbourhood, with the polished courtesy of the old school. Dinner over, he said, ‘Will you go into the drawing-room, gentlemen?’ His guests, puzzled where the drawing-room could be, rose and followed him. Opening the back door of the cottage, ‘My drawing-room is the great drawing-room of Nature,’ he said. We stepped out, and there was the deserted quarry, its rubbish mounds all planted with spruce and larch ; winding paths led among them ; a rustic bridge made by his own hands spanning a space between two pools, and the whole huge deformity transformed into beauty.”† He said to his daughter and her husband, who had come to visit him—Mr. Dodds, of Belhaven : “They talk of sacrifices ; I never can feel that I have made any. I never was more happy. I have all that my necessities require. The only thing that would have made me unhappy would have been to act contrary to conscience.”

There is yet another of these painful cases which it would be improper to omit, that of the Rev. Duncan M’Gillivray, of Lairg, a venerable minister, who was eighty years of age at the Disruption. The only house in the parish to which he could retire was the cottage of a widowed daughter, the use of which

\* Dis. Mss. xvi. pp. 9, 10.

† Life of Dr. Cunningham, p. 192. Rev. James Mackenzie.

had been given her by the Duke of Sutherland. The week before Mr. M'Gillivray left the manse, Mr. Gunn, the factor, called for Mrs. Henderson, and gave her significant hints as to the inexpediency of her father's going to the cottage. At last she put the question: "Do you mean, Mr. Gunn, that I am not to admit my own father into my house when he has no other place to go to?" His answer was: "Just that, Mrs. Henderson;" and her reply was, that so long as she was there her father should share her cottage. Soon after he came to be her guest, Mr. Taylor, the Duke's law-agent, called for him, and said twice and very significantly, "Mr. M'Gillivray, I wish you to know that Mr. Gunn has acquainted me that you have come to reside here without his permission." Convinced that the Duke's agents had resolved to get rid of them, and dreading the idea of being ejected in winter, both father and daughter left,\* the father going to reside with his sons—first at Dairsie, and afterwards at Mains. But after all this, he would allow no one to make much of his trials. "I have no difficulty whatever," he said, "in the matter; I see clearly that Christ's glory demands the sacrifice." He has been known to leave the room when severe remarks were made in his hearing against the Duke of Sutherland. Few things were more touching than the prayers which he continued to offer to the last on behalf of that nobleman, and there is reason to believe that in his case "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man" was not offered in vain. It is due to the Duke of Sutherland to say that, after a time, his feeling changed, and sites were granted all over his property.

\* For fuller details see *Witness*, 25th October, 1843.

## XX. THE ADVANCEMENT OF RELIGION A FRUIT OF THE DISRUPTION.

IT is impossible to close the first part of these annals without referring to the most important of all subjects in connection with the Church—the advancement of vital religion in the land. We have seen what reason there is to believe that the revival of religion prepared the way for the Disruption; but one is naturally led to ask whether the cause did not suffer when the controversy fairly broke out. For ten years and more, all over Scotland, there was contention everywhere. Families were divided, children at school took sides, bitter pamphlets were poured forth from the press, the whole frame-work of society was dislocated, and high above the turmoil were heard the voices of Scotland's most venerated ministers, engaged in keen debate. In such an atmosphere as this would not the cause of vital godliness decay, and the Christian graces themselves languish and wither? So men often asked reproachfully during the progress of the conflict, but the result proved far otherwise.

That the alloy of human infirmity mingled in the struggle none were so ready to confess as the controversialists themselves, but a great responsibility had been put into their hands, and, amidst difficulties and imperfections, they must strive faithfully to uphold the cause of Christ. Just in proportion as the consciousness of this came home to their minds, the controversy was safe. "The ecclesiastical turmoil," as Dr. Bonar expresses it, "seemed to elevate, not to depress; to spiritualise, not to secularise."

This is not the place to discuss the philosophy of such a subject, but experience everywhere shows that the Church has

far more to dread from the quiescent indifference of peaceful worldly times than from the shock of controversy quickening the intellectual activities of men. It is a remarkable fact that the most deplorable division which ever rent our Presbyterianism was coincident with the time—from 1650 to 1660—when the Church had the firmest hold on all classes of the people, and when the religion and morality of the country rose to a far higher level than ever was attained before or since. A contemporary historian states: “I verily believe there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time than in any season since the Reformation, though of triple its duration. Nor were there ever greater purity and plenty of the means of grace. . . . I have lived many years in a parish where I never heard an oath, and you might have ridden many miles before you heard any. Also you could not, for a great part of the country, have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped. . . . Nobody complained more of our Church government than our taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was, their trade was broke, people were become so sober.”\*

Such were the results wrought out among the Scottish people by our Church at a time when, from the highest nobleman to the humblest peasant, she had the whole community within her pale. A lamentable controversy, indeed, raged within her borders, but the Gospel did its blessed work none the less, and with this outstanding fact in our Church’s history, we need feel no surprise if in connection with the ten years’ conflict there were tokens of success in the spiritual field, for which our Church had reason to give thanks.

