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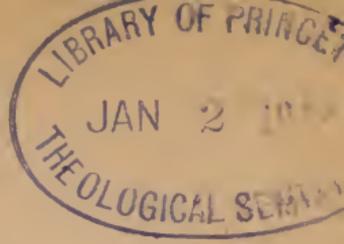






A HISTORY OF THE  
EVANGELICAL UNION.





A HISTORY

OF

THE EVANGELICAL UNION

*From its Origin to the Present Time.*

BY

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FERGUS FERGUSON, D.D.

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## P R E F A C E.

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WE do not need to offer any apology for giving to the world a history of the Evangelical Union. Many of our fellow-countrymen do not know the particulars of our history as a denomination ; and we are certain that whatever its defects may be, this work will supply a desideratum that has often been felt and complained of in the history of the Protestant denominations of Great Britain.

There are those who cry out querulously against the numerous sections into which the Church of Christ is divided in this country. But, even as it was found in the Allied army during the Crimean campaign, that the healthful rivalry between the British, the French, and the Sardinian troops, tended to increase the energy and effectiveness of the host as a whole ; in like manner, if Christians, while making much of their denominational peculiarities, would make far more of their unity under Christ the head, their earnest emulation of one another would secure the highest amount of success in the subjugation of the world to Jesus. It was on this ground that the Duke of Argyle declared on a public occasion, that he preferred the healthy rivalries of the different Protestant Communions to the dead uniformity of the Church of Rome ; and we are inclined heartily to agree with his Grace in this expression of his opinion.

The reader will find in the body of the work that we have not assumed the name " Evangelical Union " in any arrogant or exclusive sense, but simply to show that, while some other denominations are characterised by a peculiarity of

belief as to a form of Church Government or the observance of a religious ordinance, our union is based upon the view which we hold, and have been called upon providentially to contend for, as to the world-wide Evangel or Gospel of the Grace of God.

We have, of course, drawn largely in the following volume, upon our own acquaintance with the early history of our movement; but we have been greatly helped in writing it by the numerous pamphlets which were issued thirty years ago at the period of high controversial excitement, and which have been carefully preserved in the library of the Evangelical Union Academy, as well as in the private libraries of friends of the denomination. We have also to express our gratitude to several of our ministerial brethren for the kind way in which they have furnished us with statements as to the history of themselves or their churches. In particular, we would return our thanks to the Rev. Dr. Morison and the Rev. Dr. Guthrie, of Glasgow, as well as to the Rev. Professor Kirk, of Edinburgh, for the accounts with which they have favoured us in private conversation as to their early contendings for the truth, and even as to the inner workings of their own deeply exercised minds.

It is possible that at certain points of the narrative, the reader may be inclined to think that the author has been tempted to indulge in a severity of style not in harmony with the spirit of brotherly love for which he has already pled. In self-defence, he would say that it is very difficult to write the history of a theological controversy in which one has been personally concerned without sometimes manifesting warmth of feeling; but certainly, if in any instance that warmth has degenerated into acerbity, it was not intended by the author, and he begs that it will be overlooked.

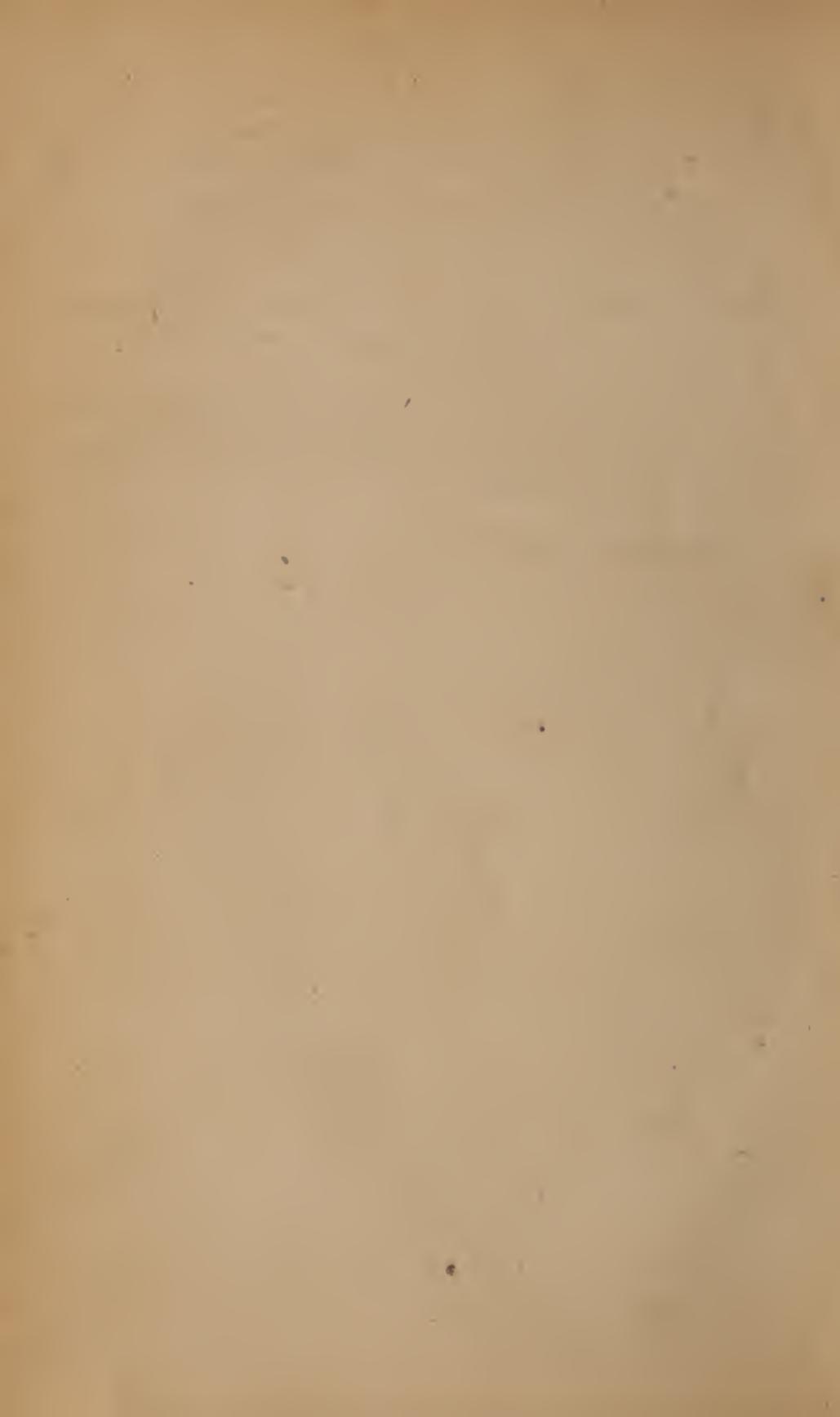
With reference to the proposal made by the large-hearted Dr. William Pulsford of Glasgow, at the annual meetings of

the Scottish Congregational Union in this city in April of this year, to the effect that an attempt should be made to unite the Congregational and Evangelical Unions "on the principle of comprehension and not of compromise," we have no hesitation in saying for ourselves that we would rejoice in such a confederate amalgamation—if its accomplishment should be found possible; and it would pain us to learn that any words which had dropped from our pen in this volume should be thought hostile to such a scheme.

We commend the work to the gracious blessing of Him whose cause and glory on the earth it is humbly designed to promote and advance.

F. F.

GLASGOW, *June, 1876.*



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# A HISTORY

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## CHAPTER I.

Introduction—Rev. James Morison, D.D.—His Career as a Student—His Religious Experience in the North of Scotland—His Usefulness as a Probationer at Cabrach, Knockando, Nairn, and Lerwick.

THE thought has been forcibly impressed upon our minds for some time that a history of the rise and formation of the Evangelical Union might be not only interesting, but eminently profitable, to many of our fellow-countrymen. Fully thirty years have passed away since that river rose which has swelled into the goodly dimensions of our religious denomination; and there are not a few who know very little of the early struggles of the fathers and founders of our cause. Such an account as we propose may be calculated, by God's blessing, to benefit the soul, as well as to inform the mind. And while we do not lay claim either to all the information, or all the mental qualities, which the full historian of such a movement should possess, yet any contribution towards such a history must be important, considering that the doctrines necessarily brought under review are vital in importance, and that the Evangelical Union may have much to do, as years roll on, in the way of leavening other sections of the Church of Christ with its truly liberal, and yet wholesomely conservative, theological views.

Let us not be thought guilty of a semi-idolatrous hero-worship, or of preferring one brother unduly above another, if we commence by ascribing the origin of our movement, under God, to the honoured divine whose name, in the ordinary parlance of the country, it is made to bear. These *soubriquets* often show where the chief merit lies—the *vox populi* only giving expression to the shrewd conclusions of

the *mens populi*. And while we admit that other honoured brethren played most important parts in the way of witness-bearing and foundation-laying, and rendered services which we shall not be slow to recognise in the sequel, we are certain that these fellow-labourers themselves will not be displeased with us for giving prominence, first of all, to the Luther-like pastor of Clerk's Lane Church, Kilmarnock, of thirty-five years ago.

It is a common saying, and one which we believe to be as true as common, that *when God has a work to do, He always provides the man to do it*. Indeed, this fact stands out so clearly on the page of history, as we take our retrospect of human affairs, that it has become a favourite proof with many, that a Divine Providence is constantly at work among the sons of men. Now, it seems to us, in looking back upon the state of Christianity in Scotland forty years ago, that a man was needed with both something of the Iconoclast and something of the Reformer about him. John Knox had, without doubt, freed the land from Papal and priestly tyranny. Ebenezer Erskine had given the Church patronage of the lairds its first mortal wound. Thomas Chalmers had blown his Evangelical trumpet, and had startled the drones of moderatism from the lethargy of the eighteenth century, into which they had fallen. The Haldanes had cried aloud, "Ye must be born again." Still there was a want. The theology even of men who loved the Gospel limped sadly. Earnest and pious souls groaned in darkness, because they could not be assured that the Lord loved them. The doctrine of unconditional election brooded like a terrifying nightmare over the Church of the most religious people in the world. How important that the spell should be dissipated and driven away! A man was needed; and, in the providence of God, a man arose.

We do not care to inquire after the exact age of our friends who may be yet living, and therefore content ourselves with saying that James Morison was born upwards of fifty years ago in the town of Bathgate, in Linlithgow. His father had been ordained the minister of the Anti-Burgher Church there while the men of a former generation were not as yet delivered from the anxieties and hardships entailed upon them by the wars of the First Napoleon. Mr. Robert Morison was generally acknowledged to be a man of considerable intellectual power, and wielded no small influence,

not only in the district where his lot was cast, but also in the Presbytery of Edinburgh and in the annual Synods of his Church.

In these days the town of Bathgate was the scene of constant stir, because one of the lines of coaches passed through it that ran regularly between Edinburgh and Glasgow. There had also been quite recently erected—by the legacy of a gentleman interested in the place—a handsome Academy, at which superior educational advantages were to be enjoyed. At this seminary the founder of our denomination received the rudiments of his literary acquirements. We had the pleasure of holding in our hands, the other day, the first Greek Testament he ever possessed, and which he had received as a prize at the annual examination of the school. Little did the donor think, at the time, that the gift was so appropriate, and, in a manner, so prophetic of the studies and labours of the young prizeman.

But if our esteemed friend had been a diligent student at the academy, his zeal altogether “consumed him” when he became a competitor in the higher arena of Edinburgh University. Here the vital energy of his body, as well as the midnight oil, began to be largely drawn upon. Professor Pillans, seeing the promise of his student, wished him to enter the Established Church, offering to use his influence to get him a parish; but the son of the Seceder minister remained true to his training and the convictions of his youth. Professor Wilson (“Christopher North”) gave him his second prize, regretting that he could not give him his first, on account of a certain ambitiousness of style which, while it gave large hopes of the future, made his compositions at the time somewhat defective. But the brilliant poet and philosopher testified on our student’s certificate that “he had manifested as much intellectual power as had ever been displayed in his class.”

In his eagerness, however, to find out the laws of mind, young Morison had neglected the laws of health; for he was compelled to intermit his studies for a time and go home, as some thought, to die. For months the issue trembled in the balance; and all the town doctors but one, afterwards the great Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, declared his heart to be organically affected. The solitary prophet of good turned out to be correct; and slowly, but surely, the wheels of life began to play healthfully again.

As in the case of Thomas Chalmers, and many of less note, the illness bore good fruit; for although Mr. Morison had always been thoughtful and earnest, his devoutness increased after that he had been brought into such close contact with death. As a student in the Divinity Hall of the Secession Church, then under the professorial care of Drs. Brown, Balmer, Duncan, and Mitchell, he applied himself to his theological exercises with as much diligence as he had manifested at the University, but with augmented piety. A characteristic *rencontre* took place between him and one of his professors during his Hall-curriculum, and one which gave good proof that the minister of Bathgate's son was not to be held within the leading-strings of stereotyped creeds and confessions. The professor had been lecturing on the eternal sonship of Christ; but Mr. Morison ventured in his prescribed essay to differ from his teacher, and elaborately, yet respectfully, refute his position. He took up the ground that, while Christ was eternally the Second Person of the Godhead, He did not actually become God's *Son* till He was "born of a woman, and made under the law"—that the name, in fact, denoted an *economical office*, and not an *essential distinction*. The professor, in his criticism, hinted that "Mr. Morison had better put himself right with his Presbytery." But although the young student had undeniably opposed the standards as well as his teacher, no decided action was taken in the case. That was reserved for future years, and yet more vital doctrines. While, however, the young essayist's work was condemned by his own preceptor, he was determined not to go unapproved. So he inclosed his treatise to the late eminent Dr. Wardlaw, and begged his opinion of the performance. He still retains in his possession a letter from the champion of Congregationalism, in which the latter warmly commends the learning and talent of his young correspondent.

Mr. Morison, from his earliest days, had been a great book-collector. Even when a student, his library gave promise of becoming what it is now, one of the first private collections of theological and general literature. His attack of heart-disease was brought to a head by a long walk which he took to Linlithgow from Bathgate, for a book which a minister had promised him. He felt the tome to be very ponderous as he carried it home; and that day the weakness began which it took months to master.

Even when only a stripling, our friend took part in the Voluntary controversy which raged over Scotland in 1836, and in which his father was a redoubtable champion. A tradition still lingers in Leith of a young divinity student electrifying a public meeting there, unexpectedly, and taking the breath from Mr. Leckie, the hired peripatetic of the Establishment. This was no other than the author of "Romans IX.," and of the "Commentaries on Matthew and Mark." He used to follow the plausible apostle of endowments, when he was within walking distance of the Bathgate manse. At Bonkle, Whitburn, and Falkirk, great debates came off. The lecturer was seen to shudder when the door would open, and the growing boy would walk in with a bundle of books below his arm. One night our hero gave promise of his future eminence as an exegete, by an extemporaneous exposition of the second Psalm, to which Mr. Leckie had referred in the course of debate.

Mr. Morison owed much of his love for books, and for the expository interpretation of the Scriptures to the late Dr. John Brown, of Broughton Place, Edinburgh, who was also Professor of Exegesis to the United Secession Church.\* He was, during the period of his curriculum, Dr. Brown's favourite student. On the day on which he was licensed, that learned and amiable man did not hesitate to say that he was "the hope of their church." Although, in one view of the case, that hope was disappointed, in the next world if not in this, all his contemporaries will be ready to admit that, in another sense, it has been amply and abundantly fulfilled.

Mr. Morison being licensed to preach the gospel in the spring of 1839, he fulfilled a few isolated preaching engagements with friends in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the neighbourhood of these cities. We have heard his first pulpit appearances described as being highly creditable to his scholarship, and as also indicating elaborate preparation and care. The impression was left upon the minds of the hearers that the preacher was very talented and promising; but little of the deep spiritual effect was produced which characterised his subsequent ministrations—a change that was now, happily, near at hand.

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\* We need hardly add that this denomination, sometimes also called the United Associate Church (because composed of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers, who coalesced in 1822), after its union with the Relief body in 1846, was designated the United Presbyterian Church.

The first preaching appointment which he received from the Synod's committee was a very peculiar one. He was not sent to any of the important vacancies in the Lowlands, but to the "hill-country" in the far north, to minister to the rude agricultural population in the border-lands, where the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Elgin join. Read in the light of the preacher's subsequent experience, the allocation was quite providential. Nothing could have been more directly calculated to bring to maturity the conclusion which had already been growing up in his own mind that he had been seeking in the discourses he had preached too much of his own glory, and too little of God's; and, indeed, that they were not at all what sermons ought to be. And besides—a yet more important consummation—by this very appointment, not, at first sight, complimentary to "flesh and blood," he was led to discover that, with all his studies and accomplishments, he had not yet found the "one thing needful" for both preacher and hearer—namely, the soul-enlightening "knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

How many young men there are who pass from the Natural Philosophy class to the Divinity hall with even less concern than from Latin to Logic, or from Logic to Ethics! Too often, with unclean hands, they adventure to touch the holy ark of God. They hear no voice of warning on the threshold of their theological career sounding in their ears, "Ye must be born again." Mr. Morison was beginning to fear that there was this serious defect in his experience. He has been so kind and frank as to inform us lately that, strangely enough, while he had been deeply studying theology as a science, he had never thought it necessary to bring these studies to bear upon his own heart, or the state of his soul before God. The two things had been going on simultaneously in parallel and non-approximating lines—the laborious investigation of divinity in all kinds of books, ancient and modern, and the religious exercises of the spirit, chiefly in the way of prayer, and serious engagements generally; but he had never once thought that the science he was searching out was the only means by which his mind was to be brought to religious rest. This is a most important point. We invite the earnest attention of our readers to it. We are now to see how these hitherto separated lines approached one another at the Cross, and how "the earnest student" found in simple Scriptural theology that which

bathed his soul in bliss. It was the beginning of the Evangelical Union. The rill that has become a river of salvation, sprung out of a solitary moor in the far North.

Perhaps Mr. Morison's religious seriousness may have been, to some extent, deepened by the fact that "the Kilsyth revival" was causing no small stir at this very time in the land. The salutary infection of religious concern had come across the Atlantic from the United States, as it subsequently did in 1859 and 1873. Messrs. Wight, Pullar, Machray, and Cornwall, among the Independents, had already begun to hold "protracted meetings" in various cities and towns in Scotland. The writings also of Mr. Finney and his coadjutors in the Oberlin Institute, had been re-published and widely circulated in this country. Dr. Morison, however, does not recollect that these events had much to do directly with his religious earnestness. It is more probable that the Spirit of God was touching different hearts, here and there, at the same time; yet, unconsciously to himself, he may have been influenced by the general state of the land. And it cannot be denied that, after his return from the North, with the full light and baptism of the Spirit, he found society prepared, to a large extent, for the evangelistic career on which he entered.

The mid-summer of 1839 had now arrived, and we behold our preacher leaving Edinburgh, and setting sail at Granton Pier in the Aberdeen packet. He is reading Finney's "Lectures on Revivals" by the way; and while the steamer ploughs the billows of the German Sea, the conviction is deepening in his mind that he has hitherto been preaching with a wrong aim and in a wrong way; and he wonders much how he will be able to recite the elaborate sermons, abounding in Johnsonian terms and climaxes, which he carries in his valise with him, to the rustics in the outlandish region whither he is going.

When Mr. Morison reached Aberdeen, as railways were then unknown in Scotland, he took coach to Huntly, and found a conveyance waiting there to carry him to Cabrach, a parish on the borders of Banffshire. This was the station to which he had been appointed. There was not even a fully organised church in the little chapel. It was only a kind of mission congregation, and was supplied partly by the Secession Church and partly by the Scottish Congregationalists.

The house in which the preacher lodged was several miles distant from the chapel, and stood all alone in a bleak pastoral district. The Deveron meandered down the strath on its way to its entrance into the sea at Banff, through a region as sparsely inhabited as the uplands of Dumfriesshire and Lanarkshire. The little dwelling consisted of "a but and a ben." The best apartment, of course, was allotted to the minister; but it was superlative only in the comparative degree, for the floor was earthen and very uneven besides. The honest landlord and landlady were nervously apprehensive lest they should not be able to accommodate their guest satisfactorily, and must have heaved a sigh of relief when they found that he was a vegetarian,—for butcher-meat was scarce; and that he took no tea,—for they could give him splendid cream! But little did they know what was passing in his studious and pious mind. They wondered at his abstemiousness, and saw him poring over weighty folios and careful manuscripts; but they did not dream that God was to meet with him in their lowly shieling, and cause him to see a great light, in whose brightness multitudes yet unborn would triumph and rejoice.

As the Sabbath-day drew near, Mr. Morison grew yet more anxious about the sermons he had brought with him. He already shrewdly suspected that they were as far above the capacity of the congregation he would be called upon to address, as homilies in the Greek or Latin language would be. This impression was confirmed when, on his way to church on the Sabbath morning, across the moor, he observed that, among the intending worshippers who were converging towards the plain conventicle, all the men wore bonnets, and all the women snow-white caps; and when he looked upon the assembly from the pulpit, and saw their uniform rusticity in point of intelligence, as well as of dress, he determined to lay his prepared discourses aside, and try the method of simple extemporaneous address. He had been studying the Book of Ecclesiastes critically. He thought he could not do better than give an unpremeditated running comment on the first chapter of that book. He succeeded beyond his own expectation. We can easily understand how, with the fervid and natural eloquence of his youth, he would rivet and enchain the astonished agriculturists, as he expatiated on Solomon's sad conclusions,—“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us." We doubt not that while he would solemnise the minds of his hearers by declaiming on the transitoriness of all sublunary things, he would tell them that there was something under the sun which was old, and yet ever new, namely, the "glorious gospel of the blessed God."

But this was the very thing which he felt that he had not got a right hold of. When he returned in the evening to his rude lodging, although he was satisfied with his first attempt at direct extemporaneous address, he still found himself in a comparative mist on the all-important point of his own reconciliation and acceptance with God. He could not see clearly how he was to obtain peace with the Maker whom he had offended. The Confession of Faith represented Christ as the "Redeemer of God's elect only," and he could not understand how he was to know that he was one of the elect. If in a comfortable state of mind one day, he might be uncomfortable the next, so that his own frames and feelings never could be a valid or steadfast ground of dependence and hope; and it seemed wrong withal and anti-evangelical to mix up his own subjective experiences with the objective work of the ever-blessed Mediator. So he read and read, and pondered and pondered over the Word of God. He ate of the good housewife's simple fare, and drank of her rich and nourishing milk; but still "he hungered and thirsted after righteousness, that he might be filled." The breeze of the summer evening sighed around his lonely room; but his spirit sighed yet more mournfully after God, even the living God. At length one day, in the midst of his earnest ruminations, there arose upon his soul a light, clearer and dearer than that which shone on Moray and its resplendent frith,—namely, that caused by the precious truth, that CHRIST, GOD'S SON, HAD DIED FOR ALL, AND THEREFORE FOR HIM. He wondered that he had never seen it before. Was it not written that Jesus was "a propitiation for the sins of the whole world"? Was it not written, again, that "he gave himself a ransom for all"? And yet

again, that "he tasted death for every man"? And as to the Father's love, the Son himself did not say, "God so loved the *elect* world," but "God so loved the world." He was as free, then, as any, to this great salvation. He might break forth into singing, and say with Paul, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." That comfortable conclusion was not to be arrived at by a lengthened experience, but simply by "believing the record God gave concerning his Son." It was a thing of testimony, not a thing of frames and feelings. Now he saw how the lines converged and met which had been kept so distinct before—*theology* and *religion*. They met in the conversion of the soul. It was the *knowledge of God as a Saviour that made men good*. Let a man believe that Jesus died for him, and he would rejoice in Jesus,—he would love him in return, and serve him too. The work of the Spirit was simply to take this transforming truth and show it to the soul.

He "rejoiced," like the wise men of the east, when they saw the star, "with exceeding great joy;" and his gladness was greater for others than for himself. Now he could go to every man he met, and say, "Jesus died for you; believe and live: it is eternal life to know him." Now he understood what to say in the pulpit. Formerly, he had thought it to be his chief duty, as a minister, to expound the Word of God, *seriatim*, from Genesis to Revelation; but now he saw that there was *one truth* more excellent than all the others, to the elucidation of which all the other revelations of the Bible were expected to contribute, and to which they did obeisance, as the sheaves of Joseph's brethren did, to his sheaf.

The extemporaneous sermon on Ecclesiastes had made a great talk among the farms and cottages of the Cabrach. Consequently, on next Sabbath the preacher was confronted with an increased congregation, who, in turn, received an increased blessing. On the previous Sunday, Solomon's lamentations had awed them; but now, "a greater than Solomon was there." The young preacher overflowed with the love of Christ. He assured them that *Christ had died for all, and therefore for them*. He did not hesitate to point to different parts of the house, and say, "Yes; for you, and you, and you." He assured them that faith was simply the knowledge of that fact, and that no stipulated amount of sorrow was required previous to the belief of the truth.

They might be saved where they were sitting, and they would be conscious of the change, too; for "blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." The mighty result of regeneration was effected by the might of the truth which they were called upon to believe.

This simple and searching preaching produced a deep impression in the rustic neighbourhood; and the chapel, which had formerly been but thinly attended, and in which there had been few signs of spiritual life, soon became crowded to the door, and that, too, with deeply awakened and convicted hearers. There were no dwellings near the unadorned meeting-house; but the earnest evangelist was kept busy all week, wending his way from cottage to cottage, conversing with "sin-sick" souls, and applying to the consciences he had been the means of troubling, the soothing and satisfying balm of Gilead.

Their only regret was that he had so soon to leave them; for his appointment was a double one. Knockando, in Morayshire, was conjoined with Cabrach in the plan of supply. This was another station of the Associate Home Mission which was unable to support a minister, and was therefore glad to get occasional preaching. Our senior readers, who were familiar with the names of the ministers of the Scottish Congregational Union a quarter of a century ago, will recollect that the father of the much-esteemed Dr. Munro, of Forres, was long the Independent minister of Knockando. Probably the fame of the young Secession Evangelist had travelled over the moors before him. At any rate, an excitement was produced there similar to that which he had left behind him at Cabrach. The little chapel became crowded in Knockando also; and *sensible* souls first wept for grief over their sins, and then for joy over their salvation. Being himself baptised with the Spirit, the preacher found that the Spirit blessed his labours wherever he went.

The Synod's Committee prolonged Mr. Morison's stay in the North, that, when he was there at any rate, he might supply churches which were vacant, or whose ministers were sick or anxious for rest. On this footing he visited, successively, Elgin, Forres, Nairn, Tain, and Lerwick, in the Shetland Isles; and found that God abundantly blessed his labours "in every place." The chapels became crowded to overflowing; and, like his Master before him, the young

disciple, in answering all the calls that were made upon him for conversation and domiciliary visits, "could not so much as eat bread." Never did young, unordained licentiate perform so wonderful an itinerancy,—except, perhaps, Mr. William Burns, of Kilsyth, who, at that very time, was perambulating Scotland, "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom," and who, faithful to the end, and with undiminished zeal, has recently closed his apostolic career in the heart of China. The Dissenting Evangelist was more scholarly, however, than his cotemporary of the Established Church, and, in our opinion, had clearer views than he of the way of salvation.

At Forres, indeed, Mr. Morison was somewhat under restraint, owing to the presence of the eminent minister of the Church, the Rev. Mr. Stark, then somewhat advanced in years. The latter, however, allowed the young licentiate to take his own way and made no remark, although, doubtless, his mode of address and "inquiry meetings" must have appeared to him somewhat novel and strange.

But at Nairn our Evangelist was unfettered and free; for the minister (Rev. Mr. Mein), was absent on sick leave. We are glad to be able to furnish our readers with an account of Mr. Morison's labours in that town from a tract dated 14th April, 1840, and entitled "A brief account of the recent revival of religion in Nairn, especially in the United Associate Congregation there, by one of themselves." This tract is fraught with this especial interest, that it is the first publication which Mr. Morison's labours called forth. Its author was Isaac Ketcher, Esq. His brother, Colonel Ketcher, and he, had both been employed in Indian service—the one in the Bombay, and the other in the Madras Presidency: and after their return home they had taken a deep interest in the religious welfare of their native town. After an introduction, in which he notices certain events which had helped to stir up a little spiritual interest in Nairn (and chiefly a joint-prayer meeting called forth by the religious persecutions in Madagascar), Mr. Ketcher continues:—

"Such was the state of Nairn in October last, when by the goodness of the All-Wise Head of the Church, Mr. Morison, jun., of Bathgate, came here to officiate for one of the pastors of the town, who, in the wise and merciful dispensation of that same God and Father of His people, was laid aside from his official duties by affliction. This was an epoch in the religious history of Nairn vastly interesting, when the youth of the town, or the major part of them, were, as it might

be said, ready to rise *en masse* to enlist themselves under the banners of the Cross, and 'give themselves up to the Lord.'

"The first four days of Mr. Morison's ministerial labours here will ever, I am persuaded, be kept in religious remembrance by many a precious soul. He preached on Sabbath, the 6th October; he attended the monthly meeting for missionary purposes on Monday evening, the 7th; on Tuesday he conducted the usual weekly evening prayer meeting; and on Wednesday he preached in the evening. On all these four successive days the people were attentive, and the influence of the Spirit from on high was seemingly amongst them. The season, I repeat it, will never be forgotten by many awakened minds then specially brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ; and I have good authority for saying, that several of the young people, who have lately joined the churches here, date their 'new world begun' from this time. Six weeks or two months after Mr. Morison's first visit to Nairn, on his return to the south from Tain, where he had been located in the meantime, he passed through Nairn, and gave a Wednesday evening sermon to an overflowing audience in the Secession Church. On this occasion he delivered a very rousing discourse; and his manner, so novel and captivating to the greater part of his audience, made powerful, and, I believe, permanent impressions on numbers of his hearers. His loud calls to repentance, and forcible warnings in view of eternity, might have startled some nominal self-secure hearers of the Word; but he might challenge any experienced Christian to the test, whether one word of his speech or doctrine contravened the truth as it is contained in the revealed Word of God. The consequence appears to be some proof of the watering of the Spirit on his then very limited, but touching, labours here. It pleased God still to prevent the minister referred to from resuming his active duties; and his people, pressed to it by the youthful 'inquirers' in the town, without reference to denomination, agreed to invite Mr. Morison to return to minister among us, even for a few weeks. The object was, after some difficulty, accomplished by the rev. gentleman's consenting to give Nairn two weeks of his time and labours on his route to Lerwick, whither his appointments as a 'probationer' led him in the months of June and July last. He came here accordingly on Monday, the 21st of May, and preached to a crowded audience on that evening. After the public service, he waited till a late hour to converse individually with such as were anxious about the concerns of the soul. He preached three times on Sabbath, the 24th of May, to a congregation collected from 'east to west.' The church he preached in is planned to hold nearly 600 sitters, but it was computed that upwards of 1000 were crammed into it, or about the doors; many of whom, eager to keep possession of their seats, remained without moving from an hour before the morning service until the close of the third service in the evening. I hold it a very incautious thing to conclude hastily as to probable good derived at such seasons from the evidence of mere feeling, however strongly marked: because frames of mind are very doubtful evidences of vital touching of heart. But I am firmly persuaded that the Power from on High effectually manifested itself to the conviction of many valuable souls, as the consequence of the preaching of the Word in these three sermons. In the evening, after the public services, Mr. Morison remained to a late hour in the

Church to help inquirers to the consolations they required. The next Sabbath, 31st May, the same number of services were attended by an overflowing audience, and similar evidences of edification and conviction were remarkable as before; and an increased number of inquirers remained at the close of the day for experimental conversation and advice. On Thursday, 4th June, Mr. Morison left Nairn for Lerwick, carrying with him the regrets of the people, and their prayers for his success as an Evangelist. And no wonder. The Lord made his sojourn with us 'a time of refreshing from His own presence.' Mr. Morison, during the fourteen days of his last stay here, was indefatigable—'in season and out of season,' serving his Lord and Master. Besides the Sabbath's arduous engagements, there was hardly an hour of the other days of the week that he had not to attend a prayer meeting, or engage with some family or individual, in affording instruction regarding the important considerations in view of eternal life. Some idea may be formed of the extent of his engagements when it is known that, in the above brief period of fourteen days, he conversed separately with *one hundred and thirty individuals* (and with most of them four or five times) regarding their souls. With several of them, I understand, he maintains a correspondence, and his answers give new and reviving energy to the young professors."

This quotation will serve to give our readers a tolerably good idea of the way in which the juvenile Evangelist preached and laboured at this time wherever he went, and of the sacred spell which he threw over all who heard him, whether rich or poor, young or old. We should have mentioned before, that, during his first progress north, Mr. Morison received a call to be the pastor of the United Associate Church at Moyness, a village about six miles beyond Forres.

Our young hero found that the Gospel was "the power of God unto salvation" in Shetland, as well as on the mainland. The metropolitans of Lerwick crowded to hear him; and, like Whitfield at Edinburgh a hundred years before, he might have written: "I hold a levee from morning to night of weeping sinners, whose hearts God hast touched." One lady came to him to ask his advice on a nice point of Christian practice—" *Might she go to a ball?* The parish minister's daughters were going; and *might she go too?*" She secretly desired to go; but she wished to know what the preacher who had affected her so much, would say. His answer was, that "she might go *if she thought that the Lord Jesus would be there too, with His blessing and approval.*" Many years afterwards he received a letter from this lady, in which she informed him that she was much displeased at the time with what she thought his Puritanic rigour; but that she

subsequently thanked him in her heart for his faithfulness, as well as for the pith and point of his saying; for it had led her to serious reflection, and to a complete change of mind and of life.

We leave our young preacher, for the present, in this "ultima Thule" of the British Isles. The free and unfettered breezes of the wide Atlantic are sweeping around him; and he is also folded in "the everlasting arms."

## CHAPTER II.

Mr. Morison Preaches at Bathgate, Dunfermline, and Glasgow—Is Called to Clerk's Lane Church, Kilmarnock—Publishes the Pamphlet entitled, "What must I do to be Saved?"—An Epitome of its Contents—Exception taken to it on his Ordination-day.

UNWILLING to interrupt the continuity of our narrative in our first chapter, we have given a complete and unbroken account of Mr. Morison's visit to the North of Scotland, while he was a probationer of the Secession Church. We will now, however, be so particular as to observe that he came south from Tain in December, 1839, and did not return to fulfil his engagements at Nairn and Lerwick till the end of May, 1840.

During the period that elapsed between the two dates just mentioned, the same burning zeal characterised the young evangelist; and wherever his preaching appointments led him, not content with supplying the pulpit on the Lord's day, he held protracted meetings for the conversion of souls on every night of the week. The town of Bathgate, where his father had laboured so long, came in for a good share of these fervent ministrations. The people who had known him as a raw school-boy and assiduous student, were hardly prepared for the new character in which he appeared before them, namely, that of an enthusiastic revivalist. While we can hardly say that the proverb was verified, "A prophet hath no honour in his own country," perhaps this familiarity with him as fellow-townfolk prevented them from receiving as abundant a blessing as had fallen upon the inhabitants of Ross-shire and Morayshire. Even the quiet

and philosophical father of the young preacher wondered at the change that had passed upon his devoted son, who had thus suddenly forsaken all the models of the Secession Church, and had fashioned his ministry more after the pattern supplied by Whitfield, the Wesleys, and Rowland Hill, of England.

We may here insert Mr. Morison's *first publication*, both to illustrate the burning zeal which consumed him at this date, as well as to show the way in which he conducted these revival services. It was a yellow fly-leaf, printed on only one side, and thrown off for circulation in the town of Bathgate about the time of which we are treating. It runs thus :—

“A THOUSAND YEARS AFTER THIS !”

“Where, O reader, will you then be? Pause, ponder, answer. You will be—you must be *somewhere*; for the rocks and mountains, however earnestly supplicated, will not fall on any soul to annihilate it. Where, O where then will *you* be? Do you hope that you shall be in holy heaven? Why do you hope this? Is it because Christ Jesus is there, and you know in whom you have believed, and feel assured that where He is, there you shall be also? Do you know indeed that you are in ‘Christ?’ O beware! Self-deception here is soul-damnation. But, O reader, would you be *happy* in holy heaven? Would you not weary in being always and for ever devout? Can you think that you would be happy in spending an eternity in praise, if you find it irksome to spend two hours in prayer? Have you, then, got the ‘new heart,’ the new nature—*the love of holiness*? If not, alas! alas! for your poor soul! Are you willing to remain another day without this preparation for eternity? To-morrow! where may you be? Can you boast of to-morrow? *To-morrow is the thief of souls*. ‘Now is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.’ ‘Redeem the time.’

\*\*\* “Perhaps you are not aware that within a few minutes’ walk of your dwelling, in Mr. Morison’s Chapel, meetings are to be held all the week, commencing on Sabbath, the 10th day of May, for the very purpose of bringing you to Christ. ‘Come, and hear, that your soul may live.’

“On Sabbath evening the services begin at six o’clock, on every other evening at seven. There is also a prayer meeting every morning from nine to ten.”

The town of Dunfermline was likewise favoured largely with the visits of the youthful Boanerges. The Rev. Mr. Cuthbertson of the Secession Church felt it to be a privilege to have him in his pulpit; while an earnest and intelligent layman, Mr. David Reid, father of the lately deceased and much lamented Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs, and who afterwards became a valuable friend, was proud to entertain

him as a guest in his house. At Dunfermline and elsewhere he was accompanied on these preaching tours by the Rev. James Robertson, afterwards of Musselburgh, and now of Newington, Edinburgh. A Christian lady, long ago entered into rest, and whose name we have pleasure in printing in these memoirs on account of her deep love to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ—Miss Anne Muirhead, of Falkirk—has often informed us that, at these meetings, young Morison always preached first, and young Robertson second. The first thundered forth with awakening power the terror of the law and of the Lord, while the second followed with the soothing and satisfying comforts of grace. Those who listened thought they saw before them a personified representation of the text, “The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Since our settlement in the city of Glasgow, we have heard old people tell of discourses preached by Mr. Morison during this spring of 1840, both in Nicholson Street Church, Hutchesontown (afterwards the scene of the labours of Dr. John M'Farlane, now of Clapham, London), and also in the pulpit of the eminent Dr. Heugh, in Blackfriars Street. He insisted chiefly, in both places, on the words “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” His discourses were intended mainly to probe the consciences of worldly professors. He preached for two consecutive Sabbaths in one of these churches on this startling text. Many unenlightened Nicodemuses were shaken. About a dozen tests of the new birth were laid down, by which he told his hearers that they might prove and examine themselves as to whether or not they were “in the faith.” The common conviction of the impressed audiences, as they retired, seemed to be “We never heard it before on this fashion.”

But we must now refer to an event that happened before the earnest evangelist returned to the Shetland Isles,—one which had a most important bearing on his future career, and which also deeply affected the religious and ecclesiastical history of many besides himself: we mean Mr. Morison's call to the pastoral oversight of the Clerk's Lane church, Kilmarnock. This was one of the best country vacancies in the Secession Church at the time; and to it, in the providence of God, our honoured brother was sent.

Before Mr. Morison's settlement, Clerk's Lane pulpit had been occupied by two remarkable men, whose fame had

travelled far beyond the bounds of Ayrshire and of their own denomination. We refer to the Rev. James Robertson—a man of great eccentricity, but a genius and a scholar—and Dr. John Ritchie, afterwards of Edinburgh, and widely known as the apostle of “The Voluntary Controversy.” The Rev. David Wilson had been pastor of the church for some years after Dr. Ritchie’s removal to Edinburgh; but his ministry had not been successful, and he had been persuaded to retire, on a small pension, in the year 1839. The congregation had become much reduced during the latter part of Mr. Wilson’s ministry; while their differences of opinion about his retirement had reacted unfavourably likewise upon their spiritual prosperity.

It is worthy of being remarked, however, that “a spirit of grace and of supplications” had been poured out upon a portion of the church. They had been meeting, for some time before the youthful licentiate appeared, in the upper session-house, to beseech the Lord to send them a man of spiritual power, who would make them forget the sorrows of their protracted dissensions, in a blessed revival of religion. We were in conversation lately with a venerable brother, who informed us that, at one of these meetings, although not in office, and but recently transferred from another congregation in town, he had taken the liberty of remarking that, “the preacher we need is not one who will soothe and satisfy God’s people, but one who will awaken and, instrumentally, convert the unconverted.” The most influential gentleman in the church rose up when this plain brother sat down, and said, “I cordially second that.” When Mr. Morison delivered his first sermons in Clerk’s Lane, with all the unction and power of the Holy Ghost, the people who had been at that meeting came round the humble spokesman at the dismissal of the congregation, saying, “Ah! Robert, you got a hold o’ the young man last night, and persuaded him to give us discourses to your mind!” “I did not,” was the reply;—“Can you not see an answer to our prayers?” Another worthy old man, the senior elder of the church, William Fleming by name, when asked afterwards how it was that he could be led away by Mr. Morison’s plausibilities, although he had been a strict Calvinist all his days, replied, “I knew the voice o’ my Father whenever I heard it.”