There was one thing, at least, on account of which all the friends of religion might well be grateful: the ministers of the Convocation had stood true to their pledges in the day of trial. The world had ridiculed the bare idea of 400 of their number laying down their livings for conscience’ sake. A triumph for the cause of irreligion was confidently expected by the more careless.

\* Kirkton’s History, pp. 63, 64. Attempts have been made to cast doubt on these statements by some who had little sympathy with Kirkton’s religious views. For a complete vindication of his accuracy the reader may refer to a pamphlet by the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Langton. Letter to Dr. Chalmers, &c., 1833.

After all the loud professions of the Evangelical party, the love of stipend was expected to prevail, pledges would be cast aside, some back-door would be found, and when men were seen coming down from the high ground they had so boldly taken, the world was prepared with its scornful laugh to greet the ignominious retreat. One of the English judges, on being told by a Scottish M.P. that the holder of the richest benefice in Scotland had pledged himself to resign it, replied, with a sneer, "I will believe it when I see it." At Perth, "many of the worldly and ungodly in the town and neighbourhood were eagerly watching the event, and had, it is understood, considerable bets depending on the conduct of particular ministers. When, contrary to their expectations, the Disruption actually took place on such an extensive scale, they seemed completely taken by surprise."\* The system of bets on the result is said to have been common in the clubs of Edinburgh and elsewhere, and the surprise felt at Perth was very generally shared in, over the country. When the news of the Disruption day reached Glasgow, and was announced on the Exchange, the usual busy hum of voices suddenly ceased, and silence fell on the assembled merchants. For a brief moment the reality of Christian principle seemed suddenly to reveal itself even to men of the world. As Mr. Lewis says of Dundee, "Even those most opposed to us respected our courage and constancy." It was religion itself that had been put on trial in the persons of its most zealous professing friends, and if all the truth could be told as to the kind of talk that had gone on in those clubs and elsewhere among worldly circles, it would be seen how great a danger had been escaped from.

"If we had failed in the day of trial," says Mr. Thomson, of Muckhart, "and become traitors and renegades, infidelity would, ere long, have walked triumphantly through the length and breadth of the land." Mr. Mather, of Stanley, tells of one of those ministers who had turned back in the day of trial, and who, in the hearing of an elder of the United Secession, was railing at the Free Church, when he received the reply: "Mr. —, had all the non-intrusion ministers acted as you have

\* Dis. Mss. iv. p. 8.

done, a greater injury would have been done to the interests of religion and morality than could have been repaired by a hundred years' preaching."\* All the friends of our common faith in all the churches might well rejoice that the sacrifice which had been laid on the altar of Christian principle had at least taken away this ground for reproach. "There is something," says Dr. Guthrie, "more eloquent than speech. I am bold to say that Hall, Foster, or Chalmers never preached a sermon so impressive or sublime as the humblest minister of our Church did on the 18th of May, when he gave up his living to retain his principles, and joined the crowd which, bursting from the doors of St. Andrew's Church, with Chalmers at its head, marched out, file by file, in steady ranks, giving God's people reason to weep tears, not of grief, but of joy."†

But not only had a great danger been escaped from; a new impulse had been given to the spiritual work of the Church—the grand object for which she exists on earth.

One signal proof of this was the spirit of prayer which showed itself all through the conflict. Days were again and again set apart by the Church in which her people were invited to public and private prayer. In November, 1842, for example, an earnest appeal was widely circulated, calling all the friends of the Church to "the duty of pouring out their hearts to God in frequent and fervent prayers, in the view of the approaching Convocation. . . . Let those occupying a private station in the Church bear in mind that as Aaron and Hur of old bore up the hands of Moses while Israel was contending with Amalek, and as the people in the wilderness brought to the service of the tabernacle according to their several abilities, . . . so those in the most retired and private spheres may, by prayer, render just as real and essential a service to this assembly of ministers as those who shall be called to take the most active share in its proceedings."