The impression produced by Mr. Morison’s first discourses

in Clerk's Lane Chapel was indeed great. He certainly had no lack of matter. A man who, being too late for the service, and unwilling to disturb the congregation, had taken his seat upon the gallery stairs, went away home at the close of the running comment which the preacher had given on the chapter he read, with the understanding that he had heard the discourse for the occasion. He was both surprised and disappointed to learn afterwards that he had missed the principal portion of the feast. The candidate's seriousness of manner, and deep sincerity, also affected the people much. When the vote was taken, it was not unanimous in his favour. A considerable minority preferred his more quiet and more moderate friend, James Robertson. They seemed to be anxious to have a second minister of that name in Clerk's Lane pulpit. Besides, the alarming appeals of the minister of Bathgate's son troubled them not a little. They thought that they would have more polished and staid decorum, if less power, with the one, than with the other. But what gained the day for Mr. Morison with the mass and the majority was, not merely this very burning earnestness, but his remarkable expository powers. The old people still remembered worthy Mr. Robertson's gift in this direction, and they thought that they could see traces of the same learning and exegetical skill in the youthful candidate. His future career has certainly not been unworthy of this their shrewd opinion. Mr. Morison and his friendly rival were on an evangelistic tour together when the result of the election was handed up to the former, as they were both seated on a coach-top, at an inn-door. He did not tell his brother the news till they had reached their destination, and were about to retire for the night.

Thus was the lot of our young licentiate fixed in the town which, celebrated towards the close of the last century by the publication of the first edition of Burns's poems, was to gain some additional celebrity in this century by the publication of his healthier works,—works of genius too, although not exactly of the same order and tone.

And here we are led to notice that this summer was signalled not only by Mr. Morison's call to Clerk's Lane Church, but also by the publication of his first religious treatise in the shape of an eighteen page tract, entitled "The Question 'What must I do to be Saved?' Answered. By Philanthropos. Edinburgh: M. Paterson, 7 Union

Place, 1840." Around this little pamphlet much interest gathers. It was the small sling and stone that did great service. But for it there had been no Presbytery case, and no Synodical deliverance. But for it there had been no Evangelical Union. Let us, therefore, linger a little around the circumstances of its composition.

We saw in last article, from the statement of Mr. Ketcher, of Nairn, that Mr. Morison kept up a correspondence with his young converts, in different places, for the sake of dispelling their lingering doubts, and of establishing them in the faith. His ubiquitous labours had now rendered this correspondence enormous; and he rightly judged that if he should compose a tract, embodying in a clear manner, and within a brief compass, the cream both of his discourses and hortatory conversations, his epistolary labours would be lightened, and his usefulness also increased. All earnest men have a high idea of the power of the press. The printed words go where their voices have never been heard. The printed words will remain when their voices will be hushed in death.

The post-script to the first edition of the little book clearly enough accounts for its publication. It runs thus: "I have written this tract at the urgent request of many individuals, in many parts of the country, who have expressed an anxious desire to have beside them, in a permanent form, the views which have been instrumental in 'turning them from the error of their ways.' I earnestly implore the prayers of the believing reader, that I may be made 'wise in winning souls.'"

The structure of the tract is very simple. After quoting the gaoler's question, "What must I do to be saved?" from Acts xvi. 30, the writer thus begins, "O Reader! is this the question which, above all others, you wish to be answered?" He then asks his reader from what he desires to be saved, and replies, for him, "It is, your conscience answers, from the punishment justly due to your myriads of sins." Then, probing the conscience, lest his reader should not be sufficiently awakened, he proceeds to show that the great commandment of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," is violated by every unconverted man every *moment* of his life, so that such a person's whole existence is an unbroken course of sin, whatever may be his outward proprieties and amiabilities of conduct. Having shown that sin must be punished, but that God has

provided a substitute in the person of Jesus, he next proceeds to tread on ground which he afterwards found to be dangerous, but of whose slipperiness he had no idea when he penned his tract. We have already shown that at Cabrach, in Banffshire, he had found that *Christ had died for all, and, therefore, for him*. This doctrine he had not hesitated to preach everywhere, and now he did not hesitate to print it. But our readers will observe that he did not discuss the subject for controversy's sake, but from a holy desire to save souls, by removing stumbling-blocks out of their way.

“‘Ah!’ perhaps you say, ‘I would indeed feel that I am safe, could I see that all this is true *to me*; but how do I know that Christ died for *me*?’ You admit then, that if I can prove that Christ did die for *you*, you need no more to secure your safety. You admit that, if Christ died for *you* he did completely satisfy the law by bearing the punishment due to your sins, so that nothing more is required from the lawgiver from *you* to make atonement for your sins;—you admit all this, do you? ‘O yes!’ you reply, ‘prove to me that another has satisfied the lawgiver for *me* by bearing the punishment which I deserved to suffer, and I am satisfied,—I feel I must be safe.’ Well, beloved, listen to God’s own word. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, **BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD**’ (1 John ii. 1, 2). Are you a part of ‘the whole world?’ Then Jesus is here asserted to be ‘the propitiation’ for *your* sins. I recollect of once quoting this passage to a middle-aged woman, who had been for years in very deep distress about the state of her soul; and, after quoting it, I said to her, ‘Now, are you not satisfied that Christ has atoned for *your* sins?’ ‘No, Sir,’ said she, ‘I believe he has atoned for the sins of the elect, but I cannot tell that I am among the elect.’ I replied, ‘Turn up your Bible: how does the passage run in your edition? for it does not say in mine, “and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole *elect*,” but it says, “for the sins of the whole *world*,”—does not that comprehend you?’ After some further explanations, she saw the truth, and said, ‘O now I see the rock on which I was almost wrecked for ever. O, I see it now. Yes, he has died for *me*. That is what I wanted, and what I need;—glory be to God!’”

In the same strain he goes on to show from Heb. ii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Isaiah xlv. 22, and many other passages, that the Son of God literally shed his blood for the sins of the whole world, fortifying his position by the following footnote,—“See on this text a very valuable sermon developing the universal extent of the atonement, by the most able biblical expositor in Scotland, Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. The sermon is to be found in the *United Secession Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 296.”

In like manner he meets such difficulties of the anxious inquirer as that he "has not the right kind of faith;" "I fear I have not repented yet;" "Must I not pray for grace to help me to believe?" &c. All these cobwebs of mistakes he easily sweeps away with the great gospel truth, "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."

But when he comes to the difficulty of election, we find that, notwithstanding all the light he had got, Mr. Morison was a limitarian still. The passage is a remarkable one. It shows how "good Homer may nod." It is completely out of harmony with the rest of the tract. As we read it, we say to ourselves, "This last patch of snow must soon melt away, too, before the fervent sun that has melted all the rest."

"'But O! Sir, if I be not one of the elected, then I cannot be saved.' If you be not 'chosen before the foundation of the world,' then assuredly you *will* not be saved, that is, you will be quite unwilling to be saved, you will be quite careless, as hundreds around you are. If, however, you be willing to believe and be saved, you shall be saved; for the only reason why any are not saved, is this, 'They *will* not come unto Christ, that they may have life:' 'they *will* not be gathered by Christ, when he *would* gather them, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.' Election, in the order of nature, comes after the atonement; and when it is properly understood, it is one of the most delightful doctrines of Scripture. It is so, because it *secures* 'a seed' to Jesus. The harmony of doctrines, I apprehend to be the following: God foresaw that all men would become hell-deserving sinners; he resolved, in consequence of his ineffable love and pity, to provide an atonement sufficient for the salvation of all; he resolved to offer this atonement to all, so that all should be able and all should be welcome to come and accept it as 'all their salvation.' He foresaw, however, that not one out of the whole human family would be *willing* to be saved in this way,—and then he elected. That all might not be lost, that Jesus might 'see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied,' he resolved to bestow on some, such influences of his Spirit as would infallibly *dispose* them to accept what all others are able and welcome to take. Thus it is clear that election does injustice to none, throws obstacles in the way of none. It only secures the salvation of some, and leaves the rest quite able and welcome to come and avail themselves of the freely-offered gift. If then you be *disposed* to believe, the probability is that you are amongst the elect; nay, if you be 'willing' (Psalm cx. 3), it is certain that you are. O 'believe, then, and live.'"

As will be seen in the sequel, this was the very doctrine at which several brethren in connection with the Congregational body stumbled. The eminent Dr. Wardlaw had

brought them to the very point for which Mr. Morison was here contending—namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ had shed his blood for every human being; but the invincible operations of the Holy Spirit, according to that divine, had been provided to remove the unwillingness and indifference of only some hearers of the gospel. Plainly the latter tenet did not square with the former. Why should not the second toll-bar be flung wide open on the King's highway, as well as the first? Besides, was not the Holy Ghost resisted by the impenitent and unbelieving, as well as the Son of God? The reason why one man is saved and another remains unsaved, is not that God has from all eternity unconditionally decreed to give grace to one man and withhold it from another, but that one man yields to the mighty solicitations of divine grace, while another rejects them and suffers for his rejection. Thus the elect are they who come to God; and it is the duty of every man, and especially of every hearer of the gospel, to become one of God's elect. This was the glorious truth which Wesley, and Fletcher of Madely, saw in the last century, and which was hidden from the eyes of their no less pious and zealous contemporaries, Whitfield and Toplady. James Morison came to see the consistent view afterwards; but as yet he occupied only Whitfield and Toplady's ground.

From recent communications with Mr. Morison's old adherents in Kilmarnock, we have learned that this passage gave many earnest souls sincere concern. They saw and felt its inconsistency with the rest of their honoured pastor's teachings. And they were truly delighted and relieved when about the year 1843 he broke through this last fetter of limitation, and declared that as Jesus had died for every man, so did the Holy Spirit strive with every man, according to the measure of light which each might enjoy, honestly and earnestly seeking His salvation. Without doubt, a seed is secured to Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, according to the fore-knowledge of God; but this foreseen result is brought about by the two concurrent wills—the will of God who draws, and the will of man who yields.

Yet let us not be hard on our youthful hero, because he did not see his way to a consistent theological creed all at once. Let us not laugh at Earl Grey's ten-pound franchise in these days of household suffrage. Let us not sneer at Lord John Russell's sliding scale, because Cobden gave us

free-trade. In progressive theology as well as in progressive legislation, the large instalment by the way leads on to the complete and ultimate measure of reform.

Still it is worthy of notice that this halting, disappointing paragraph remains un-expunged in the 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th editions of the tract; and it is only when we come to that issued in 1844 that we find it happily left out. Therefore James Morison was a moderate Calvinist when the Secession Church threw him overboard in 1841. To be consistent they should also, to-day, condemn the writings of Ralph Wardlaw, and William Anderson, and Albert Barnes. But it cannot be denied that the great majority of the ministers of that denomination have come up to the very theological standpoint which the Luther of Kilmarnock occupied when they visited him with their ecclesiastical ban. We anticipate, however. The "dead fly in the ointment" has caused us to digress.

We need not quote any additional extracts from this important publication, because, after having lain long in comparative obscurity, eclipsed by publications of a later date, it has suddenly experienced the fortunate resurrection of republication in London. A gentleman there having casually, or rather providentially, met with it, communicated with Dr. Morison; and the consequence is, that it has been issued with a few verbal corrections made by the author, by Partidge & Co., of London, under the title "Safe for Eternity." We are delighted to observe that this new edition has already reached a circulation of *nine thousand*. We cordially recommend it to our readers. We know the intelligent teacher of a large Bible class, who lately held up the little pamphlet before the fifty young men at his feet, saying, "Look here, lads. But for this there had been no Evangelical Union. But for this I had not been here teaching you, and you had not been there listening to me." He then went on to remark that it was a very small matter that kept Cromwell and Hampden from sailing away to America, which, had they done, our liberties would not have been secured; and, in like manner, if this little penny publication had not been issued, the free and world-wide gospel in all its full-orbed consistency would not have been secured for our native land. But we must now continue our narrative and show how this was so.

Mr. Morison did not return from the Shetland Isles till

the month of July; and as it had been fixed that his ordination should take place in Kilmarnock in the month of September, he spent the interval in the unwearied evangelisation to which he had been "addicted" for some time past.

He was under the necessity, indeed, of paying one visit to the Ayrshire town during that period, to preach what were called his "trial discourses." The service was held in the chapel on a week day. He translated Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to the complete satisfaction, and even admiration of the Presbytery; read an exposition on Phil. ii. 6—"Who being in the form of God," etc.; and delivered a sermon on 1 Tim. i. 5—"Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Of course these subjects had been previously prescribed by the court. While he was reading his elaborate paper on the divinity of Christ, some one observed that "they had heard enough;" but the venerable minister of Tarbolton exclaimed, "Let the young man go on—I am greatly edified." When Mr. Morison was charged afterwards with having concealed his peculiar views on the occasion, he of course was able to reply that he required to keep by the topics assigned him; but he was glad to be able to add that in his trial sermon he had distinctly brought out the simplicity of the nature of faith, and had insisted on the doctrine that God does not command men to perform impossibilities—their responsibility invariably keeping pace with their powers and privileges.

As his ordination made considerable stir in the town and country, and foreshadowed the ecclesiastical opposition that he was to meet with in his zealous career, we take occasion here to remark that it was not the first ordination that had made a commotion in Kilmarnock. Burns has celebrated the settlement of the Rev. Dr. M'Kinlay in the Low Church, in 1785, in his well-known and characteristic poem, entitled, "The Ordination." And twenty-one years previous quite a riot had taken place at the forced "placin'" of the Rev. James Lindsay over the same congregation. The Earl of Glencairn had issued the presentation in favour of this gentleman (the minister of Cumbrae) without his having been heard by the people at all; and there seems to have been enough of "non-intrusion" feeling in the town even at that date to cause a truly uproarious scene to be enacted, the

particulars of which any one may find out for himself who will be at the trouble of turning up the file of the *Caledonian Mercury* of July 21, 1764.

But the obstacles in the way of Mr. Morison's settlement were very different from those which had caused disturbance in the town eighty years before. His election had been free and fair, and great expectations were entertained by his friends of his future usefulness. Yet it will not seem surprising to our readers that sundry ministers in a rural Presbytery like that of Kilmarnock, where things had all along been managed in an easy and stereotyped way, should object to that truly Pentecostal zeal which led the young preacher continually to press the question on every hearer and neighbour, "Hast thou been born again?" Such a mode of address fitted better the Haldanes and the Methodists than a staid son of the Secession. Then the rumour had gone forth that the pamphlet which he had just published contained statements which would not square with the Calvinistic standards of the Church. It is true that this tract had not as yet been very widely circulated; but one or two of the members of Presbytery had seen a copy of it, and had secretly determined to make its contents the subject of preliminary investigations.

Hence on the forenoon of the ordination-day some questions were proposed to the young pastor-elect in the session house or vestry, as to his doctrinal views. The congregation had already assembled in the adjoining chapel, so that the delay was very awkward; but, notwithstanding, a long conversation ensued. No member of court had a copy of the tract with him; but Mr. Morison pulled out one from his pocket, and expressed his readiness to read any paragraph to which exceptions had been taken. Several sentences were anxiously considered, and some little misconception was removed. For example, his questioners had supposed him to teach the doctrine that all men were already pardoned; but on this point he was able satisfactorily to explain that there was a great and manifest difference between the proposition that Christ had died for all men, so that they might be pardoned, and the proposition that all were already pardoned. Mr. Morison, while assuring the Presbytery that he never could, and never would, preach any other doctrine than that contained in the tract, promised in the future, to be more careful in the expressions he would employ, especially with

reference to the misapprehensions which had been made apparent. He also agreed to suppress the pamphlet, since the Presbytery seemed to be displeased with the way in which it had been worded. He was anxious to be ordained, and yielded to the unexpected pressure which was put upon him.

Meanwhile, a whole hour had elapsed, and the large congregation had grown impatient. A whisper ran through the building that something unpleasant had occurred; and when at length the reverend members of the court appeared, traces of the recent "heckling" were visible on the agitated countenances of all. Yet, although the succeeding services were constrained and comfortless, the young minister entered into the deed of self-dedication with pious fervour; for it was observed that both he and his deeply sympathising father shed many tears during the solemn imposition of the hands of the Presbytery.

At the close of the ordination it was made publicly manifest that a true, brotherly cordiality of sentiment did not subsist between the Presbytery and the new member of their court. It had always been customary for the ordaining ministers to dine, when the ceremony was over, with the principal people of the congregation and their recently acquired pastor. On this occasion, however, all the ministers absented themselves save one—the Rev. Mr. Ronald, of Saltcoats, who deserves honourable mention as the solitary *exception* to the discourtesy, which was the *rule* of procedure that day. It should perhaps be mentioned that the reason of non-attendance lay, possibly, quite as much in the fact that the church had agreed to have no intoxicating beverages at the dinner, as in the unpopularity of Mr. Morison. But this excuse does not tell much in the Presbytery's favour. Had the young man's influence with his people already been so powerful, that they felt that strong drink, the curse of the land, would have been an impertinence and impropriety at the feast? Then verily his co-presbyters should have seen in this very fact that God was on his side, and that, whatever might be the doctrinal differences on which they had just been splitting hairs, he was a man "full of the Holy Ghost."

## CHAPTER III.

Rev. James Morison's Ministry at Kilmarnock—His Crowded Congregations—Preaches on "Not far from the Kingdom of God"—Publishes his Discourse—Abstract of it—Publishes also on the Nature of the Atonement—Abstract of the Pamphlet—Mutterings of Presbyterial Displeasure—Conference with the Presbytery at Irvine—Libel is prepared against him.

THE storm that had gathered over Mr. Morison's head, at the time of his ordination in Kilmarnock, was not the precursor of immediate sunshine and peace, but grew into a hurricane of portentous and prodigious power, which soon burst with unrestrained fury upon the young and zealous minister of the gospel. But let us not be discouraged as we look back upon these days of trial and difficulty. The suspicious-looking clouds were "big with mercy," and really "broke in blessing," not only on his head, but on the heads and hearts of thousands besides.

On the Sabbath after the ordination, the Rev. Robert Morison, of Bathgate, preached in the forenoon, in Clerk's Lane Church, and introduced his son with much fatherly affection and earnestness of manner to his new congregation. The young minister preached with great power and "demonstration of the Spirit" in the afternoon on the text, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He had promised to the Presbytery during the week, that he would keep within due bounds, and avoid modes of expression which had seemed to some of them to be extravagant and inaccurate; but on the Lord's day, in the Lord's house, and facing the people to whom the Lord had sent him, as well as the immense audience which had crowded to hear him, he seemed to be saying within his own heart, like the apostle Peter, "I will obey God, rather than man." Precise courtiers, indeed, may bind down a queen and get her to promise that she will not transgress the rules of etiquette by too marked a demonstration of affection, when she receives her son at the pier or the palace, on his return from distant and dangerous wanderings; but who would blame her if, forgetting all her engagements, she should rush forward, at the first sight of the prince-errant, and falling on

his neck, smother him with warm maternal kisses? Nor need it be a matter of astonishment that, in this his first sermon as minister of Clerk's Lane congregation, this Scottish Samson burst the withes with which the Delilah of Divinity had bound him, and proclaimed the atonement of Calvary's bleeding Lamb to "every sinner, without distinction and without exception."

Perhaps, indeed, we do Mr. Morison injustice when we take for granted, that either in his first or subsequent discourses, he violated the pledge which he had given to the Presbytery on the day of his ordination. It will be remembered that he had then simply come under a promise to be careful about his manner of expressing himself, and chiefly with respect to the errors of universal pardon which some of his interrogators had erroneously thought him to teach. At the very same time, he had distinctly declared that "he could preach, and would preach, no other doctrines than those which were taught in the tract," since he believed them to be the very truth of God. Therefore, in preaching as he did, he doubtless felt that he was acting in perfect good faith with his co-presbyters; and in fact, in his subsequent trial, he distinctly informed his judges that he had sacredly kept this promise. It is probable, however, that they hoped that he would calm down and dwell on the less evangelical portions of the Word of God; but how could a man be expected to do so, whose whole soul was on fire with the recently-discovered good news of salvation, and who was saying to himself every hour with the apostle "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

It will not be matter of surprise to those who know the pulpit power of the founder of our denomination, and who also consider the momentous importance of the Scripture doctrines which he thus brought publicly under discussion, that from this very first Sabbath of his ministerial labours, Clerk's Lane Church became literally crowded to the door, and remained so to the close of his pastoral labours in Kilmarnock, and indeed till the large congregation which he had drawn together removed to a new and better situated place of meeting. As we have already stated, the congregation had been sadly reduced under Mr. Wilson's unsuccessful ministry; and even although it had been unexpectedly reinforced shortly before the period of which we speak, by the accession of a considerable body of mal-

contents from a sister church in the town,\* the building could not be called more than half-filled at the time of Mr. Morison's ordination. But after that event took place, a great and immediate change was manifest. The excitement caused by the rumour of his difficult ordination and forsaken ordination dinner, his tract, his views on the atonement, and strange way of putting things, as well as of his powerful manner of speaking, brought a great crowd of hearers at once both from the populous town in which his lot had been cast, and the surrounding district. Fifty years before, the graphic and sarcastic pen of Robert Burns had made the world familiar with the fondness of Ayrshire artizans and rustics for theological discussions in connection with the case of M'Gill, of Ayr; but a fresh, and, in some respects, a healthier proof of the same liking was given in the case of our hero in Kilmarnock. Besides, on reviewing the political history of the place for several years previous, it would appear as if the public mind had been sharpened for theological discussion, and prepared for a world-wide gospel. First of all the agitations about the Reform Bill had given occasion for frequent debates. Then the Voluntary Controversy had whetted both the temper and the tongue of many a local Hampden. And, lastly, the Chartist movement, revealing as it did popular dissatisfaction with legislative inconsistencies, had pre-disposed multitudes of the working classes to see similar inequalities in the national creed, and to welcome as a friendly innovator and Liberator any divine who would reform religion, and sweep away the appearance of partiality and the "respect of persons" from the decrees of God.