In the Disruption Mss. there are traces of how these appeals were responded to. "Looking back as far as 1839, I recollect that, during the sitting of the General Assembly that year, there was a more than ordinary concern manifest in all our

\* Dis. Mss. v. p. 6.

† Life, vol. ii. p. 59.

public and private religious exercises [at Farr] for the Divine blessing and presence on and with the ministers and elders of our Church. This concern was increasing during the years following."\*

"A little before my leaving to attend the Convocation, I was much impressed with an ejaculatory prayer of an old woman, who had been long bedrid, whom I was visiting [in Gartly]. I had been telling her where and for what purpose I was going. The poor woman raised herself as well as she could in her bed, and prayed fervently that the Lord would be with the ministers who were to assemble, and enable them to stand together and be faithful to Jesus, the Church's only Head and King." †

At Tobermory, in the Island of Mull, the parish had been under "a Moderate ministry, and there were few among the people who truly feared God. One of the brightest lights of the place was an old man, a weaver, named John M'Innes. He was a man of faith and prayer. . . . Previous to and about the time of the Disruption, he was known often to spend most of the night in prayer—literally wrestling till the breaking of the day, that the Lord would give grace to His witnesses to be faithful in the day of trial. Some time before, he one night came out of his closet with his face shining with joy. He said he firmly believed that at no distant time the Lord was going to send the Gospel to the poor Isle of Mull. . . . When the Disruption took place, the people seemed instinctively to turn to M'Innes's house, round which, the first Sabbath, five hundred assembled for admission. Though the Church which I saw is not yet opened, the number of adherents is about 1000. . . . The minister is Mr. M'Lean, in the settlement of whom in the place old John M'Innes's prediction has been eminently fulfilled." ‡

"I think about this time [after the Convocation] many of my people [at Errol] as well as myself experienced an increased spirit of seriousness and prayer. One of the first things that impressed them very deeply in this way was the circumstance that one of my co-presbyters, while assisting at the communion, which took place about three weeks after the Convocation, dwelt very

\* Dis. Mss. xx. p. 1.

† *Ibid.* xvii. p. 7.

‡ Mss. by W. Dickson, Esq., of notes taken on the spot.

largely in prayer on the trial that was coming on the minister and people, and represented that as likely to be the last time they would meet together in that place for the celebration of that solemnity. Many, as well as the parties immediately concerned, were affected by the way in which that brother prayed for sustaining faith to the writer and his partner in life.”\*

“My soul often goes out at the throne of grace on behalf of Larbert and Dunipace. May the Disruption be more blessed to them than days of peace!”†

These extracts may serve to indicate the spirit of prayerfulness which was spreading throughout the congregations and among the ministers.

Another circumstance no less deserving of notice was the earnest preaching of the Gospel, and the way in which ministers were pressing home its invitations. Amid the heat and fervour of controversy men seemed to grow more urgent, and the very events which were transpiring were dwelt on as giving impressiveness to the appeal. We see this in the address written by Dr. James Buchanan, and circulated by the Convocation among the people of Scotland, in which, after arguing the public questions at issue, they urge men solemnly to consider the great question of personal salvation. “Are there none among you who have often been solemnly warned to flee from the wrath to come, and affectionately invited to close with Christ, who are still living without Christ and without hope in the world? Are there none who, while the throne of grace has been at all times accessible, have habitually neglected secret prayer? Are there none of your houses in which there is no domestic altar? . . . A season of trial has often been a time of reviving from the presence of the Lord; and it is our hearts’ desire and prayer for you that, now when the clouds are gathering, and a storm seems to be at hand, the careless may be awakened to serious thought, and may be found safe in the ark when the deluge comes, and that the faithful may be strengthened to endure, as seeing Him who is invisible. . . . In contending for Christ’s crown as the King of saints, and your right to serve Him as Master in His own house, according to the rule of His Word, see that you obey Christ as

\* Dis. Mss. xi. p. 3.

† Life of M’Cheyne, p. 140.

your Lord, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called."

In a similar spirit, ministers in their own parishes availed themselves of the opportunity, and we give two examples to show how this was done. "It is pre-eminently necessary," said Dr. John Bonar, of Larbert, "that every man should look to his own saving interest in Christ. Have we such an interest in Him? Have we anything in Christ really possessed which would counterbalance the loss of the earthly things which are perilled? Have we anything in religion for the sake of which it would be wise to suffer the loss of all earthly things? He would be a fool to throw away all the advantages of this life if he had nothing after all in the life to come; but he would be infinitely worse than a fool who would, for the sake of the world, sell his soul or betray his Saviour. See to it, then, that you gain the soul and hold the Saviour. 'I bless God,' said James Guthrie, when under sentence of death for maintaining the Headship of Christ, 'I die not as a fool dieth. I know what I die for, and I know it is worth dying for.' See that ye know what ye suffer for, and how much it is worth suffering for."\*

"And now, my dear friends, I cannot close without remembering that God appears to be preparing, by the solemn movements of His providence, for a process of sternest sifting, when those of you who are Christians by mere profession will probably be separated from those who are Christians in deed and in truth. . . . Let me, therefore, urge upon you all the vast and infinite importance of closing, in right earnest, with the overtures of the Gospel, and entering with the Divine Redeemer into a covenant never to be forgotten. If you rest satisfied with anything short of this, it is not for a moment to be supposed that you can stand in the day of visitation and trial." †

If the approach of the Disruption, however, was viewed in this light, the change, when it actually came, brought with it a new and far more serious responsibility, for not only were

\* Reasons for Religious People, &c., pp. 5, 6.

† Rev. Mr. Wallace, of Hawick, *Witness*, 28th December, 1842.

parishes and whole districts, formerly closed, laid open to the preaching of the Gospel, but the outgoing ministers, to an extent never before equalled, had the ear of the people, who were eager and longing to hear the Gospel from their lips. Of the solemn responsibility arising out of this, Dr. Candlish reminded the first Assembly: "I trust we have now made up our minds to *look only to the great prospects before us, and have dismissed all bitterness and wrath, so that in all that has occurred, we now recognise, not the instrumentality of man, but the doing of the Lord.* . . . We have cause to wonder at this condescension of the Lord, in having counted us worthy to bear such a testimony before Christendom. But let us now address ourselves to the work on hand. . . . A very weighty responsibility rests on us. We have been instrumental throughout all the land in exciting a thirst for the preaching of the Gospel, and if now we shall slack our exertions, and fold our hands, and grow weary, unquestionably we shall incur the heavy responsibility of leaving the fields which are now white unto the harvest unreaped and ungathered. . . . What remaineth but to gird up the loins of our mind, to watch with prayer, labouring to win souls unto Christ, and *coveting nothing as a recompense for all the sacrifices we have been enabled to make, but that ours may be the glorious reward of those who have turned many to righteousness.*"\*

Before giving examples to show how this work was carried out, there is one circumstance which must be borne in mind, if one would understand the situation—viz., the line of distinction which separated between the Establishment and the Free Church. Nothing connected with the movement was more obvious than that, as a general rule, the more earnest and spiritually-minded among both ministers and people had gone to form the Free Church. The consciousness of this, as may be seen from certain of their own statements recently published, weighed heavily on the more far-seeing friends of the Establishment. It was, however, only what might have been expected in the very nature of things. Not only did it require a certain degree of earnestness for a man to cast in his lot with those who were preparing to share the sacrifices, and provide for the support of the outgoing

\* *Witness*, 23rd May, 1843.

ministers, but it could hardly be that the more careless members of the Church could feel any real interest in the Headship of Christ, or in His crown-rights as Redeemer. That not a few of those who adhered to the Establishment did so from conscientious feelings is true, but the mass of those men whose religion was a mere form naturally remained where they got all they cared for without trouble or sacrifice. Some of the anecdotes which obtained currency in the country show what the popular impression on the subject was. At Carmylie, "in stormy weather, during the winter of 1844-45, the congregation had to leave their tent and worship in the barn of Mr. Kydd, farmer at Mains of Carmylie. One stormy Sabbath, when the congregation were repairing as usual to the barn, the congregation of the Establishment were also on their way to the parish church. Some of the members of the different congregations, accordingly, met and crossed each other. A member of the Established Church thus accosted an elder of the Free Church, 'Well, John, you are on the way to the barn to get a thrashing,' alluding to the reputed severity of the minister's preaching. 'Na, na,' said John, 'the thrashing is ower, and we're now at the dichtin' (winnowing). D'ye not see the chaff blowing down yonder?' pointing to the Established Church."\* In this case the love of repartee had something to do with the strength of the statement, but similar views meet us in the deliberately expressed opinions of ministers, speaking from their own experience. "There were exceptions, certainly," says Dr. Foote, of Aberdeen, "some going with us who had not given any evidence of vital religion, and some remaining behind, of whom better things might have been expected; but the division, in the main, turned out just as I looked for."†

"I have always had reason to conclude that those who came out along with me were, with very few exceptions, the most pious and godly of the parish."‡

"My expectation was, that, if the Disruption should take place, a very considerable part of my congregation would remain faithful. There was much prayer among them, both social

\* Parker Mss., Rev. W. Wilson, Pres. of Arbroath.