Clerk's Lane, or, as it used to be called in these days, "Clerk's Close," was quite a narrow lane which ran off the square at the cross. It was so named, because, long before,

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\* An unusual event had happened in this "Gallows-knowe meeting-house." Several scores of people, finding themselves in a minority as to the election of a minister, and not being satisfied with the new man after they had given him a trial, suddenly and simultaneously demanded lines of disjunction. The minister, seeing the secession inevitable, determined good naturedly to bear it with equanimity. "What will I do, sir," said the session-clerk, "with all these elders and communicants that are leaving you?" "O, just write out certificates for them one by one." "But, then, I want awa' mysel'. Wha'll write mine?" "I'll do that, Robert, myself, when you've got through the lot," was the self-possessed reply.

the Town Clerk had lived there; but more recently the Anti-Burgher meeting-house and manse had been built at its farther end. The authorities of the town have now turned the lane into a respectably wide street, so that any one standing at Sir James Shaw's monument, can get a good view of the famous church that used to be quite hidden by the houses before. The worthy magistrates, by this piece of town improvement, have, perhaps unwittingly, practically illustrated the religious or theological history of the day; for their act has seemed to say that, "Whereas the narrow lane was good enough for the days of limited grace, now that the proceedings which immortalised that very locality have ended in the proclamation of a free gospel over the length and breadth of the land, it would not do to keep the close so strait, and therefore it should be widened, so as to correspond with that widened and more generous theology."

Well, it was quite an entertainment to see the stream of people that poured into Clerk's Lane when the bells began to ring at a quarter to 11 a.m., or a quarter to 2 p.m., on the Lord's day, after James Morison began his ministry in Kilmarnock. If any of our readers had gone to visit friends who lived in the narrow passage, they would, if unacquainted with the events of the day, have concluded that the crowd was a congregation dispersing, rather than collecting. Up that entry the multitude advanced steadily and unceasingly for a whole quarter of an hour, till about a thousand hearers were crammed into the square, old-fashioned building. Kilmarnock, the agricultural capital of Ayrshire, contained, even in these days, a population of 20,000 inhabitants; and not only did its thoughtful and curious artizans help to swell the numbers of this eager assembly, but all the villages and towns around contributed their respective quotas of worshippers. Stewarton, Kilmaurs, Dundonald, Galston, Newmilns, and Darvel, with many other places more remote, were every Sabbath represented there. As the winter advanced and the affections of the people began to be fairly centred around the young preacher, carts and waggons were brought into requisition, and it was no uncommon thing to see as many as fifty people coming into the town from Galston, and a score or more from "Loudon's bonnie woods and braes," higher up the valley. Farmers even came as far as from Loudon hill itself, and the scene of the battle of Drumclog, with as much earnestness and determination

stamped upon their countenances as if they were about to follow the blue banner once more which their forefathers had unfurled on these very uplands of Ayrshire,—only that the nineteenth-century inscription was to be, “For Christ’s free gospel and salvation,—the blood-bought birthright of every man.”

Such weekly gatherings from far and near could not come together without attracting the attention of the whole district. The people on the road-side and in the streets used to look curiously at the troops of church-goers as they passed. Their devout aspect was itself a sermon, and induced many to join the growing band; for they wisely judged that “surely a blessing was to be got at that kirk, let folk speak as they pleased, or so many decent and earnest people would not take the trouble to go so far Sabbath after Sabbath.” But “every one to his trade.” A man in the outskirts of Kilmarnock, who had dipped a little into phrenology, and thought himself no mean disciple of Gall and Spurzheim, was not so much impressed with the gravity of the people’s faces as with the height of their brows. “They were nae weak-minded or senseless folk that were followin’ after that man. Veneration was high, and Causality was weel-developed in the most of them; and for his part, he would just go down and hear for himself.”

All who went to hear were at once arrested and impressed; while many of them were carried captive, not only by the eloquence of the speaker, but the saving grace of his Divine Master. Mr. Morison, in these days, as we have already remarked, had a clear, ringing voice, and, as he preached without notes, and generally without having written his discourses (although his train of thought was always conscientiously prepared), every now and then he rose to the height of genuine eloquence,—the extemporaneous inspiration of the circumstances in which he found himself to be placed, and of the momentous thoughts with which his own soul was constantly on fire. No one could hear him without feeling in his heart, more or less, “the power of the world to come.” Many years after the time of which we are writing, Mr. Thomas Brown, now editor of the *Birmingham Morning News*, remarked to us at the close of one of Mr. J. B. Gough’s most entrancing addresses in the City Hall of Glasgow, “But of all the orators I ever heard, religious, philanthropic, or political, there never was one

who could thrill my soul with deep spiritual awe like James Morison, in his first days at Kilmarnock." Another hearer (Baillie Lamberton of Glasgow), who received his first religious impressions at the same time, has described to us the subdued murmur that ran over the audience when, on a certain occasion, the rapt speaker closed one of his extemporaneous bursts by saying, "If I could not find out in the Word of God that Jesus made an atonement for all, and therefore for me, I would burn my Bible and die in despair!"

The chapel became so crowded that it was with great difficulty that the preacher could make his way on a Sabbath morning through the dense mass that thronged the doorway and the stairs that led up to the pulpit. As he had to walk in the open air from the session-house to the church, he always appeared with his hat in his hand advancing slowly through the crowd that opened to let him ascend. Depositing his hat below his seat in the sacred rostrum, he was in the habit of engaging for a little in secret prayer. By the time that he rises to give out the psalm, our phrenological friend, possibly perched in the "cock-loft" in the gallery, has had time to conclude that, "There's something in that head any way. Veneration is high, and Causality is developed with a vengeance. There's just enough of the Love o' Approbation to keep him up; and he has as much Combativeness as will help him to fight the Presbytery if they oppose him. There's no wonder that a man has made such a stir with a head like that. Whatever he may prove about *Theology*, he proves that *Phrenology's* right—and no mistake."

Mr. Morison used to read the psalm or paraphrase with great effect in these days; and they who hear him give out the hymn yet when his throat infirmity is not at its worst, can easily understand how emphatic the elocution of his youth must have been. We read lately a notice of him in a Dunfermline newspaper, issued about the time we are referring to, the writer of which remarked that it could be seen that he was a man of power from the way in which he gave out the 41st Paraphrase, beginning, "As when the Hebrew Prophet raised." Well, let us suppose that he has given out that rich evangelical composition (which, candidly speaking, fully justifies the doctrines with which his name has been associated, for it cannot be sung consistently on the hypothesis of any other theology), and hark! how full and

hearty the burst of praise that immediately succeeds! Who can sing like those who have newly found the pearl of great price? How tame are all "Italian trills" compared with the jubilee chants of the "blessed people, the joyful sound that know!" While we do not despise the adjuncts of good music and full choral harmony, these are mightily enriched by "the melody of joy and health" that is made by truly regenerated souls, and the presence of which is certified by the shining countenance, the closed eye, or, it may be, the silently trickling tear.

But while the people are singing let us take a look at them. See how densely they are packed together! The passages both above and below are invisible; for the elders of the church, to meet the extraordinary demand for sittings, have provided boards that are dexterously placed across the aisles as soon as the pews are filled, so that every inch of room within the building is thus occupied. If you are acquainted with the families, you will see that in the throng husbands and wives have been separated from one another and their children; but they put up with the temporary divorce patiently for the greater love which they bear to the Heavenly Bridegroom. What would come of that mother with the baby in her arms if it should begin to cry? How could she get out with it, tightly wedged in as she is by the crowd?—and she has already begun to notice, to her dismay, that the seats are all down in the passages, rendering egress apparently impossible. Be not afraid, good woman, for the very crowd which so excites the people and the preacher causes all the babies to sleep; and even although your child should make a noise, so much of the love of Christ has been shed abroad in the hearts of the congregation that they will all sympathise with you; and the young minister himself will neither look nor speak angrily, for even the crying children seem only to remind him of the babe of Bethlehem, and he will speak on apparently well-pleased and content through quite a Babel of infantine interruption.

But now Mr. Morison has risen to pray. In these days there was as much power and unction in his prayers as in his sermons. They revealed an intimacy of communion between God and the speaker's soul. Then the way in which he addressed the Divine Being was novel and striking. People had been accustomed to hear the Deity invoked as the most High and the most Holy—as the Omnipresent, the

Omniscient, and the Omnipotent—and without doubt such representations of his glorious perfections were calculated to evoke the reverential adorations of the worshippers. But Mr. Morison preferred to address God rather as the Father of men and of the Lord Jesus Christ. “O Father!” “O Heavenly Father!” and “O dear Heavenly Father!” were the most common modes of invocation which he employed both in the exordium and throughout the separate petitions of prayer. And, besides, it impressed people much who had not been accustomed to such forms of expression, to hear a minister thank God for those present who had passed from death to life, and pray that “disquieted souls might this very day enter into rest and have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Some of the discourses which Mr. Morison preached during this first half-year of his pastorate are still distinctly remembered for their power and usefulness. He seems sometimes to have preached in the evening; for a lady once told us that, not being able to gain admission for the throng, she stood outside and heard him preach one night soon after his settlement on the text, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, Anathema Maranatha.” It was a very awakening sermon, and was eminently calculated to make sinners tremble that were at ease in Zion. The crowd filled the court in front of the chapel back to the gates; and so distinct were the intonations of the speaker’s voice that those without could hear as well as those within, and seemed to be over-awed in the gathering darkness of the autumnal evening. Mr. Morison seems to have thought it proper to preach such arousing sermons frequently at that time for the purpose of “breaking up the fallow-ground” and preparing it for the seed of the gospel. Another favourite sermon with him about the same period was one on the text, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” (Mark xii. 34.)

The Rev. A. M. Wilson, of Bathgate, when editor of the *Christian Times*, described in an interesting paper on his own religious experience how, when disquieted in his mind about his acceptance with God, he had been invited by a friend to go and hear Mr. Morison shortly after his ordination in Kilmarnock. He had been discouraged by a deep sense of his unworthiness to sit at the table of the Lord, and had been perplexed by a message which the kind clergyman had sent him, whose ministrations he attended regularly, to

the effect that "that very sense of unworthiness was a sign of grace, and should cheer him rather than otherwise." His friend informed Mr. Wilson that the new minister was blamed for saying that "we had only to believe." "That's the very thing for me," said our anxious inquirer to himself; "for I have been long trying works and have failed." The very next Sabbath found him seated in Clerk's Lane meeting-house—the first time he had ever condescended to worship in a Dissenting Church. The text was that just mentioned, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God;" and the tendency of the discourse was only to confirm to absolute certainty the hearer's previous conviction that he never had been a Christian at all. With his characteristic decision of character, Mr. Wilson went straight to the preacher at the close of the service and revealed to him his troubled state of mind. Thereupon a most interesting conversation followed: "You think that you would be all right if you had a certain amount of emotion and experience?" "Yes." "And you are looking into your own heart to see if there is a sufficient amount there?" "Yes." "Well, you are all wrong. You should not look in upon your sinful self, but out upon the Crucified One; and the contemplation of His love without will put you right within. Believe really that 'He loved you and gave Himself for you,' and never mind your heart. It will burn, and bask, and brighten under the sunshine of that love without your anxious endeavours if you only accept as true the gospel declaration, and continue in the contemplation of it." Such was the chief line of expostulation and illustration used. The effect upon the inquirer was instantaneous. Like the bitten Israelites he looked and lived. He went home, as he says, "not knowing whether his head or feet were uppermost," so filled was he to overflowing with the joy of salvation; and ever since that time he has not only remained steadfast in the faith and love of Christ, but has proved ultimately one of the most useful ministers of the Evangelical Union.

This discourse, "Not far from the kingdom of God," was deemed so valuable, and so eminently calculated to be useful, that its publication was forthwith eagerly demanded. It was published in Kilmarnock under the title of "Not quite a Christian;" and, next to the important pamphlet referred to in last chapter, on "What shall I do to be saved?" had a larger circulation than all the tractates issued by Mr.

Morison during his Kilmarnock ministry. Indeed, we are not certain that its sale did not exceed that of its perhaps more storied predecessor. We have lying before us, while we write, eight editions of this little book (embracing twenty-seven thousand copies), four of which were issued in 1841, three in Kilmarnock and one in Edinburgh. We will here give an abstract of its contents, for thus only will those who are following our narrative be able to enter into the spirit of these times:—

After quoting his text, Mr. Morison asks his reader if he is "safe in the New Testament kingdom of God." Supposing that he receives the reply, "I do not know, and it is impossible to tell," he strikingly asks:

"Is it difficult for you to know whether you are an Englishman or a Frenchman, the subject of King Philip or of Queen Victoria? Is it puzzling and perplexing to you to decide, at twelve o'clock noon, whether it be indeed mid-day or mid-night? No more difficulty should there be, O dear Reader, in determining whether you be in 'marvellous light,' or in 'gross darkness;' on the way to heaven, or the road to hell; a member of the 'household of faith,' or a member of the family of Satan; *within* the kingdom of God, or *without* it. O then, what think you of yourself? Are you on the right or the wrong side of salvation? What say you to your own case?"

He then proceeds to notice six several points of experience which a man may have, and yet not be a Christian: (1) "*You may have much knowledge about the gospel, and yet fall short of being a Christian.*" (2) "*You may possibly have good gifts in conducting spiritual exercises, and yet fall short of being a Christian.*" (3) "I would go further and remark that *you may possibly have great pleasure in religious duties, and yet after all fall short of being a Christian.*" (4) "I would remark again, O dear Reader, that *you may have deep convictions of sin, and yet fall short of being a Christian.*" (5) "I would go on to say more; *you may be decidedly and habitually serious, and known to be such, and yet fall short of being a Christian.*" "And (6) once more, O dear Reader, let me say to you,—*you may even feel great peace, and joy, and love to God, and yet after all turn out to be no Christian.*" Perhaps some of our readers may not see the sense in which the author used this last proposition. The following quotation will both make this plain and serve as an instance of the anecdotal style in which he indulged in these early days:—

"Religious affections are a great part of 'the new creature;' but 'the new creature' may possibly be awanting, when there are religious

affections. Do you doubt this? I will tell you of instances. Once, upon a morning, a person came into my room in great distress of mind. I had never seen her before; she had come from a distance of about twenty miles. On entering into conversation with her, I found that about five months before, she had undergone a great change, and felt unspeakable peace and joy. 'I also felt that I hated sin,' said she, 'and I loved God more than tongue can tell. I could have given him a hundred hearts had I had them. I could have done anything to promote his glory; I could have died without a grudge. But, O Sir, about a month ago this all left me. I am all in darkness. I have no peace now; no joy now; and though I could not indulge in sin, I can feel no love to God, I am dreadfully afraid of him.' She was indeed in despair. I asked her what it was that gave her peace originally. She replied that she had heard a sermon on the pardon of sin, and it was strongly *borne in upon her mind*, that her sins were all forgiven; but now she thought otherwise. I inquired if she at that time had any good ground for supposing that her sins had been all forgiven—'did you think so, because of any statement in the Bible?' 'No sir,' she replied, 'it was just strongly *borne in upon my mind* that it was the case, and I believed it.' 'Ah! then,' I rejoined, 'you have been believing a mere impression of your mind, and not the record which God hath given of his Son; your ground of hope was your own *impression*, and not *God's truth*; and, consequently, with a change in your impressions, you feel a total change in your prospects and state of heart.' I went on to explain to her that no person is entitled to have peace and hope, who cannot derive it directly from the word of God. I turned her eye *out to Jesus*—as revealed in the Bible; instead of allowing it to pore in on her own heart—where God has made no revelation of mercy; and she again got peace, joy and love in believing, and said, 'Ah! now, sir, I see my error. I must always look out and never in; and as the *truth without* is the ground of my hope, my hope never can change as long as I keep the truth in view, for *it* is unchangeable.' 'True,' said I, 'if you now feel peace, and joy, and love, because you see something in the Bible calculated to produce these feelings, *keep contemplating that something in the Bible, and the same feelings will be as lasting as the Bible itself.*'"

Under the second head, and while showing how there may be *gifts without graces*, he spoke out very plainly about unconverted ministers:

"I know of a minister who draws every Sabbath-day many hundreds of admiring hearers to hang upon his lips, but who, as long as I knew him, was the first member of a card-playing club, which met regularly in a public hotel. . . . I know a minister of unblemished moral character, who, not long ago, told his people, that for more than twenty-seven years he had preached to them in unbelief. You perceive, then, that it is possible to have a good gift of preaching, and yet after all fall short of being a Christian."

There was another sermon which was preached in November, 1840, and published about the beginning of 1841, to which reference must be made here, if we would be methodical

in our narrative ; for it was more than once referred to in the protracted debates that arose on Mr. Morison's case in the Presbytery and Synod, during the spring and summer of the latter year. He gave out 1 John ii. 2, one afternoon as his text, "And he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." His hearers expected him to go on to the extent of the atonement, their favourite theme ; but he lingered all that day and during successive Sabbaths *on the nature of the atonement*,—in truth, the more important topic of the two ; for our views of the extent of the reference of Christ's sacrifice must be determined by our antecedent views of its nature. He showed, deliberately, *what the atonement was not*, before proceeding to show *what it was*—the simple but striking plan which he usually adopted in these early days, and which certainly tended to quicken the attention of his hearers and concentrate it on the positive side of the question, when, at length, after long delay, it was presented to the mind. The substance of these successive discourses was immediately committed to the press, and was published as a pamphlet of fifty pages ; and as this is still considered to have been one of the most original and philosophical of Mr. Morison's early treatises, and one which more than any other helped to recommend his system of theology to multitudes of pious and thoughtful people, we will here give an abstract of it also:—

He shows I. That the *Atonement is not Pardon*, and that for six reasons : " (1) Because pardon comes after confession of sin, whereas the atonement was made eighteen hundred years ago ; (2) Because we pray for pardon, but never for atonement ; (3) Because God pardons often, whereas the atonement was but once made ; (4) Because God bestows pardon, whereas he receives the atonement ; (5) Because it is Christ alone that atones, whereas it is properly God the Father that pardons ; and (6) Because pardon has reference to God's character as a Father, whereas the atonement has reference to his character as a Moral Governor. (Of course these are the mere headings of the argument, the amplification and illustration of which extend over several pages.) II. *The atonement is not Justification* ; (1) Because the atonement is something made by Christ, whereas justification is something done by God the Father ; (2) Because the atonement was finished eighteen centuries ago, whereas justification comes after effectual calling ; (3) The atonement is pre-supposed in

faith, whereas justification pre-supposes faith ; (4) The atonement is a general something, out of which all believers draw their personal salvation ; whereas justification is a separate blessing, which cannot serve more than one individual ; (5) The atonement is spoken of in scripture as a thing that is past, whereas justification is sometimes spoken of as a future blessing ; as for example, ' God shall justify the circumcision by faith.' (We may remark in passing, that this second negative head was rendered necessary by the representations of those who boldly maintained that the atonement of Christ *per se* had delivered the elect and the elect alone from all condemnation.) III. *The Atonement is not Redemption.* This allegation the author supported by a numerous induction of passages of scripture, all showing that redemption meant *actual deliverance* either from the penalty or the power of sin, and was of course experienced only by believers. The following are a sample of the texts quoted :—' In whom we have redemption through his blood, *the forgiveness of sins.*' ' Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' IV. *The Atonement is not Reconciliation.* He here shows that the atonement could be reconciliation only in one or other of three senses. (1) That God and man had been by Christ mutually reconciled ; but this would involve universal salvation. Or (2) That the atonement did actually reconcile man to God ; whereas it is only the means of such reconciliation. Or (3) That the atonement actually reconciled God to man ; but God never needed to be reconciled to man—he was never at enmity with him—he was always his friend. It is man that needs to be reconciled to God. V. Whatever the atonement may be, *it is not the payment of a debt.* For (1) Debts when paid, cease to be debts ; but sin, though atoned for, is a debt still. (2) Debts which are paid cannot be forgiven ; but though sin is atoned for, it requires also to be forgiven. (3) Debts may be forgiven without any payment ; but sin could not be forgiven without an atonement. (4) Debts are transferable, sins are not. (5) The satisfactory payment of a debt does not depend on the dignity of the person who pays it ; but the whole value of the atonement depends upon the high and glorious rank and character of the sufferer."