† Dis. Mss xxiv.

‡ *Ibid.* xii. Cleish.

and otherwise, before and during the memorable Assembly. . . . The praying part of them have favourably realised my expectations.”\*

The division which thus took place was, in many respects, painful, yet it drew the more devoted followers of Christ closer to each other, and inasmuch as the communion of saints is one of the means of grace, it brought with it spiritual advantages which both ministers and people were not slow to acknowledge. Mr. Thomson, of Muckhart, tells how, in consequence of the Disruption, “a very great and decided change had taken place in the whole aspect of the congregation. . . . There is much more of cordial and kindly interest in each other. I have got much better acquainted with them than I did for the ten preceding years. I have been led, from greater frankness in intercourse with them, to believe there are more of God’s people among them than I at first anticipated.”†

It was in the pastoral work itself that the results were most visible in the increasing earnestness both of preachers and hearers, the greater purity of communion, and the new life that was thrown into all departments of Christian work. The following extracts, referring to different districts of the country, will show how widely the impulse was felt.

“I am conscious,” says Dr. Lorimer [Glasgow], “speaking generally, of more liberty and freedom, both in prayer and preaching. . . . There is more lively attention, too, on the part of the people to the Word preached. More than one has assured me that my entire services come home with much more power to the heart and conscience than they once did. From time to time I hear of cases of spiritual good. Among the believing members of my flock there is more activity and prayer, and greater zeal for the good of others. This is particularly apparent among the youth of both sexes, who assemble in prayer meetings, and distribute tracts, and teach in Sabbath schools.”‡

“I have no hesitation in stating that the Disruption has had a most beneficial effect on the minds of many of my flock, and especially among the young. . . . A considerable majority of this class adhere to the Free Church, and, I am happy to say,

\* Dis. Mss. xv.

† *Ibid.* xxviii. p. 8.

‡ *Ibid.* i. p. 8.

now manifest a much livelier interest in spiritual things than before. The institution of a very interesting meeting, for religious improvement and prayer, on the morning of the Lord's day, has been the result. There is, likewise, a greater readiness displayed by qualified persons to act as Sabbath-school teachers—a circumstance which gives me particular delight. Another pleasing fruit of the separation has been a spirit of sincere cordiality among my people as a congregation, a new bond of mutual attachment has been created, which promises to be productive of lasting good."

"There has been great and spiritual concern manifested [at Ardoch], and much greater solemnity in hearing the Gospel than before the Disruption, especially on sacramental occasions, when the sufferings of our Lord brought nigh made His people forget their own. . . . There has also been exhibited much greater union of heart among the members of the congregation."\*

"The cause of vital godliness has been promoted by the Disruption [Lesmahagow]. My observation leads me to think that, both before and since that event, more attention has been paid to the preaching of the Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath, and also to the duties of secret and family religion. Generally speaking, a deeper interest is felt in spiritual subjects; but, alas, it is still with us the day of small things. . . . Oh! for a larger outpouring of the Spirit of God to water the weary wilderness."†

"At Humbie, I found my facilities for preaching the Gospel and doing good among the people increased after the Disruption. I myself felt more free both to speak and to act, and my people were more willing and attentive. Our mutual attachment was also increased by our mutual trials."‡

At Arbirlot, Mr. Kirk preached in the barn, which became his church; "but the crowd was often so great that they had to remove to the field, which was no great hardship, the Sabbaths being fine that summer; and the warm devotion of the hearers, and the deep impression made, caused thankfulness and joy. Often did the people speak of the good they got at that time; several have dated their new birth from that period."§

\* Parker Mss., Kintore, p. 4.

† Dis. Mss. xxxi. p. 14.

‡ *Ibid.* xxxiii. p. 8.

§ Parker Mss., Pres. of Arburoath.