Having with much unction, power, and simplicity, illustrated all these negative points, the author advances next to

the positive side of the momentous subject, which he thus introduces :

“I proceed now to wind up this address, by telling you what I conceive the atonement to be. I have already proved to you, that it is not PARDON, but a something on the ground of which all sins and sinners may be pardoned. It is not DELIVERANCE FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF THE LAW, but a something on the ground of which all who are under wrath *may* be accepted and treated by God as if they were as righteous as Jesus himself. It is not REDEMPTION, but a something on the ground of which every miserable captive of Satan *may* for ever be emancipated from his accursed slavery. It is not RECONCILIATION, but a something calculated to slay the bitterest enmity of the wickedest heart out of hell. It is not the PAYMENT OF A DEBT, but a something in consideration of which God *may* now consistently remit unpaid every debt of every sinner. What then is THIS TALISMANIC SOMETHING? In other words, what is the ATONEMENT? My answer is the following:—*It is an expedient introduced into the divine moral government, consisting of the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ, which has completely removed all the obstacles standing between man and salvation, except the obstacles within him.*”

This extract is worthy of notice, because the Presbytery afterwards pounced upon the expression “a talismanic something,” and libelled it as irreverent, and semi-blasphemous; but our readers, we think, will agree with us, that in the connection in which it occurs it is extremely forcible, and could have appeared reprehensible only to those who were anxious to find fault.

It is manifest also that such discourses when preached, and such a treatise when published, must have contained a rich feast for those to whom the truths in question came with all the surprise of newly discovered realities. The Rev. William Taylor, of Kendal, informed us recently that he was standing at the door the first Sabbath afternoon that Mr. Morison preached on the nature of the atonement. He could not get admittance to the chapel on account of the great crowd; but as he listened outside, the wind of the regenerating Holy Spirit blew around him as well as the wind of the winter day, and he entered into rest by believing on the Son of God. He “was saved and came unto the knowledge of the truth.” At first he had been opposed to the young preacher, although other members of his family befriended him. The powerful and practical home-thrusts irritated and annoyed the future professor, as yet unsubdued in heart. As the winter advanced, however, he became intellectually convinced that this David with his sling and stone had the best

of it, and was more than a match, single-handed, for the Goliath-like Presbytery, and the hosts of their ecclesiastical abettors that stretched out formidably beyond. But on this day the "Talismanic Something," exerted its magic influence upon his soul; and with tears in his eyes, and transport in his soul, he found that the Propitiation of Calvary was "all his salvation and all his desire." This is already the second minister for his future denomination that James Morison has picked up in the first few months of his truly wonderful pastorate. But since "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and men hear the sound thereof, but can not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth," neither the preacher nor any one else in that crowded building knew that, ere the exciting service closed, an embryo-seed of truth had been deposited in the mind of that tall, athletic young man in the door-way, which would swell and germinate, and bear fruit, till, at length, successive generations of students of theology would gladly sit at his feet, and admiringly take on the impress and the mould of his philosophic mind.

We have recently conversed with those who had been thought, and had even thought themselves to be, advanced Christians at the time when these discourses on the nature of the atonement were delivered, but who have confessed to us that the benefit which they received from them was incalculable, and something which could not be paid for by money. Their views of divine truth were rectified and enlarged; doctrines that had all been *in a jumble*, now took their proper and orderly places; and whereas they had only "seen men as trees walking" before, they now, "in God's light saw light clearly."

It is worthy of remark, that this tractate, like all Mr. Morison's other publications indeed, is at once simple and scholarly; suits the learned as well as the unlearned; and shows in every page that its author had both been taught of man and taught of God. His great logical power is constantly apparent; and yet the anxious sinner is ever dealt with beseechingly and tenderly. Then the quotations which he makes as foot-notes and appendices are most imposing and influential. He could support any position he took up by the authority of the schools, as well as of the Scriptures. He had all the divines, ancient and modern, British, American, and Continental, at his finger-ends. His theological erudition, considering his youth, was something wonderful;

and while, on the one hand, it imparted to his statements great weight, it must have made even the elder ministers tremble, who adventured to enter with him into the controversial lists.

He was often in the habit in these early days of taking up books of reference with him into the pulpit. If he required only one or two, he would carry them himself; but if he wished to quote from several ponderous tomes, he would send them before him with the beadle. Often when proving a point, he would fortify his position suddenly, by turning up some corroborative passage in Jonathan Edwards, the Marrow-men, or the Erskines of the early Secession Church. He did not do so for the sake of pedantic display, but that, since his views had been called in question, they might be confirmed in the estimation of his hearers, by the statements of influential authors of acknowledged orthodoxy. He honestly believed, at the time, that his doctrines did not conflict with the Confession of Faith, if charitably construed, and if only a liberal margin were allowed him; and he was anxious to show that great and good men in all lands and times had spoken on free grace and assurance as comfortably as he wished to do. And being what would be called a moderate or Baxterian Calvinist (although giving special prominence to the world-wide aspects of his creed), it is not difficult to see that the course which he adopted of appealing to the writings of learned men, as well as to the Bible, was perfectly honest and honourable, as well as prudent and politic for one in his circumstances—beginning to feel, as he did, that he was standing at bay for the defence of the Gospel of Christ.

It may be of use to insert here the brief preface to this treatise on the Nature of the Atonement. It will help to give our readers a clear idea of "the situation" at the time:—

*"To the people who stately assemble in Clerk's Lane Chapel, Kilmarnock, to hear the gospel.*

"My dear hearers,—Accept from me the First of a Series of Addresses on some of the important 'things which belong to our peace.' I beg of you to take it in the one hand, and the Bible in the other, and inquire regarding every matter as you go along, 'what saith the Lord?' My only object in preaching and in writing to you is, as far as I know my own heart, GOD'S GLORY AND YOUR ETERNAL WELFARE. My constant prayer is, O that every man, woman, and child were turned to the Lord! Those of you who are already in the enjoyment of peace, I would implore to 'follow on to know the Lord,'

and make Him known. Those of you who are seeking peace, I would implore to come immediately to the atonement — the ark of the spiritual Noah, and there you will find ‘rest to the sole of your foot.’ Those of you who have apathy instead of peace, and who are ‘at ease in Zion,’ I would implore to remember that ‘there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’ O may the Divine Spirit be the schoolmaster of you all; and may he ‘take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto you.’ This is and will be the constant ‘cry’ of one who wishes to be your faithful, as he is your affectionate pastor,

“JAMES MORISON.

“Kilmarnock, Jan. 1, 1841.

“P.S.—Most of you have seen some of the replies which have been made to the small treatise on ‘What must I do to be saved?’ I am much disinclined to enter into any personal controversies; and I shall therefore take up every point, which requires to be discussed, in the course of the addresses, of which this is the first.”

But besides these powerful and important afternoon discourses which he had begun to preach, Mr. Morison made his ministry yet more attractive by commencing, soon after his ordination, the exposition of the epistle to the Romans. At an early stage in his theological career he had been attracted towards this epistle as the chief repertory of inspired apostolic theology, and had already begun to collect that complete store of books on its literature which have rendered his two separate volumes on the third and ninth chapters so valuable, or rather invaluable, to the biblical student. As the physiologist can construct the whole animal in his mind from a single bone, or the eminence of a painter can be appreciated by a *connoisseur* from his first efforts with the brush, so did the introductory discourse on the epistle reveal to the knowing ones in the congregation what the coming course was to be. The first planks that were laid predicted the proportions of the future ship. A greater expositor even than old Mr. Robertson was among them. Thus the crowds that came at first were retained by the learning and research, as well as by the zeal and earnestness, of the young pastor of Clerk’s Lane. Rarely is there to be found in any ministry such a union as was here of apostolic fervour, logical acumen, and linguistic lore.

Another circumstance that tended to fan the flame of excitement was the marvellous size to which the Monday night prayer meeting grew. Previous to Mr. Morison’s ordination it had been held in the adjoining session-house; but immediately afterwards it was found necessary to transfer it to the chapel. Then, as both the preacher’s fame and notoriety increased, the desire on the part of the town’s

people to see as well as to hear the object of all this interest became so great, that the Monday evening congregation grew as large and crowded as that on the Sabbath day. Yet there were some significant points of contrast between the two assemblies. First, there were the staid church-goers, who would not leave their own place of worship on the Sunday, but who were willing to creep to the conventicle there was so much talk about on the Monday. Then there were the sceptics who would not honour a church by condescending to enter it on its own peculiar holiday, but who would go with Athenian curiosity on an ordinary day, as they would repair to a news-room, seeking after "some new thing." And there were the poor also who had no Sunday clothes, but were not ashamed to press in amongst a multitude who all wore Monday clothes. Ah! these Monday night meetings were very dangerous, or very salutary, as the case might be viewed. For there many Nicodemuses were so blessed that they returned on Sunday, as well as on Monday, and eventually bade their own churches good-bye. There many sceptics lost their scepticism; for Christianity as represented by this new divine, had been stripped of sundry inconsistencies and contradictions which had been wont to repel them. And the poor to whom "the gospel was preached" became, as they listened, "poor in spirit," "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom;" and ultimately found that while grace had given them garments for their Father's house on high, godliness gave them garments for their Father's house below.

Another point of difference in the Monday night meeting was, that Mr. Morison occupied the precentor's desk, and would not ascend to the pulpit. He was importuned by the elders to do so, but with that practical sagacity which has always characterised him, he persistently declined doing so, even although told that some of the people in the gallery, while they could hear his voice, could with difficulty see his face. The reason he alleged was this, that he expected the crowd to abate, and he would rather not have the humiliation of descending to the humbler platform from the more elevated and more honourable rostrum.

Yet for years the crowd kept up. Mr. Morison had begun to lecture on the Gospel according to John, on the Monday night, at the very time when he began to lecture on the Epistle to the Romans, on the Sabbath forenoon. He brought

the same luminousness of thought, and the same wealth of learning to bear on the one exposition as on the other. He had wonderful facility in drawing, by way of practical inference, evangelical lessons from verses and paragraphs in which others would not have dreamt of finding them.

Meanwhile, the whole town and country side were filled with controversy and excitement. Hardly a week passed without some reference being made to the Clerk's Lane pulpit in the local press. Pamphlet after pamphlet was published by those who "were zealous for the law," which, if the object of attack could not find time or inclination to answer himself, some of his chivalrous adherents were not slow to demolish. The printers in Kilmarnock began to have a fine time of it. In the appendix to "the Nature of the Atonement," we find Mr. Morison replying to the Rev. Mr. Graham, a local minister, who had published against him, making up in acrimony what he lacked in argument. He calmly shows his ultroneous assailant that he had completely confounded infinitude of degree with infinitude of duration in his reasoning about the substitutionary sufferings of Christ; but he evidently restrains the lifted lash, and ends his brief critique with a Christ-like prayer for his antagonist's spiritual welfare.

But while even already there was war without, there were peace and joy within. If man frowned, Jesus smiled. If good but narrow ministers reviled him, his unsectarian Saviour blessed him, and owned his labours from day to day. His vestry at the close of a sermon, or on an appointed night for conference, used to be crowded with anxious inquirers. We conversed with one who is now a minister, lately, who told us that, having gone to speak with him on religious things, he found quite a congregation assembled of the spiritually distressed. Mr. Morison had been detained by some other engagement, and, coming suddenly into the room, gave instructions that "the inquirers from the country should come first into his inner apartment, that they might get earlier home." He resembled a popular physician to whom many patients resorted, with this two-fold difference, that he had himself, as God's instrument, first wounded them that then he might make them alive, and that he possessed the infallible balm of Gilead for them all, so that it was their own fault if they were not made whole. Moreover, the only fee he asked was, that they would trust in God. We lately

heard a friend describing the house at mid-day of a popular Edinburgh physician not long deceased. Not only were all the public rooms filled with anxious patients, but the bed-rooms also. Such was the appearance presented by the manse in Clerk's Lane in these early days, and especially on a Sabbath evening. The public rooms, the bed-rooms, and even the kitchen would be filled by awakened souls. Was it not like "Touching the Ark of God," to lay any arrest on such a gracious work? Could the doctrines be deleterious which produced such results?

But already the mutterings of Presbyterian wrath began to be heard; for man proposed to put his ban on what the Lord had blessed.

We have already noticed that a considerable minority had preferred a rival candidate to Mr Morison, at the time of his election to Clerk's Lane Church. Ever since his ordination these dissentients had been critical, or rather hypercritical, listeners; and the more prominent members of the Presbytery had no lack of informants as to all that was said and done within the walls of the old chapel. The malcontents were the richer portion of the congregation; and the rich are less likely than the poor to embrace anything new and unfashionable. They could not bear the doctrine that respectable persons like themselves were unsafe, because perhaps unregenerated, notwithstanding all their church-going and sacrament-observing. Therefore the pencil was often sharpened as the young preacher went on with his discourse, because the temper had been sharpened first; and you might be sure that the startling statement that was noted down on the blank leaf of the Bible, or the back of a letter, or the opened pocket book, would be duly reported on some early day to some one of the preacher's co-presbyters in town or country.

Thus it rarely happened that there was a Presbytery meeting in Kilmarnock after Mr. Morison's settlement, at which he was not questioned, ay, and cross questioned too, as to what he had been saying in his pulpit. And what must have made these sederunts more disagreeable to him was, that, in accordance with the previous custom of the court, they were held in his own vestry. One day he had been from home fulfilling some preaching engagement in the country, and was late in making his appearance. It had been broadly insinuated by some not very charitable speaker that

he had absented himself because he was afraid to meet his co-presbyters; but one look of his radiant countenance when he entered, showed that the surmise was baseless. The annoying interrogations ran, on that occasion, on Rom. i. 7, which he had just been expounding a Sabbath or two before to his flock: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." "What's this you have been saying, Mr. Morison," began some abrupt questioner, "about 'beloved of God'?" That day, however, according to the account of one who was present, he had fairly the best of it. He explained to his inquisitors, evidently in a style that was quite new to them, the difference between the love of benevolence and the love of complacency—that it was the love of benevolence and compassion that extended to all men; while the love of complacential delight terminated only on the saints, who were in Christ. Old Mr. Elles, of Saltcoats, who afterwards spoke so strongly against him at his two successive trials, was so much pleased with his answers at this time, that he generously exclaimed with his peculiar *bur*, that "he would henceforth defend the name of James Morison against all imputations of heresy; and that for his part he perfectly sympathised with him in his desire to have a *free offer* of the gospel proclaimed to all mankind." But by the time that another monthly meeting came round, they had heard something else, and forthwith the work of jealous inquiry and catechetical examination went on again.

Another thing at which the Presbytery professed to be very indignant was this, that whereas Mr. Morison had promised on the day of his ordination to suppress his pamphlet on the question "What must I do to be saved?" that pamphlet had not been suppressed, but had been pretty extensively circulated in Kilmarnock and in different parts of the country. Now the fact was that Mr. Morison had not circulated the prohibited publication himself; but other people had done it for him. His promise on his ordination-day had been wrung from him suddenly and unexpectedly. He had then no idea that any other person would propose to publish the tract; and when, first, Mr. Muir, of Kilmarnock, a publisher in his own congregation, then Mr. David Reid, of Dunfermline, and thirdly, the Rev. Thomas Aveling, of Kingsland Chapel, London, informed him that they greatly desired, and indeed intended to publish it, he did not consider him-

self to be bound by his promise to the Presbytery to hinder them from doing so, by visiting them with pains and penalties, although he would not have republished the little work himself. But only think of it, Kilmarnock Presbytery ! Here is an English Independent minister of full standing, associated with Angell James, Jay of Bath, and Thomas Binney, at that very time. Well, what you condemn, he approves. What you try to bury, he hastens to raise from the dead. On the package which you have labelled "Poison," he inscribes "The Bread of Life."

And, in truth, we have never been able to see what fault they had to find with this pamphlet. It was exactly like "James's Anxious Inquirer" epitomised, only with rather more genius and learning in it than that amiable and eloquent pastor of Birmingham could lay claim to. But surely a heavy responsibility rests upon those who so hounded and persecuted a servant of Christ about a publication which God then so signally honoured, and still honours, as the means of enlightening and saving souls.

At length the dissatisfaction of the Presbytery grew so great that they appointed a committee to confer in private with Mr. Morison concerning his alleged errors in doctrine, with the view, if possible, of bringing about a harmonious settlement. The committee met with him twice in Irvine, on the 20th of January and 16th of February, 1841. Unfortunately they could not agree. We spoke lately to a lady who had seen Mr. Morison when on his way to one of these interviews. He was in high spirits; for he fully expected that he would be able to satisfy the scruples of his ministerial brethren. Railway communication was not so complete then as it is now; and the young pastor was walking at a rapid pace along the highway to the solemn conclave—a patient pedestrian—the wide blue cloak which he wore in those days flapping in the wind of winter behind him. As he passed the little octagonal parish church at Dreghorn, he might perhaps remember that the Rev. Mr. M'Leod, although he had received the presentation to it from the Earl of Eglinton in 1830, had not been allowed to enter upon his pastoral duties by the General Assembly, on account of his alleged sympathy with the Rowite Heresy—said Rowite heresy being just Paul's doctrine, that Christ had "given Himself a ransom for all;" and John's doctrine, "We know that we have passed from death to life." O

hair-splitting Scotland! how ridiculous does thy narrowness appear to liberal-minded men! When he came in sight of Irvine he might remember the learned and pious David Dickson, who had been minister there two hundred years before, and who afterwards became Principal of the University of Edinburgh—the author or amender of the beautiful hymn, “Jerusalem, my happy home,” &c. In his days, and under his ministry, a deep revival of religion broke out, which, spreading to Stewarton, was called by the scoffers of the time, “The Stewarton Sickness,” and the awakened, “The daft folks of Stewarton.” Our young divine might pray as he walked along that the Lord would enable him to guide prudently and successfully the religious excitement which he had been honoured to originate, notwithstanding the opposition of his own professed servants. Yet he came home at night more disconsolate than when he departed; for, on his return, he remarked to his pious and like-minded sister, who then kept his house, “I see nothing before me but to go to America!” But the Lord happily *saw before him* that he was not to go to America, but to remain in Scotland, and be a blessing to us all. The chief reason of his despondency was that his interrogators seemed to be more anxious to stab his character than to sift his creed. They were evidently afraid of him in theological debate, and therefore had resolved apparently to try to undermine his moral influence. The “little mouse” of the tract’s republication and distribution by others they had determined to magnify into a mountain of grievous culpability.

Yet we cannot tell exactly what kind of meetings these were which took place in the quiet old town of Irvine; for the proceedings being private no notes of them were published. Little did the tranquil burghers know that conferences were being held in their midst on these two unchronicled days, which would affect generations yet unborn. It was at these meetings that the libel was prepared against James Morison, in reply to which he pled, first, before the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, and then before the Synod of Glasgow; and we must now endeavour to give our readers some account of these excited ecclesiastical assemblies.

## CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Morison's Trial before the Presbytery in Kilmarnock on the 2nd of March, 1841—The Scene in the Chapel described—The Chief Ministers who took part against him—Memorial by the Congregation—Memorial by the Minority—Report of the Committee—Mr. Morison's Defence—Remarks on his Defence.