“The people in general [Muckhart] seem to listen to the Word with much more earnestness. Considerable emotion is from time to time manifested. They seem much more alive to the realities and importance of religion. . . . Some, apparently, have been awakened for the first time, and more quickening and life imparted to those previously renewed.”\*

“Since the Disruption the most favourable circumstances in our congregation [Collace] have been—the visiting of their districts by the elders in a spiritual manner, and the much purer exercise of discipline. . . . Three months after the Disruption one of the most intelligent, but most careless, lads in the place, but not very friendly to us, was the subject of so decided a change as to be remarked in the whole neighbourhood. He soon found joy and peace in believing, and has proved one of our steadiest and most efficient helps in the deaconship.”†

Dr. Lorimer states that “many of the young people who applied for admission to the Lord’s table at Bothwell, in the summer of 1844, when I resided there for a short time, and took ecclesiastical charge, . . . attributed their first serious thoughts of religion to that great event [the Disruption], and its immediate consequent widespread and warm gospel preaching.”‡

At Luss, in Dumbartonshire, it is said that, “since the Disruption there have been some awakenings. Great outward changes have taken place on some who were careless, and I have reason to believe that several have been converted. . . . There are inquirers after truth in the congregation who seem to have been brought into a state of concern since the Disruption, and who confess that they spent sleepless nights thinking over it. In reference to this matter, I quote again from Lady Colquhoun: ‘A great change since the event is manifest in the spiritual concern of many, and the conversion of some. The appearance of the congregation is also most encouraging, from the apparent impression under the Word preached, frequently from a solemn silence.’”§

Of the work in the Presbytery of Ayr, Mr. Grant gives

\* Dis. Mss. xxviii.

† *Ibid.* xxi. p. 2.

‡ *Ibid.* i. p. 9.

§ *Ibid.* xxx. p. 6.

an interesting account:—"The months that followed [the Disruption] were busy months. The eleven who came out undertook to supply ordinances in thirty-three charges. It was no easy task. I find that I preached on an average twenty times a-month. My brethren were equally busy. But two things combined to make it very pleasant work. First, there was little rain—Sabbath seemed invariably to be calm and sunshiny; so that our meeting in the open air was really more pleasant than it would have been in a crowded church. Secondly, the earnestness with which the people listened was most remarkable. I have now lived to see the revival of 1859 and the religious movement of 1874. I cannot, and therefore do not, speak of other localities; but I may safely say that in Ayr the earnestness was deeper and the fruit more abundant in the summer and autumn of 1843 than during any part of my ministry. It was not merely nor mainly a time of ecclesiastical controversy about Church government, but especially a time of deep, earnest, and widespread spiritual awakening. As I gazed on the upturned countenances of the assembled people, they always seemed to me to say, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.'"

Mr. Taylor, of Flisk, enumerates the spiritual benefits arising from the change in his neighbourhood: "First, we got free from the fellowship of many in the ministry with whom we had little sympathy. . . . Secondly, we saw that God was owning the testimony that was borne to the mediatorial glory of His Son in the increased earnestness of those who waited on our ministry, and in bringing out the distinction which it is ever salutary to maintain betwixt the Church and the world. Thirdly, we felt, what has since been a source of constant satisfaction, that we did not provoke Christ to blast our ministry by a deliberate disowning of Him in His kingly office. Probably there was no one feeling which more effectually constrained me to join in the Disruption movement than just the fear that Christ would refuse to remember me among His servants should I have followed any other course. And what I have since seen, both in the personal and ministerial history of many who apostatised from the truth and their own professions, has shown me that the fear was well founded."

In regard to the actual results in his own experience, Mr. Taylor goes on to say : " My labours lay among the farmers, and ploughmen, and villagers. Amongst these God's saving grace was effectually put forth in the Disruption year, and in some of the years which immediately followed. It is true that things did not turn out as I expected and prayed for. My hope was that there would be some marked and outwardly recognisable work of grace, some visible acknowledgment from God of the testimony which, as a Church, we were endeavouring to bear to His glory. Now it was not so ; and, doubtless, this expectation was my infirmity. The great scriptural principle was literally fulfilled—the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. There was a measure of hearty interest among the people, and hopefulness in connection with ordinances, which was encouraging. But it was years afterwards before I knew of cases of conversion which had really taken place at that time.

" I remember well the first intimation I got. A poor ploughman, of simple mind and manner, called for his certificate. He had been with us at the Disruption, and had worshipped with us in the barn. He was affected at parting, and he said, with much feeling, ' Sir, the Word gripped me in the barn.' One and another of the most decided of the people have spoken to that as the time when they were affected by spiritual things as they had never been before."\*

What Mr. Taylor had longed to see in Fife—a marked revival of religion—took place in the Island of Skye, simultaneously with the Disruption. It was carefully inquired into on the spot during the following year, by W. Dickson, Esq., to whom, as Convener of the Committee on Sabbath Schools, the Church is so deeply indebted. Some portions of his notes taken at the time may tend to show the reality and interesting nature of the work.

" The awakening first began in Skye about the month of April, 1843, at Unish, a small village on the west side of the island, where for some time Norman M'Leod, an old soldier, who was present at the landing in Egypt under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, had been stationed in the service of the Gaelic School Society.

" One night Norman was conducting family worship in a cot-

\* Dis. Mss. xxxvii. part 2, p. 9.

tage. As was frequently the case, some others from about the doors came in to be present. Among these were some fishermen from the small Island of Issay, which is nearly opposite Unish, on the west coast of Skye. That evening, among the poor fishermen, the work of the Lord first appeared. Their minds were filled with anxiety and distress about their souls. For two days they would not go to bed at all, and would give the old man no rest from speaking to them, praying with them, and reading the Bible. Awakened to a sense of eternal realities, hearing the voice which called the fishermen of Galilee, they left their nets and followed Him. They would not rest, day nor night, till they had fled from the wrath to come. . . .”

“Shortly after the awakening began, the Rev. Roderick M’Leod came from Snizort and preached at Fairybridge, at a place where three roads met; and continued to do so weekly for a long while. On such occasions the gatherings were often very great; the numbers who left their work and came to hear were said to have been sometimes from five to nine thousand. The word was quick and powerful, and many who seemed to feel little while under it, were struck with convictions on their way home, and turned aside to pray. . . . One Wednesday he preached from the words, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock.’ On this occasion the presence of the Spirit of God was manifested in great power. Mr. M’Leod was using the words, ‘Oh! it is not my fear that Christ will not accept you, but my fear is that you will not accept of Christ,’ when the cries of the people were such that his voice was drowned, and he had to stop speaking. Some, after that solemn sermon, refused to remove from the place. When their friends offered to take them they would cry, ‘Oh! will I go away without Christ? will I go home without Christ?’ . . . The power which on many occasions about this time attended the preaching of the Word at Fairybridge was overwhelming.”

After mentioning many striking cases of conversion among old and young, the details of which, as well as all the facts above stated, were noted down from the lips of the Rev. Roderick M’Leod, the catechists and elders who were personally engaged in the work, and which give reality to the narrative, Mr. Dick-

son records Mr. M'Leod's views as to "the probable ends for which the Lord had at this time made such wonderful displays of His power in the awakening and conversion of sinners. He said that two views in particular had occurred to him. First, that it was for the awakening of the Church of God, so long settling on her lees, to a new and realising sense of the necessity and power of the Spirit's work, and quickening her to renewed effort and diligence for the conversion of perishing souls; and secondly, that the mouth of the scoffer and infidel might be stopped, and the Gospel be anew established in evidence by manifest miracles of grace, in the same way that Christ at first established its truth to an unbelieving world by working miracles of nature."

"It was matter of common remark," Mr. Dickson adds, "both here and in Ross-shire, that wherever any one previously careless became awakened to concern for his soul, he cast in his lot with the ministers and people of the Free Church."\*

From these extracts the reader will be able to form some estimate of the kind of work which was going on in Scotland. The year of the Disruption proved to be a great time of evangelistic effort in all parts of the land, and the Word of God had "free course" to the awakening of sinners and quickening of believers. In some localities the work was more quiet, in others its results were more openly manifest, but everywhere there was reason to believe that God in no common measure was giving "testimony to the word of His grace," and owning His servants in bringing sinners to Christ, and building up His people in their most holy faith.

It was not in vain, then, that the sacrifice had been made by the Church, and the testimony borne to the crown-rights of her Lord. Those tokens of success, quietly given in so many congregations, and those 'showers of blessing,' coming down in separate localities, were a rich reward. In no small measure the anticipations of Dr. Duncan were realised. "Those who valued religion and religious privileges, would go out along with their beloved pastors, and rally round them with an interest not unlike that with which our forefathers followed

\* Mss. Notes of Journey to Skye, &c., in 1844, by W. Dickson, Esq.

their persecuted ministers to the retired glen and the wind-beaten mountain-side. Is it too much to anticipate as a certain consequence that, while the virtues and graces of these true-hearted men, as well as of their teachers, would be strengthened by the sacrifices which they made for the sake of their adorable Head, a spirit would by the blessing of God be awakened among those who had hitherto cared for none of those things, and, cherished by Divine grace, would spread, as it did of old, till its blessed influences might perhaps be felt over the whole mass of society? . . . Among Christ's ministers, indeed, the event would doubtless occasion many painful privations, and destroy many earthly hopes, but it would shake their hearts more loose from the cherished things of time, and give them freer scope and warmer zeal in their Master's cause, whilst among their people it would light a new and more holy flame. . . . Oh! would not this repay tenfold our privations and sufferings, while it afforded a new proof of that blessed promise, so incomprehensible to worldly men, that those who leave houses and lands and all that is dear to them on earth for the sake of Christ, shall obtain even of blessings in the present life 'manifold more' than they have abandoned, as well as what is infinitely more valuable, 'life everlasting in the world to come?' '\*

\* Letter from the Minister of Ruthwell to his flock.