THE special meeting of the Presbytery on Mr. Morison's case, which had been fixed for the 2nd of March, 1841, was looked forward to in the town and neighbourhood with much anxious expectation. Rumours had been afloat for months as to the dissatisfaction of his co-presbyters with the teachings of the young minister; and the great bulk of the inhabitants were desirous to learn from the libel which, it was understood, was to be served upon him, what might be the amount of the alleged disagreement. Within the church and congregation again, the mass of the people were eager to hear what the clergymen of the district had to say against the doctrines which they themselves had so heartily embraced, and which had brought, under God, so much peace to their own hearts and consciences, as well as purity to their lives. They also wondered how the young David of their affections would comport himself, single-handed, with the sling and stone of the Word against the ecclesiastical host which would oppose him. They inwardly hoped and prayed that he might not fail or be discouraged; nor were they disappointed. The small minority, again, who had been opposed to Mr. Morison's settlement at the first, and resolutely clung to the hardest tenets of the Calvinistic creed, were glad because their side of the subject would be argued by competent and influential debaters, who might possibly be able to crush and silence altogether the enthusiastic champion of what they deemed to be new and startling doctrines.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, as the case might be viewed, the Presbytery had always been in the habit of meeting in Clerk's Lane Chapel, or in the adjoining premises, so that the very walls which had rung for months with the fervid proclamation of a Universal Atonement and affiliated doctrines, were to re-echo the disheartening contradictions of the same. If the pews had been able to speak as the debate

went on, they could have borne witness that divers of their occupants had entered into spiritual rest through the teacher and the teachings that were challenged and condemned; while down many an eye sympathetic tears did trickle, that seemed to say, "if you only knew how our souls were blessed here, you would not argue as you do."

The church and congregation had held a meeting on the Thursday previous, "at which a motion was agreed upon to the Presbytery, expressive of warm attachment to their young pastor, and of their intention to adhere to him, notwithstanding any procedure that might be adopted towards him by the Presbytery." Such are the words used in the "Kilmarnock Journal" of that date.

At length the eventful Tuesday, the 2nd of March, dawned. The day of Mr. Morison's ordination, in the preceding September, had been wet and uncomfortable; but the day of his trial was clear and beautiful. Therefore, the state of the weather offered no hindrance to the hundreds of people who began, in the early part of the forenoon, to stream towards the chapel from town and country; so that, weekday as it was, according to the newspaper just named, "before eleven o'clock, the hour of meeting, the church was crowded." This single sentence, however, can give no adequate idea of the scene. The church was not only crowded, but crammed and packed in a most remarkable manner. Not only were all the passages filled, but the seats were doubly occupied. Our readers will not be able to understand our meaning till we explain the device that was adopted on the occasion; namely, that besides the row that sat on the seats, another row sat behind them on the book-board of the next pew! This arrangement, doubtless, as far as having a good view was concerned, favoured one party more than another; but, in fact, the views of divine truth were deemed more important than the view of the divines themselves; and if only the hearing with the ear was satisfied, the seeing with the eye was quite a secondary consideration. One person present, from the neighbourhood of Loudon Hill, has informed us that, "on looking around him it seemed as if all the shoemakers of Darvel had struck work for the day," and had come down to enjoy the theological gladiatorship, and hear about the "shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace" that were for "every creature." We may even say, with the local poet of the time, whose somewhat

sarcastic muse Mr. Morison's great popularity in Clerk's Lane excited:—

“Frae Sar'coats and Beith, Da'ry and Kilwinnin',  
 The Burghers in hirsels cam' pechin' an' rinin' ;  
 Newmills tae and Ga'stoun hae turned oot their scores,  
 And dizens cam' drovin' doun frae Mr. Orr's ;  
 The flock o' the apocalyptic Kilmaurs  
 Wad naether be frichted wi' brackses nor scaurs ;  
 And women and men frae the Holm and Townen',  
 Cam' rining' and loupin' up tae the Clerk's pen.”

But however excited the multitude might be, there was one person who felt calm and tranquil, and that was Mr. Morison himself. He told a favourite young member of his Bible class, the night before, that “his pulse would not beat one stroke the quicker for the whole proceedings.” He was perfectly persuaded that he had truth on his side, and that in the stand he had made for that truth he had only done his duty according to the best of his judgment,—and therefore was he prepared to leave the issue with the God of Providence and Grace—of whose grace, indeed, he gloried to declare that it “had appeared unto all men.”

Two front seats had been left vacant for the Members of Court in the lower area of the church, near the door, and immediately before the pulpit. Indeed, the foremost of these seats was only a folding board that had been put into the passage to economise room, since the church had become so densely crowded on the Sabbath days. Mr. Morison sat at the head of this seat or form, in immediate proximity to his hostile co-presbyters, who, on taking their places, were at once tightly wedged in by an eager and almost struggling crowd. If it had been a case of physical, rather than argumentative, encounter, the lamb would soon have been rescued from the paws of the lions by his enthusiastic admirers. But as the conclave was an ecclesiastical one, such a rescue was out of the question ; and there they were, panel, presbytery, and public, all closely packed together.

Perhaps this is the proper place for giving our readers some idea of the calibre and character of the men with whom the originator of our movement found himself to be thus suddenly involved, when on the threshold of his ministry, in theological warfare. There was but one Doctor of Divinity among them, namely, Dr Schaw, of Ayr. He, however, was a very old man at the time of Mr. Morison's trial, and did not take a

leading part in the debate. He died a year or two afterwards. Mr. Campbell, of Irvine, had also nearly run his course. We have always heard him spoken of as a man of considerable literary finish and polish, although not of any extensive learning. His speeches on the occasion were well prepared and scholarly, but had not very great weight or power.

The greatest *character*, undoubtedly, among the senior ministers of the Presbytery, was Mr. Robertson of Kilmaurs. He enjoyed some little local and denominational fame, from the fact that he had published three expository volumes on the book of Revelation. If he had not in this work displayed much exegetical acumen, he had, nevertheless, manifested considerable historical research; for he had found no difficulty in showing that seals had been opened, trumpets blown, and vials poured out by the daring deeds of Charlemagne, Barbarossa, and Napoleon the First. It was expected that, being somewhat conversant with letters, Mr. Robertson would have spoken at considerable length on Mr. Morison's case; but this he did not do. Only one utterance of his is vividly remembered. The worthy man seems to have been impressed with the conviction that Mr. Morison had departed from his ordination vows, in opposing to any extent the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. Therefore did he exclaim, in the course of his brief speech, in the broad Scotch accent which old ministers had not quite abandoned thirty years ago, "I hear that the young man's going to be married soon. Moderator, if he has broken his ordination *voo*, what guarantee have we that he'll no' break his marriage *voo*?" This sally of course provoked only the mirth of the audience, and was not noticed in Mr. Morison's reply.

Passing by the aged minister of Tarbolton, and Mr. Blackwood of Galston, who have both likewise gone to their rest, (as well as Mr. Orr of Fenwick, who still lives, much respected,) we would close these preliminary remarks, by observing that the five *coryphæi* of debate in the Presbytery of Kilmarnock were Messrs. Ronald and Elles of Saltcoats; Mr., afterwards Dr., Meikle of Beith; Mr., afterwards Dr., Bruce of Newmilns; and Mr., afterwards Dr., Thomas of Mauchline. We have named Messrs. Ronald and Elles together, not merely because they were ministers in the same town on the coast, but because they were associated for many years as joint secretaries of the Committee of Sup-

ply of the Secession Church. They made out all the plans for licensed preachers, and constituted a potent duumvirate, before which, for many a year, the students of the divinity hall did tremble. We have already mentioned that Mr. Ronald, owing to his great admiration for Dr. Brown of Edinburgh, sympathised considerably with the young accused minister. Mr. Elles, on the other hand, was decidedly Calvinistic, and therefore decidedly opposed him, even although, in one Presbytery meeting, as already recorded, a single gleam of sunshine had for a passing moment relieved the gloom. His opposition was sometimes forcible; but then his force was coarse. Mr. Meikle of Beith has since proved by his published works (especially "The Edenic Dispensation"), that he did not lack aptitude for theological investigation; but we rather think that he would himself have confessed that his mind was stimulated to inquiry by this very ecclesiastical discussion into which he was drawn. Mr. Bruce of Newmilns has the credit, from all who ever knew him, of having been, throughout life, if not remarkably original and profound, yet truly pious and sincere. When he spoke, it was always as a Christian man, and apparently as if he recognised his responsibility to God for all that he uttered. We are sorry that we cannot say as much for Mr. Thomas of Mauchline. Perhaps because he was the most willing to engage in the work, the task seemed to have been devolved on him of showing up what appeared to the Presbytery to be the accused minister's disingenuousness of conduct in the matter of the circulation of the tract; and at it he went *con amore*, and with all the zeal of an unsparing special pleader. He did not lack ability; but he seemed to be unscrupulous in his mode of dealing with an opponent. That our readers may yet more clearly understand the idiosyncrasies of Mr. Morison's chief opponents in the Presbytery, we would concisely characterise them as—the half-friendly Mr. Ronald, the bullying Mr. Elles, the thoughtful Mr. Meikle, the godly Mr. Bruce, and the lawyer-like Mr. Thomas. Yet the young co-presbyter at their bar was more than a match for them all in logical power, in learning, and in consuming zeal for the glory of God.

Such, then, were the men with whom Mr. Morison was sitting in close juxtaposition in that crowded chapel on that March forenoon. We have forgotten, however, the Moderator, Mr. Young of Catrine, on whom the duties of President

had by rotation devolved on the exciting occasion. He took his seat below the pulpit, and in the desk usually occupied by the precentor. He was a junior member of Presbytery, but was in delicate health, and did not survive long. In his heart he secretly favoured the noble champion of the truth, although he was not himself noble enough to take his place by his side. After the excitement of the trial was over, he remarked to a friend, who is now one of our ministers, "I never heard a man get such a drubbing as James Morison gave Thomas of Mauchline in his reply."

But, in our desire to enable our readers fully to appreciate the scene, we fear that we almost anticipate. When the Court had been constituted by prayer, and the minutes of the previous meeting read, the Moderator called for the production of any documents that might be forthcoming anent the case. Whereupon the Memorial of the church and congregation was immediately handed in, and was read by the Rev. Mr. Ronald of Saltcoats, the clerk to the Presbytery. It was as follows:—

Unto the Reverend the Moderator and other members of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, to meet at Kilmarnock on Tuesday, the 2nd of March, the representation of the Congregation of Clerk's Lane, Kilmarnock,—

Respectfully sheweth,—That it has been matter of sincere regret with your memorialists that they have so frequently been brought into collision with the Presbytery and its measures of late years past; and though they had hoped matters would be placed on a more amicable footing, after the settlement among them of their young minister, they are sorry to find themselves again disappointed. In the present proceedings of the Presbytery against Mr. Morison, they still find it incumbent on them to express their decided disapprobation, both of the spirit by which these proceedings have been characterised, and of the principles on which they have been conducted. They consider that it was required by the law of Christ, from the several members of Presbytery who thought Mr. Morison in error, that they should have conferred with him personally, and in the spirit of Christian affection, on the points in which they conceived him to be erroneous; whereas they have proceeded, in the very first place, to institute public judicial proceedings against him; and these, too, on the foundation principally of vague rumours, without a complaint being laid from any quarter—the Presbytery thereby constituting themselves at once Mr. Morison's accusers, inquisitors, and judges. They also think the Presbytery greatly in fault in regard to the principle on which they are proceeding. In reference to the points wherein they allege him to be in error, they bring Mr. Morison's views and manner of stating divine truth to human compositions, as the standard of orthodoxy, contrary, as your memorialists believe, both to the spirit and the letter of the principles of our church, which expressly state "that the command of God and the ex-

ample of Christ and his apostles require us to refer the determination of all matters of faith and practice entirely to the Bible,"—that "explanatory exhibitions of divine truth, being the productions of men who know but in part, cannot lay claim to perfection; that they may admit, as articles of the Christian faith, principles which the Scriptures do not sanction; or they may not give to each the place due to its intrinsic importance; or they may employ an ambiguous phraseology, which renders such exhibitions nugatory,"—"that successive generations are bound to judge for themselves in matters of faith and practice, by consulting the Scriptures with humility and prayer;" and they condemn the past practice of the Church in allowing "aversion to the labour of investigation and reverence for human authority, to lead them to resist all change, as if no improvement could be made, and to acquiesce in what has been effected, as if it comprised all the views of divine truth which the Church should display." Nor have these principles, embodied in the testimony of the Secession Church, and the mode of procedure there recommended, been altogether a dead letter in the church; on the contrary, they have been from time to time practically acted upon. Your memorialists would particularly refer to the line of conduct pursued in reference to the doctrine of the nature of the Church of Christ, viewed as independent of State support and interference, on which occasion the statements of the subordinate standards, as they are called, were at once set aside, and a direct appeal made to the word of God; and because your practice has been so strikingly opposite in the present case, your memorialists would consider themselves fully warranted at once to withdraw themselves from your jurisdiction; but, as they are averse to anything tending to division in the church, they would rather indulge the hope that you may yet adopt a more scriptural and justifiable course of procedure in regard to their beloved pastor; but, should they in this be disappointed, they, without any hesitation, intimate that it is their fixed determination to abide by the pastor of their choice, with the scripturalness of whose views of divine truth they hereby declare themselves to be quite satisfied, and that no deed of Presbytery, affecting his relation to his brethren, shall have any effect on the congregation, so as to interrupt or suspend their connection with him, till the whole case be brought before the Supreme Court, and a decision given thereon. Yet they assure the Presbytery that, in whatever position, in relation to the church, they should ultimately be placed, it shall be their endeavour, as a seceding congregation, to exhibit to the world both a doctrinal and a practical testimony for the simplicity of scriptural truth and the purity of divine ordinances. Meantime, your memorialists assure you of their earnest prayers, and their confident expectation that your conduct in this matter will be overruled by the Great Head of the Church, for the advancement of His own cause, and the diffusion of the blessed Gospel of our Lord and Saviour.—They appoint Messrs. Thomas Adam, James Guthrie, Andrew Aitken, Robert Thomson, John Stewart, David Gilchrist, William Busby, William Morton, Samuel Bryden, John Stevenson, Andrew Stewart, John Peden, James Thomson, James Boyd, and James Aird, their Commissioners to the Presbytery, to speak and act for the Congregation as they shall see cause.—Signed in name, and in behalf of the Congregation.

WILLIAM FLEMING, *Preses.*

Our readers, we doubt not, will be ready to admit that this document was skilfully composed. It reflects no small credit on its framer. Especially is that home-thrust pertinent about the alterations which the Seceders had made themselves on the Confession of Faith in the matter of the civil magistrate. The 23rd chapter of that formulary decrees, concerning the ruler in the realm or province: "yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly sealed, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." Now the Presbytery of Kilmarnock must have felt the force of the argument as used by the Memorialists, that, if their fathers had seen fit to amend, or rather expunge, the paragraphs about this civil magistrate, and to declare that he should have nothing whatever to do with the management of church affairs, by virtue of his office, much more was it competent for an earnest student of the Bible to remain a true friend to that Seceding church, and yet seek more scriptural teaching in its standards on the still more vital doctrine of the atonement of the Saviour.

Another memorial was then read from the minority of 41 members and 9 adherents, who professed to be dissatisfied with Mr. Morison's doctrines. This paper briefly stated that "the memorialists were perplexed by the strange doctrines that were preached by their pastor, Mr. Morison; that they had not received edification from them; besought the Presbytery to give them relief from their present position; and, in conclusion, hoped that the Lord would guide the deliberations of the Presbytery in the matter." As we have already stated, these dissentients had preferred another candidate when Mr. Morison was called to the church, so that it is not improbable that they may have been contemplating his doctrines all along through the jaundiced eye of prejudice.

The report of the committee, who had met with Mr. Morison at Irvine, on the 20th January and 16th February, was then read. It contained the questions put to Mr.

Morison, and his answers, which had been afterwards compressed into a report.

Mr. Ronald then read this report of the sub-committee appointed to draw up a distinct statement of the particular charges, to answer which Mr. Morison was called before the Presbytery. We have hesitated a good deal, at this stage of our narrative, as to how we should now proceed. On the one hand, although it makes our own work easier, we feel to seem to burden our pages with such large extracts; but on the other hand these quotations are intensely interesting, and form moreover the only records of the early proceedings which led to the formation of the Evangelical Union now extant, imperfect as they are. Besides, several friends, whose judgment we respect and who had come to know on what work we were engaged, have preferred to us the request that the speeches delivered on these exciting occasions should be laid before the new generation that has sprung up since they were delivered, and especially the speeches of those who were opposed to the doctrine of a universal atonement; for there is a desire to know what they had to say on the other side.

There is another point on which we have been exercised in mind a good deal, namely, as to whether or not we should make any reference to the charge of disingenuous conduct which was brought against our honoured friend as to the circulation of his tract. We hold that it was a disgrace to the Presbytery, in the first place, to seek the suppression of a publication which was full to the brim of real gospel truth, and whose few extravagances and errors, as viewed from their own limitarian standpoint, should have been more than condoned on account of its burning earnestness. Yet more was it their disgrace to make so much of the fact that Mr. Morison's friends in different parts of the country (*and not himself*) republished the tract, a promise to suppress which had been wrung from him on his ordination day. Still, we think it to be our duty, as professed historians of the time, when printing this libel, to print the whole of it, although protesting especially against the latter part, and almost begging Dr. Morison's pardon for our decision to drag it into light. One thing we are sure of, and that is, that if any of his friends should be pained by seeing "disingenuousness" charged against him whom they love and revere so much, that pain will quickly be supplanted by the satisfaction caused by the artlessness and sincerity of his explanation,

which indeed we could not leave out, not only for this reason, but also because he lays bare his whole heart in it, and beautifully explains to us afresh how it was that he was led from darkness to light—from limitarianism to liberality of theological belief.

It will also be seen, from the outburst of timidity before the debate commenced, that the members of court really were afraid of the onset. They would rather not have grappled with their young but formidable antagonist.

That our readers may yet more fully understand how the debate went on, we would add one other explanatory observation. It will be observed that, before Mr. Morison made his reply, Mr. Ronald is represented as having read over the eight charges again *seriatim*. This simple statement does not give the reader a correct idea of what occurred. The fact is that—owing surely to some informality or negligence, the like of which we never heard of before in civil or ecclesiastical procedure—Mr. Morison did not know what the several counts of his indictment were till the Clerk of the Presbytery read them out in his hearing! His indictment never had been served upon him! No doubt he might have a guess from the cross-questionings to which he had been subjected at Irvine, as to the direction which the accusations would take; but it is a fact, almost incredible though it may appear, that he heard these eight separate heads of alleged errors for the first time, in the order in which they occur, from the lips of the Clerk of the Presbytery,—so that his reply was quite extemporaneous. But both head and heart were so full of the truth that it was comparatively easy for him to pour forth replies out of his abundant stores. This is the reason why he always asked Mr. Ronald, when he had finished his answer to one charge, to read over the next. Thus they were read a second time, not all at once, but *seriatim*, that is *one by one*. Our excellent friend, Professor Taylor of Kendal has informed us that, being present on the occasion, and but a mere youth, this was the first time he ever heard the word *seriatim*. But he “took a note on’t,” and never forgot it afterwards.

We will now transfer to our pages, without any interruption, the account of the whole remaining proceedings of the forenoon diet, as culled from the “Kilmarnock Journal” and the “United Secession Magazine”—thus making the fullest report extant of the memorable meeting.

MR. RONALD'S report began with stating that these charges came under two general heads,—that of error taught and still maintained by him, and that of disingenuous conduct as to error taught and still maintained.—*First*, That the object of saving faith to any person is the statement that Christ made atonement for the sins of that person, as he made atonement for the sins of the world; and that the seeing of this statement to be true is saving faith, and gives the assurance of salvation.

This proposition was objected to, because it was inconsistent with the Secession standards, which described the object of saving faith as including the offer of Christ in the gospel, and saving faith as including the receiving and resting on Christ for salvation. It represented the assurance of salvation as necessarily arising from seeing the meaning of a text, or the truth of a historical fact, and as what, therefore, could not be lost or shaken in any other way than by a change of opinion respecting the truth of that fact; whereas, the Secession standards asserted that “infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long before he partake of it.” Because it represented the atonement of Christ, not merely as sufficient for all men, and as a channel through which salvation was offered to every hearer of the gospel, so that if he enjoyed it not he should be condemned for rejecting it, but because it represented the atonement as if it had been fitted to secure the salvation of men irrespective of the electing grace of God. Because, in order to lay a foundation for immediate and permanent assurance to the believer, it taught a doctrine which involved a security for the salvation of all men:—viz., that there is a fact in Scripture which has only to be barely seen to be true, in order to give to any man the assurance of salvation. It was true that Mr. Morison did not say that this proposition involved that doctrine, but this could not alter the nature of the proposition, nor warrant the Presbytery to tolerate its being taught.

*Second*, That all men were able of themselves to believe the gospel unto salvation, or, in other words, to put away unbelief, the only obstacle to salvation which the atonement had not removed. This was inconsistent with many parts of the standards,—man not being able by his own strength to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto. The latter clause of the proposition was objected to on account of its making no allowance for “different degrees of faith,” weak and strong, as taught in the Westminster Confession; and because it tended to keep many who had real faith in God as the hearer of prayer from availing themselves of the privilege of prayer—that their hearts might be brought to a full and cordial belief of the gospel.