## APPENDIX.

### LIST OF DISRUPTION MANUSCRIPTS.

- I. St. David's, Glasgow. Rev. J. G. Lorimer, D.D.
- II. See under xxxv.
- III. Muirkirk. Rev. S. W. Reid.
- IV. St. Leonards, Perth. Kirk-Session.
- V. Stanley. Rev. W. Mather.
- VI. Gordon. Rev. J. Fraser.
- VII. Nenthorn. Rev. R. Lang.
- VIII. Muthil. Rev. W. Douglas.
- IX. Torosay, Mull. J. Middleton, Esq., Elder.
- X. Huntly and Kirkwall. Rev. W. Sinclair.
- XI. Errol. Rev. J. Grierson, D.D.
- XII. Cleish. Rev. W. W. Duncan.
- XIII. Braco, &c. Rev. S. Grant.
- XIV. Roslin. Rev. D. Brown.
- XV. Deskford. Rev. G. Innes.
- XVI. Ruthwell. Rev. H. Duncan, D.D., and Mrs. Duncan.
- XVII. Gartly. Rev. J. Robertson.
- XVIII. Walls. Rev. J. Elder.
- XIX. Wanlockhead. Rev. J. Hastings.
- XX. Farr. Rev. D. Mackenzie.
- XXI. Collace. Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, D.D.
- XXII. Innerleithen. Rev. J. Montgomery.
- XXIII. Kirkbean. Rev. R. Gibson.

- XXIV. East Church, Aberdeen. Rev. J. Foote, D.D.  
 XXV. Madderty and Keiss. Rev. Thos. Gun.  
 XXVI. Leslie and Premnay. Rev. R. M'Combie.  
 XXVII. Woodside, Aberdeen. Rev. R. Forbes.  
 XXVIII. Muckhart. Rev. J. Thomson.  
 XXIX. Kilsyth. Rev. W. Burns, D.D.  
 XXX. Luss. Rev. Neil Stewart.  
 XXXI. Lesmahagow. Rev. A. B. Parker, D.D.  
 XXXII. Forgan.  
 XXXIII. Humbie, &c. Rev. J. Dods.  
 XXXIV. Monkton. Rev. J. M'Farlan.  
 XXXV. Kirkealdy and Galston. Rev. R. Macindoe.  
 XXXVI. Ochiltree. Rev. J. Patrick.  
 XXXVII. Grangemouth and Flisk. Rev. J. W. Taylor.  
 XXXVIII. Methlic. Mr. John Brown, Elder, Cairnrorrie.  
 XXXIX. Stevenston. Rev. Dr. Landsborough.  
     XL. Aberdalgie and Dunning. Rev. C. Stewart.  
     XLI. Ayr. Rev. W. Grant.  
     XLII. Catrine and Johnstone. Rev. W. Hutcheson.  
     XLIII. Denholm. Rev. J. M'Clymont.  
     XLIV. Fochabers. Rev. D. Dewar.  
     XLV. Largo. Rev. R. Lundin Brown.  
     XLVI. Sheildaig. Rev. C. Mackenzie.  
     XLVII. Strathfillan. Rev. A. Mackinnon.  
     XLVIII. Symington. Rev. G. Orr.  
     XLIX. Moy. Rev. Th. M'Lauchlan, LL.D.  
         L. Westruther and Elie. Rev. W. Wood, A.M.  
         LI. Auldearn.  
         LII. Statement by A. Kerr, Esq.

In addition to the above, the Parker Mss., comprising Returns from Presbytery Clerks, with accompanying documents and papers prepared by Dr. Parker.





ANNALS OF THE DISRUPTION.

PART II.

EDINBURGH:  
PRINTED BY LORIMER AND GILLIES,  
CLYDE STREET.





Date Due

F 12 '49

MY 11 '54



BW5485 .B88 1878 v.1  
Annals of the disruption : consisting

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00038 1113