*Third*, That no person ought to be directed to pray for grace to help him to believe, even though he be an “anxious sinner;” and that no person's prayers could be of any avail till he believed unto salvation; which believing, according to Mr. Morison's views of the atonement, and of the nature of faith, must immediately give the knowledge that the person was saved. This was objected to on the same ground as the latter clause of the last proposition.

*Fourth*, That repentance in Scripture meant only a change of mind, and was not godly sorrow for sin. (Several references were here made to Scripture.) Though this might appear at first view to be merely a question respecting the meaning of a Greek or Hebrew word—the

substance of what the standards describe under the name of repentance being allowed to be a necessary point of Christian experience—yet it must be seriously objected to on the following grounds, viz. :—It is not consistent with the use of the word in Scripture ; and while it is very questionable if a single case occurs in which the word, as applied to the conduct of man, should not be viewed as including grief of heart, there are many cases in which it cannot be possibly explained otherwise. Again, it tends needlessly and injuriously to bring the language of the subordinate standards into disrespect, and to bring into disrespect also the language of our best theological writers and ministers, and to unsettle and distract the minds of gospel hearers. And further, it is evidently introduced as part of a system that would teach men that they may make great progress in religion, and in solid peace and joy, without a single right feeling or exercise of the heart.

*Fifth*, That justification is not pardon, but that it is implied in pardon ; that God pardons only in his character of Father, and justifies only in his character of Judge ; that justification is the expression of the fatherly favour of God.

It was true that Mr. Morison, when referred to the Shorter Catechism, said he could assent to the expression, that in justification God pardoneth our sins—that God does so substantially. But this does not appear to be enough in opposition to the above language, which is conceived to be open to the two following objections :—*First*, it seems to imply that justification comes from the justice of God, and not, like pardon, freely by our Heavenly Father's grace ; and, *secondly*, because, for the sake evidently of defending the system of full assurance of salvation from the first act of believing the gospel, it is implied that the people of God, under a sense of their need of pardon, even for their greatest sins, cannot be afraid of condemnation, and do not need to pray for being justified ; but that, in seeking pardon of their greatest sins, they pray merely for the removal of some kind of Fatherly displeasure, which might be borne without the least fear of their not being safe. This is contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith, xviii. 4.

Along with this the Committee took notice of the assertion in one of Mr. Morison's publications, that sins unconfessed are unpardoned, and that confession is a pre-requisite to pardon ; and when Mr. Morison was asked if he did not mean by this to imply that there was no pardon in justification, or, if he meant that confession of sin must go before justification too, he said, " I presume so ; " which seems to imply one or other of these two things—either that sins are confessed before they are committed, or that justification removes only the condemnation due for the sins then past.

*Sixth*, That election comes in the order of nature after the atonement (explained by Mr. Morison as meaning only that it comes after the purpose of atonement), and other expressions which militate against the harmony of doctrine respecting the purposes of God, set forth in the standards under the notion of a covenant of grace. For example: " God's purpose in the atonement was merely to bring it within the power of all to be saved ; " and, " notwithstanding election, it is in the power of those who are not elected to be saved."

This is objected to, in the *first* place, because, without any attempt to show that it is required by the Scripture, and without any conceivable tendency to remove a single difficulty on the subject of elec-

tion, it argues a wanton disrespect to the language of our standards; and, by representing this harmony as making it clear that election does injustice to none and throws obstacles in the way of none, insinuates that these views of our standards throw such obstacles in the way of believing. *Secondly*, because it implies that our Saviour, in undertaking to make atonement, was not the representative or substitute of his own people, so as to secure their salvation, and have promised to him a seed to serve him for joy and reward. *Thirdly*, because it is inconsistent with the idea that the salvation of his chosen people was the grand design of God in purposing the atonement at all. And, *Fourthly*, his going so far along with those who deny unconditional election, without any other apparent reason, is in danger of being viewed, though contrary to Mr. Morison's intention, as a step towards getting rid of the doctrine of election altogether.

*Seventh*, There are in Mr. Morison's publications many expressions unscriptural, unwarrantable, and calculated to depreciate the atonement—for example, that it is a "talismanic something;" "that Jesus could not so suffer the consequences of sin as to liberate us from deserving punishment;" and "that the atonement of Christ has not secured the removal of the obstacles to salvation that are within sinners elected unto eternal life."

*Eighth*. In consequence of its having been reported that Mr. Morison had spoken in the pulpit in a way which led some to believe that he denied the imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin to his posterity, he was asked by the committee what were his views on this subject, and it was found that he was not prepared to say that all men by nature are deserving of the punishment of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, on account of Adam's first sin; and could not give a definite answer to the question, whether we were guilty in consequence of Adam's first sin, or deserved on its account to suffer punishment, except the words guilt and desert should be explained.

Under the second head of the charge—that of disingenuous conduct—the following instances were adduced:—

*First*. That, by the advice of friends, he prevented the sale of his pamphlet until his ordination, and limited its circulation so as to put it out of the power of members of Presbytery, who applied for it, to procure a copy—no motive being conceivable for the advice by which he had acted, except the idea that, if the pamphlet had been fully examined by members of Presbytery, it might have prevented his ordination—two members only having had a short and accidental perusal of it before his ordination. *Secondly*, That he had acted inconsistently with the pledge given by him to the Presbytery on the morning of his ordination day, to suppress, as far as possible, the circulation of the pamphlet; seeing that, when he learned an edition of the pamphlet was publishing in Dunfermline, and editions of it in Kilmarnock, he expressed no displeasure, nor took any means to suppress these. When asked for permission to publish an edition in London, he replied that, though he could give no permission, he would not visit any person publishing it with pains and penalties. He lent the pamphlet several times to candidates for admission to communion, and in various ways showed that he was by no means opposed to its circulation. *Thirdly*, That on the morning of Mr. Morison's ordination, when the Presbytery had met in the session-

house, and the congregation were assembling for public worship, the attention of the Presbytery was called to the anonymous pamphlet, of which Mr. Morison was the reputed author; and he acknowledged the fact, and produced a copy of the work; and when some parts of this production were pointed out as teaching unsound doctrines, Mr. Morison gave such explanations of his sentiments on the subjects referred to, as led the Presbytery to believe that his views, on the whole, were consistent with the Secession standards; and, along with his promise to suppress the farther circulation of the pamphlet, promised also to study modes of expressing his views less liable to be misunderstood—a promise thus softly expressed in the minutes of Presbytery out of regard to Mr. Morison's feelings; and whereas the Presbytery were thus led to believe that he would not in future teach what had been pointed out in the tract as, in the opinion of the Presbytery, inconsistent with his explanations, yet he had not restrained himself from teaching and publishing the very doctrines which had been so pointed out.

The report was approved of, and ordered to be engrossed on the minutes.

Mr. ROBERTSON of Kilmaurs considered the first step to be followed now was to ask Mr. Morison his opinion of the report, and ascertain whether he had anything to retract.

Mr. MORISON said he was ready to explain and defend his views.

Mr. MEIKLE of Beith—It was not for them to enter into a deliberation with Mr. Morison on the matter. If his views were different from theirs, he could memorialise the Synod, who, if they thought proper, might take the subject into consideration; but the Presbytery could not enter into a debate upon principles which were already settled in terms of their bond of confederation as a Church.

Mr. ELLES of Saltcoats cordially acquiesced in what had just been said. He was sorry to hear, in the memorial, certain doctrines avowed, which it was inconsistent for any Seceder to advance. Mr. Morison had no right to publish his views as he had done until they obtained the sanction of the Supreme Court. Whether they were or were not scriptural, that was another matter. It was not for them to decide upon that question. Many viewed the same texts of Scripture in a different light, and errors had in all times prevailed. The peculiar opinions of Mr. Morison struck at the fundamental principles of their Church.

Mr. RONALD—The opinions in question certainly went contrary to the standards of their Church.

Dr. SCHAW of Ayr—Mr. Morison, it appeared, did not retract any of his doctrines, but was prepared to defend them. The Presbytery did not come there to dispute upon points of doctrine, but to ascertain whether those doctrines were in accordance with the standards of the Secession Church. Any one dissatisfied with the standards could overture, in a constitutional mode, by going to the Supreme Court.

Mr. CAMPBELL of Irvine, and Mr. BLACKWOOD of Galston, spoke to the same effect.

Mr. RONALD then read over, *seriatim*, the different charges contained in the report of the sub-committee, to which Mr. Morison replied.

Mr. MORISON said that he preached no doctrines contradictory to the *main scope* of the subordinate standards of the Secession Church. He

had a high veneration for those standards, and he conceived them to embody the grand peculiar Protestant doctrines of grace. With those grand doctrines he (Mr. Morison) had never preached or printed anything at variance. In subscribing to the subordinate standards, he conceived himself to be solemnly bound to adhere to those grand and cardinal doctrines of all Protestant churches. His subscription secured that he would not teach anything like Pelagianism, or Socinianism, or Roman Catholicism; but it did not bind him, he conceived, to adhere to every minute tittle and iota within those subordinate standards. On the morning of his ordination, he had explicitly told the Presbytery that he could not and would not preach any other doctrines than those contained in the printed tract, with which such fault had been found. He did pledge himself, indeed, to abstain from the use of certain modes of expression which members of Presbytery had obviously misunderstood; or at least, he had engaged to explain those expressions in a manner that would be less liable to be misapprehended. This pledge he had faithfully fulfilled both from the pulpit and the press. He had been supposed to teach in the tract such doctrines as that of universal pardon, and he presumed that there is now no member of the court that will charge him with such heresies. But whilst he engaged to explain certain modes of expression occurring in the tract, he had by no means pledged himself to retract any of the doctrines. On the contrary, he had expressly stated that he could not and would not preach any other doctrines. If, then, any doctrine in that tract be at variance with the subordinate standards of the Secession Church, the Presbytery permitted him to preach it; for they ordained him although he most explicitly told them that he could not and would not preach any other doctrines. He conceived, moreover, that there were not many ministers of the Secession Church who considered themselves bound to hold and preach every minute doctrine, and aspect of doctrine, contained in the subordinate standards. He himself had been taught by his own professor things expressly at variance with those standards. He alluded to the often declared sentiments of at least one of the professors on the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son of God. The eternal generation of the Son of God is explicitly taught in the Confession of Faith, but he heard it as explicitly contradicted by his venerated instructor. It would appear, then, that that professor did not consider himself to be bound to adhere to every minute doctrine held in the subordinate standards. But if one minister of the Secession Church was to be permitted to hold, and preach, and teach, one doctrine at variance with the standards, would he (Mr. Morison) not be allowed to deviate in other doctrines? He took no license with the standards which other ministers did not take. He knew of many ministers of the Secession Church who repudiated the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son of God, and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit. Such ministers, however, had not thought it necessary to make any public exception in reference to those doctrines when they subscribed the subordinate standards. They obviously did not consider their subscriptions as binding them up to every detail in the standards. He (Mr. Morison) entertained this view of the nature of his adherence to their standards. He conceived himself pledged to maintain the grand Protestant doctrines of grace, and to adhere to the main scope

of the standards; but he could not permit himself to be so positively imprisoned by their human formularies as not to take his own views of certain doctrines, and his own modes of presenting all of them to the minds of his hearers. As to the first charge—which had respect to the object of saving faith—he conceived that he was teaching the obvious doctrine of Scripture, when he said that it was *the gospel*. It is *the gospel*, and *the gospel alone* which is the object of saving faith. What then is the gospel? He would refer them to the Apostle's own definition of it in the beginning of the 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which also ye have received, and by which also ye are saved." Here then, we may expect to find what the gospel, or the object of saving faith, really is. Accordingly, the Apostle proceeds to explain it in the third verse, "for I delivered," says he, "unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," &c. What then is the Apostle's own professed explanation of the object of saving faith? It is this, "Christ died for *our* sins according to the Scriptures," &c. This is "the gospel" which the Apostle preached "first of all," when he went into the heathen Corinth, and stood up in the midst of heathen Corinthians. This was "the gospel" which he preached unto them before they became believers, for it was the belief of it that constituted them believers, and it was "by it that they were saved." The Apostle, then, told the unbelieving Corinthians "first of all," after he went into their city, that the thing which they were to believe was "the gospel," or, in other words, that "Christ died for *our* sins according to the Scriptures." Now, let it be particularly marked that this was what he preached to them before they believed; for it is expressly said that it was this gospel "which they received, and by which they were saved." The word "our," in the passage referred to, cannot be confined, then, to believers; it must refer to those Corinthians who heard the Apostle when he "first of all" came into their city and preached to them. It would never have been "the gospel" which the Apostle preached, had he stood up in the midst of the Corinthians and proclaimed, "Christ died for your sins, O believing Corinthians!" The gospel is good news to "every creature." But such a supposed gospel would be good news only to believers. He (Mr. Morison) could not be considered to be preaching "the gospel" were he to stand up in the midst of his people and say, "Christ died for your sins, O believers!" No. The Apostle, then, preached to the unbelieving Corinthians, and "first of all," too, this gospel—"Christ died for *our* sins (that is, for your sins, O unbelieving Corinthians, and for mine), according to the Scriptures." Here, then, we have the Apostle's own definition of "the gospel," or the object of saving faith. It is this, "Christ died for *my* sins according to the Scriptures." He (Mr. Morison) could find no other gospel to bring peace to his own soul. In another place, the Apostle, defining the object of saving faith, says—"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." It is not said that Jesus Christ came into the world to save *some* sinners. No. Wherever a sinner was found, there we found a man to save whom Jesus Christ came into the world; the "faithful saying," then, or the object of saving faith, which every man is to believe, is this, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,

and therefore me." Again, the Apostle most accurately describes the object of saving faith in the close of the 5th chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians. He there, as an "ambassador for Christ," beseeches sinners thus, "be ye reconciled unto God;" and the argument which he uses with these unreconciled sinners is this, "for God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—When the Apostle says that he "prayed men in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God," he cannot be understood to mean the believing Corinthians. They were already reconciled unto God, and did not require to be besought to be reconciled. It is unbelieving, unreconciled, impenitent men whom he thus beseeches, and it is with them that he uses the argument of the next verse, and it is to them that he says "God made Christ to be sin for us (that is, for you, unreconciled sinners, and for me,) who knew no sin, that we (that is, you unreconciled sinners, and I,) may be made the righteousness of God in him." The saving truth, then, to be believed by unreconciled sinners is this, "God made Christ to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This is the object of saving faith—this, and nothing but this, is "the gospel." He (Mr. Morison) might have proceeded to adduce numerous other passages, in which the object of saving faith is described by the inspired writers. All of these passages united lend their evidence to the truth of the opinion, that the thing which every sinner is to believe is this, "Jesus Christ is a propitiation for my sins, seeing he is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." If it thus be so evident that this is the object of saving faith, surely this reverend court would not admit that their standards are at variance with the apostolic "truth as it is in Jesus."

Here Mr. THOMAS objected to the manner in which Mr. Morison argued, which interference called disapprobation from the audience.

Mr. MORISON resumed and said, in reference to the second charge [this means the second part of the first charge], that John the Baptist had given a most valuable definition of saving faith,—It is a "setting to one's seal that God is true." This is faith; and nothing else but this is faith; and there cannot be any other kind of faith. Faith has always, when accurately employed, a reference to some testimony. Faith is the reception, or crediting, of a testimony; it is "setting to one's seal that the testimony is true." Saving faith is the assent of the mind to the gospel-testimony, or "record which God has given concerning his Son." This record or testimony, as we are explicitly told in the 5th chapter of the first epistle of John, is this,—"God hath given us (that is, us mankind sinners) eternal life, and this life is in his Son." He that believes this to be true is a believer, and is possessed of saving faith; he that does not believe it to be true "makes God a liar." If unbelief be "making God a liar," faith must simply be admitting that what God says in reference to his Son is true. What God says in reference to his Son is this, "he has made a gift to each mankind-sinner of eternal life in him." The simple belief of this as true (because the God of truth says it) is saving faith. It is abundantly clear that all the virtue of faith lies in its object, and not in its act. The Scriptures never mention a variety of faiths, as if there was a possibility of believing the right thing in several wrong ways. The writers of the Scriptures invariably take for granted that all men know well

enough *how* to believe, just as well as men know well enough *how* to see or *how* to hear; and they are careful to make evident only *what* is to be believed,—“the saving truth as it is in Jesus.” They seem never to have dreamed that men would find a difficulty in performing the act of believing in the right manner. As the Scriptures are silent in reference to any variety of faith, so also are the subordinate standards. He (Mr. Morison) knew of no passage in their standards where it is intimated that the real gospel can be believed in a number of different ways. He assented most unqualifiedly to the definition of saving faith which is given in the Shorter Catechism. There is another and a still clearer definition of saving faith to which he assented, and which had long been assented to by the United Associate Presbytery. He referred to the definition of it that is given in the “Marrow of Modern Divinity,” and which was elaborately defended by the Associate Presbytery in a special act issued in 1742. That definition is the following:—“As Paul and Silas said to the jailor, so say I unto you, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; that is, be verily persuaded in your heart that Jesus Christ is yours; and that you shall have life and salvation by him; and that whatsoever he did for the redemption of mankind he did it for you.” Here we have it explicitly explained what it is to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” It is to be “verily persuaded that Christ is ours; and that we shall have life and salvation by him; and that whatsoever he did for the redemption of mankind he did it for us.” In reference to the second charge, Mr. Morison stated that he could not maintain man’s responsibility if he did not firmly believe that he is able to do all that God commands him to do. The sinner’s natural and perfect ability to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ must be admitted by all who maintain that the sinner is blameable for his unbelief. He (Mr. Morison) conceived that man’s ability to do his whole duty is explicitly asserted in the Holy Scriptures. God tells us that we are to “love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.” None are required to love God in the smallest degree above their “strength” or power. If, then, it is easier to believe that God tells no lie about Christ, than it is to “love God with all our heart,” and if we have sufficient “strength” to love God to this degree, it must certainly be admitted that we have abundant “strength” or power to believe. If any man can say at the last day, as a plea for his unbelief, “I could not help it—I did all I possibly could,” that man’s conscience would acquit him, and it would not be in any being’s power to make him feel remorse. This doctrine of man’s perfect ability to believe is not peculiar to him (Mr. Morison), and was the doctrine taught by Jonathan Edwards and John Howe. He (Mr. Morison) had explicitly defended this doctrine in an essay he read to the Presbytery on the day of his trials for ordination. He then said, “man still maintains, and must, to render him accountable, for ever possess power or natural ability to do his duty—this natural ability consisting in those mental and moral faculties which render him a moral agent and a responsible being; whilst, on the other hand, all his moral inability consists in want of will, or inveterate disinclination.” Moral inability is accordingly explained in this manner by Jonathan Edwards and John Howe, and by Truman in his work on “Natural and Moral Impotency.” Moral inability is but a learned

and technical phrase for a very simple thing—determined indisposition of heart. It means this, and can mean nothing more. Were any to allege that it is expressly asserted in Scripture, that “no man *can* come unto the Son except the Father draw him,” he (Mr. Morison) would reply that the word “can” is used in two senses. It describes sometimes a want of power, and sometimes a mere want of will, when perfect power is possessed. It is used in this latter acceptation in such passages as these—“Joseph’s brethren *could* not speak peaceably to him;” “how *can* I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” “having eyes full of adultery, they *cannot* cease from sin;” “how *can* two walk together except they be agreed?” “trouble me not, the door is shut, and my children are with me in bed, I *cannot* rise and give thee.” When it is said, therefore, “no man can come unto the Son except the Father draw him,” we are to understand the word “can” as explained in the light of another saying of our Lord, “ye *will* not come unto me that ye may have life.” He (Mr. Morison) admitted that it was to the Holy Spirit that the conversion of every believer was to be ascribed. He held most tenaciously that “faith is the gift of God,” and that neither faith nor any other grace ever existed in any man except as the fruit of the Spirit’s operation; but still he never could hold that the Spirit imparted *power* to believe. The Spirit does not *enable*, he “opens the heart” of the sinner—or disposes him to “attend to the truth as it is in Jesus;” and as soon as the meaning of that truth thus attended to is apprehended and its evidence appreciated, the sinner becomes a believer.—In reference to the third charge, Mr. Morison held that unbelieving prayers could never be acceptable to God. He could rest the whole proof of this opinion upon that maxim of the Apostle, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Until, then, a man has faith, or, in other words, be a believer, he cannot please God by his prayers, or by any other thing he does. The first duty of a sinner is to believe the saving “truth as it is in Jesus.” This doctrine was by no means opposed to the subordinate standards. Prayer is defined in the Shorter Catechism to be the “offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ.” Prayer, to be of any avail, must be offered up “in the name of Christ”—that is, by a person “believing in the name of Christ.” The Apostle, in the 10th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, explicitly says, “how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?” It must not be right, then, to direct a sinner, truly anxious, to pray. He should be directed to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” for until he be a believer, his prayers must be “an abomination unto God.” “The prayer of the wicked is an abomination unto God;” and until a man become a believer he is a high-handed rebel—a wicked—a “desperately wicked,” man. If the anxious sinner be directed not to believe immediately, but to pray for grace to help him to believe—this direction takes for granted that he is not bound to believe immediately, because he has not power. The sinner, however, has power, and is bound to believe, for present unbelief is present sin, and present faith is present duty.—As to the fourth charge, Mr. Morison said, repentance, when viewed in reference to sin, brings after it, as a necessary consequence, change of feeling and change of conduct, which constitute repentance itself. When John the Baptist called upon his hearers to repent, he meant

that they should "change their minds" in reference to the expected Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom. They had wrong views of these matters—they were all wrong in their ideas—and the Baptist calls on them to change their minds.—In reference to the fifth charge, Mr. Morison stated that justification must evidently be substantially the same thing with pardon; whilst it must as evidently be the same thing viewed in a different aspect; that justification and pardon are not precisely synonymous terms is obvious from the fact that a sinner can be justified only once, whereas his sins are often pardoned.—In reference to the sixth charge, Mr. Morison stated that he maintained eternal, personal, unconditional election. The only point of difference between him and the Presbytery was the position which, according to the order of nature, election should hold in the purposes of God. He did, indeed, maintain that the purpose of election comes after the purpose of atonement in the order of nature. This is no novel opinion of his, as has been asserted. It must surely be known to his learned fathers and brethren in the Presbytery, that the position of election in the divine purposes has been a question agitated by divines for many hundreds of years. Many most eminent divines accord with him (Mr. Morison) on this subject.—In reference to the seventh charge, Mr. Morison said that it appeared impossible that any sinner could ever be liberated from deserving punishment. He admitted that all believing sinners would be freed from the endurance of punishment, but he held that none could ever cease to deserve it. The late Rowland Hill said that he thought he would enter heaven uttering the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He, though a very good man, felt that he was a sinner still, and that he never would or could deserve anything but wrath. There are surely few saints who do not daily pray, "deal not with us according to our deservings." He (Mr. Morison) felt truly astonished that it should be objected to him that he taught that Christ could not so suffer for any man as that that man should not deserve to be punished everlastingly himself.

In reference to the charge of disingenuous conduct, Mr. Morison spoke as follows:—He was anxious to give to the Presbytery a plain unvarnished account of his whole procedure in reference to the publication and circulation of the tract. For many years he had laboured under total darkness as to the way of salvation. By patient research and study he at last found out a truth in the Bible, which had the effect of introducing him all at once into a new world. It changed all his views, all his feelings, all his desires, all his conduct. This gracious and glorious truth which he had discovered in the Bible was nothing else than the love of God to him in particular, in giving his own dear Son to die for him. This Bible truth he saw clearly stated in many portions of Scripture, and having seen it, and wondering that he had never seen it before, he burned with intense desire to make it known to others, that they also might receive the same unspeakable peace and joy which it had imparted to his own soul. Animated by this desire, he began to preach it everywhere, and he had no sooner begun to preach it than he saw sinners finding peace in believing it, and deriving from it a motive to live entirely to God. He continued to teach it in private, and to preach it in public, wherever he went, and he spared no pains to make it known, and to press it upon all to whom he had access.

He continued meanwhile to prosecute his own researches into its evidence, and he found new passages in support of it, and he saw many other doctrines casting a side light upon it. He began also to discover that it was a doctrine which had been found out by many godly men in all ages. He examined ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the Greek and Latin fathers, and he discovered that the theory of limited atonement, viz., that Christ died for none but the elect, was almost never, if ever, heard of for the first five centuries of the Christian era. This, and many other circumstances, all went to confirm his convictions that it must be the saving truth of the gospel which he had at length found out, and which had brought so much joy, and peace, and love, into his own heart. In going from place to place as a probationer, he found few, very few, who had the same views of the gospel; and as many persons gladly received his doctrine, he was induced, by repeated solicitations to write out his views in the shape of a tract, which they might have permanently beside them. These were the circumstances in which the writing of the tract originated. After it was written and printed, it was suggested to him by his friends, that the shape which he had given to his views of the gospel might excite the prejudices of his brethren in the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, provided they saw the tract before they became personally acquainted with him. He was advised to keep it out of the booksellers' shops, at least till after his ordination. He yielded to this advice, although it was quite opposed to his own inclination. He fondly hoped that, when his fathers and brethren knew him personally, and saw that he was sincere,—he fondly hoped that they would give a candid and favourable perusal to his treatise. The views were so clear to himself, and so delightful, that he imagined, in his simplicity, that he would easily persuade all others to embrace them. In this he was greatly disappointed. Before the day of his ordination, two members of Presbytery had seen the tract, and on the morning of that day they objected to it, and seemed disposed even to sist procedure until the obnoxious tenets maintained were retracted. He then stated expressly that he had no other views of divine truth on which to rest his own soul, and that he could not, and would not preach any other doctrines. They seemed then persuaded from the explanations given of the doctrines of the tract, that it must be the phraseology that was principally at fault. When the Presbytery insisted on its suppression, he yielded, never dreaming that any person would think it of so much consequence as to desire its republication. He soon found, however, that there were several individuals purposing to republish it. When he heard of this purpose, his mind was thrown into great perplexity. He did not see clearly whether or not it was his duty to take measures to prevent others using this liberty with his publication. It occurred to him on the one hand, that if he did not use measures to this effect, his non-interference might be construed into a tacit consent. It occurred on the other hand, that, when he took his pledge, he never contemplated the tract's republication by others, and that therefore he had, strictly speaking, only bound himself not to take any active measures to get it into circulation. He reflected, moreover, that he had told the Presbytery that he could not, and would not, preach any other doctrines. He could not but rejoice at the propagation of the views, and yet he was afraid that, if he did not interfere, he would be regarded as violating his

pledge. He at last came to the conclusion that he was keeping the strict letter of his pledge, although he did not hinder others from circulating his tract. When he came to this conclusion, he told his respected brother in London that he would not prosecute any publisher of this tract by civil pains and penalties. Whilst he did all this conscientiously, he had now to say that he *regretted* that he did not take decided measures to put a stop to its circulation. He admitted that he lent copies to several candidates for communion, but he only *lent* them; and in every case he told them to return them to him. He told them this, to secure that the copies lent might not get into circulation through his agency. He did not feel his conscience aggrieved by doing this, as the doctrines of the tract were the doctrines he was preaching every day from the pulpit, in accordance with what he had expressly told the Presbytery, that he could not, and would not, preach any other views.

Our readers will observe that the report of Mr. Morison's address is very incomplete, especially towards the close of his doctrinal remarks. He must have spoken for several hours, as the diet of the Presbytery began at 11 A.M., and closed at 5 P.M., when an interval occurred between the forenoon and the evening sederunt. And as his address had occupied the greater part of the time, it is plain that only a very meagre outline of it has been preserved. In these circumstances, we cannot continue our narrative till we have interpolated a few words of defence and explanation of his several positions, rendered necessary by this very apparent deficiency.

Let it be borne in mind that the great desire of this ardent evangelist, at the time referred to, was to present every human being he met with a waiting Saviour and immediate salvation. And what reader of the New Testament, who candidly contemplates the Lord Jesus Christ weeping over devoted Jerusalem, can deny that, in this zeal which consumed him, the founder of our denomination occupied scriptural ground, and had only caught a flame of earnestness from the burning heart of God? Now, let all these eight charges of doctrinal error, which the Kilmarnock Presbytery brought against him, be only viewed in the light of this one assumption—that *it is both the privilege and duty of every sinner to be immediately saved by Christ*, and the glory of heaven's own truth will shine upon them, and gild them with a divine radiance, changing that which may have seemed to have been heresy into the clearest orthodoxy, and illuminating that on which some men frown with the smile and the approbation of God.

On the first two charges, namely, those touching the Atonement and human Ability, we do not need to make a single apologetic remark, because Mr. Morison's own defence even as given in an abridged newspaper report, is truly clear and convincing, in its scriptural simplicity. We have, indeed, called the first charge the Atonement charge; and yet it will be observed that the word "Faith" occupies in it the principal place. And hereby hangs a tale. The fact of the matter is (as appeared afterwards in the Synod debate), that the committee who drew up the libel hesitated to charge Mr. Morison openly, and in so many words, with error on the extent of the atonement, because they could not agree among themselves upon the matter; and also because they knew, besides, that a diversity of opinion was springing up among the leading men of the denomination on the subject, —some, with Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, declaring for a universal reference of the atonement; while others, like Dr. Hay of Kinross, preferred to confine the reference of the death of Christ wholly to the elect. All these pulses of influence had already been felt beating, by means of private correspondence; and it was the young Luther of Kilmarnock who had aroused the whole agitation, and given all this impulse to thought. Now, Mr. Ronald of Saltcoats, and one or two others, approved of Dr. Brown's liberal view; but the majority of the Presbytery were decidedly and wholly limitarian. But, by a wily resort worthy of lawyers, they tried to preserve both the appearance and reality of peace among themselves, by leaving out all reference to the atonement *quâ* atonement, and by bringing it in, by a kind of side wind, as the object of faith! For they felt pretty sure that, even although the "extent of the atonement" was the head and front of the young preacher's offending, he had yet committed himself to so much error, as they conceived, on affiliated and subordinate points, that they would succeed in proving him heterodox on these without breaking ground at all, or at any rate not very deep ground, on the dangerous dogma. This *ruse*, however, was completely exposed by the honesty of Dr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch, when the case reached the Synod, in June following, as shall afterwards appear. But this is the reason why, if the reader looks back to the libel, he will see that, in the first and principal charge, no prominent mention is made of the atonement, while, in reality, three things are compressed into one sentence

—the object, the nature, and the consequence of saving faith.

Yet, when Mr. Morison rose to make his earnest extemporaneous defence, he took no notice of this little piece of ecclesiastical subtilty, but immediately proceeded to prove from the blessed Word of God itself, that the object of faith to every man was this—that Jesus died for him in particular upon the tree. And did he not prove it convincingly? we ask, confident of an affirmative reply. Had Christ not “tasted death for every man”? Was He not “a propitiation for the sins of the whole world”? Was not the pastor of Clerk’s Lane Church, in his earnest ministry, as fully warranted to say to all the people who might crowd around him in the streets of Kilmarnock, Ayr, or Irvine, “Christ died for our sins,” as Paul had been warranted to use such words in the streets of Corinth?

On the nature of faith, too, his arguments were equally convincing. To believe in God, was to take him at his word—“to receive his witness.” We are aware that divines have differed in opinion on this point,—some maintaining that in saving faith there is the consent of the heart, as well as the assent of the understanding; while others, like Mr. Morison, would make the trust of the heart rather the effect of faith than its essential element. Dr. Candlish stated in the Free Assembly, before his death, that Dr. Chalmers and he differed on this very point, and yet they never thought of separating upon it. Evidently, if the same spirit of liberality had prevailed in the Kilmarnock Secession Presbytery, in March, 1841, the second head of the first charge would not have been inserted in this libel.

As to the second charge, Mr. Morison and his followers have always maintained that it is impossible for any human being to believe either God or man literally and *in toto* of himself. He must be supplied with testimony, and that, too, fully substantiated, or he cannot believe. Still more, on account of the repugnance of the heart of man to divine things, there must be the inscrutable suasive influence of the Holy Spirit,—which, however, they have gloried to declare, at least ever since the Evangelical Union was fully launched, to be world-wide in its extent and resistible in its nature. But on the question of man’s natural ability to do all that God has commanded him to do, it will be observed that Mr. Morison very properly took a high and fearless position.

He boldly asserted that God would not be *God*—that is, would not be all-perfect, because unjust—if the bounds of human responsibility exceeded the bounds of human ability. We were interested to notice, the other day, in consulting the reply given by Dr. Reid, of Glasgow University, to David Hume, on the Freedom of the Will, in the close of last century, that the professor of Moral Philosophy takes the same ground as the young Ayrshire theologian. Reid broadly asserts that, even although a man should cut off his own fingers, or put out his own eyes, he might and would be blameworthy for the act of self-mutilation; but that no man, and not even the Deity, could hold him responsible for using his eyes when he had none, or using his fingers when he had none. How completely does such an illustrative argument (coming home, as it does, with irresistible demonstration, to the conscience and the heart) sweep away, as with a besom of annihilation, the miserable sophistries which sundry divines have endeavoured to palm upon a credulous church about man's being culpable for his inability to obey and believe God, although he lost the power by no fault of his own, but by an act of Adam six thousand years ago!

Possibly a few truly pious and godly people may imagine that they detect something dangerous and heterodox in the third charge, namely, that the anxious sinner should not be directed to pray for grace to help him to believe the Gospel; but here we would remind them of Mr. Morison's grand central position, that it was the duty and privilege of every man, in this day of grace, to be saved immediately. Let them consider all his statements on this point in the light of that truth. He knew very well that scores of ministers were in the habit of saying to their hearers, "You cannot believe the Gospel; but go home and pray to God for grace to help you to believe." Now, Mr. Morison held that this was a misdirection, and a grand practical mistake. To give such an advice was not to point men to the cross, but to send them away from the cross. God was beseeching them to be reconciled,—why should they beseech God? God was waiting on them,—why should they wait on him? God was knocking at the door of their hearts,—why should they keep knocking at his door, as if he were unwilling to help them? Let them believe first, and then their prayers would be those of the accepted child. While they tarried the Bridegroom might come, and they would be "too late." If

Mr. Morison erred on this point, he erred in good company. We have heard the late Dr. Wardlaw come to the same conclusion at the close of a cautiously-worded discourse. And James of Birmingham has words to much the same effect in his *Anxious Inquirer*.

Let the fourth charge, on Repentance, be studied in the light of the same consuming earnestness. Mr. Morison knew that many seeking souls were kept in darkness and distress from the fear that their sorrow for sin was not deep enough. Fully persuaded that if such inquirers would only "Behold the Lamb," they "would mourn and be in bitterness,"—their tears of contrition, however, intermingled with the smiles of grace,—he called attention to the fact that the Greek word rendered "repentance," in the New Testament meant *change of mind*; whereas that which meant *sorrow for sin*, as in the case of Judas, was quite a different word. And, without doubt, Mr. Morison was right and the Kilmarnock Presbytery were wrong. Let any reader only consult the best critics on the text of the New Testament, and he will find the truth stated on this point in much the same way as the founder of our denomination stated it. And it is quite undeniable that, while Arminian and Wesleyan theologians have generally taken the ground of the Kilmarnock Presbytery, a great host of respectable, orthodox, Calvinistic divines are on Mr. Morison's side. But surely the Presbytery were making a man literally "an offender for a word," when they sought to convict him of being a heretic on so minute and subordinate a point as this.

The fifth charge seems to be still more insignificant, and therefore we pass it by in silence. As to the sixth topic—namely, Election—we have already indicated that Mr. Morison, at the time of his trial, was not wholly emancipated from the Calvinistic fetters. Still, some of his expressions did not satisfy the Presbytery. And what is the sample of the objectionable utterances which the libel contains? Tell it not in Glasgow; publish it not in the streets of Edinburgh, lest the hosts of infidels should triumph—"That, notwithstanding election, it is in the power of the non-elect to be saved!" Did these ministers really put that down as an error to be condemned? They actually did. How, then, on their principles, can there be a judgment-seat, and a left hand of the judge? How can the non-elect be condemned for rejecting salvation *if it was not in their power to*

*be saved?* Once more it is plain that the truth of God was on the side of the accused, and not on that of his accusers.

We have already shown that when the expression "a talismanic something," as applied to the work of Christ, is read in the connection in which it occurs in Mr. Morison's "Nature of the Atonement," instead of appearing irreverent, it is very forcible and powerful indeed.—As to the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity (for the Presbytery ended at the origin of evil, where they should have begun), we feel persuaded that any candid and reasonable man will side once more with the stripling rather than with his seniors. Only listen. It was seriously charged against Mr. Morison that "he was not prepared to say that all men by nature are deserving of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, on account of Adam's first sin, or that they are guilty of Adam's sin, and therefore deserving of punishment, till the terms guilt and desert are explained." And who would be prepared, in this year of grace, to swallow wholesale such a creed? Is it because the world is taking strides of progress in theology, as rapid as those which she is taking in science and political advancement, that this grotesque ultimatum of 1841 scents so much of the sepulchre and decay? Why, it looks as if it had been dug up with a mummy after an interment of millenniums. We can hardly believe that grave ecclesiastics tried to cram that choking fossil down a young man's throat when Victoria was Queen, and Sir Robert Peel her Prime Minister. All honour to him who shuddered at its monstrosity and would have none of it! Send a child to hell for Adam's sin! Bring in a man personally guilty for what he never did, and for what was done thousands of years before he was born! Could a charge like that be proved at the Kilmarnock Sheriff Court, or the Ayr Circuit Court, or the Edinburgh Court of Justiciary? Would it not be refused a hearing, and be sent out of court with shouts of derisive laughter? And how can it ever be entertained at the judgment-seat of Christ? "Not till the words guilt and desert were explained?" We should think not, brave "young swain," who didst thus dare, single-handed, to defend Christ's truth against well-meaning but belated ecclesiastics. The difficulty of our valourous friend was something like that of the little girl in Roxburghshire we heard of many years ago, who told her mother that she had tried hard to repent of eating the apple in the garden of

Eden, and had not been able! No doubt it must be matter of grief and shame to us that our progenitor transgressed the command of God. Temporal death, moreover, and temptations, and tendencies towards evil, have resulted to us from his fall; but whatever harm has accrued from it, has been more than met and mastered in the redemption of Christ. But for a conclave of clergymen to maintain that death eternal resulted to any human being through that first sin, apart from his own iniquities, and to insert it in the text of an ecclesiastical libel, that the accused presbyter wished to know what kind of "guilt" and "desert" was meant, savours so much of owl-like superstition that we fancy we hear the click of the thumb-screw or the foot-rack in the days of the Inquisition, or see the smoke curling round "auld Kilmarnock" from a fire which has just been kindled to burn a wizard or a witch.

We could not permit these original eight charges to go out to the world again, without adding a few words of explanation and defence to the report of Mr. Morison's reply, which, although the fullest we could get, is still meagre and incomplete.

## CHAPTER V.

Evening Sederunt of the Presbytery on the day of Mr. Morison's Trial—Speeches of the Rev. Messrs. Meikle, Ronald, and Thomas—Scene at the Close—Decision of the Presbytery—Mr. Morison Appeals to the Synod—Speech of Mr. Thomas Adam.

WHEN the Presbytery, after a brief interval, met again for their evening sederunt, the crowd assembled in Clerk's Lane Chapel was, if possible, even more dense and excited than it had been during the day; because, of course, the shopkeepers and workmen who were released from labour were eager to see and to hear, and everybody knew that some kind of decision or other would be reached before the sitting was closed. Professor Taylor (to whom we are indebted for sundry particulars), who had been seated in the lower part of the chapel in the forenoon, had found his way to the front of the gallery in the evening, from which elevated position he was able to survey the scene and hear all that was to be heard.

As Mr. Morison had spoken at length during the previous diet, it now remained for the members of the Presbytery to express their judgment on his views. This they seem to have done in the order of seniority. No report has been preserved, in any of the journals on which we have been able to lay our hands, of the speeches of Dr. Schaw of Ayr, who introduced the discussion, Mr. Campbell of Irvine, or Mr. Robertson of Kilmaurs. Only a brief summary of Mr. Elles's remarks is given in the Kilmarnock newspaper, from which we have already quoted more than once; but it contains no observations of any importance. We are arrested, however, by the long and elaborate address of Mr. Meikle of Beith, to whom it would appear that the post of honour had been assigned of preparing a detailed reply to Mr. Morison's averments on all the theological points at issue.

And inasmuch as the latter had ever given great prominence in all his sermons and pamphlets, as well as in the speech delivered that day, to Paul's definition of the Gospel in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, as justifying that pointed, personal, and individualising preaching, which he practised, and on which he insisted as the true apostolic mode, Mr. Meikle began by referring to that notable passage in the Word of God. In the course of his remarks he said:

“Mr. Morison overlooks the fact that this epistle is not addressed to the heathen at Corinth, which in his reasoning he took for granted, but to the church there, even to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours—chap. i. 2.”

But here Mr. Meikle “overlooks the fact” that this was the message which, according to Mr. Morison, Paul had delivered “first of all” in the streets of Corinth to the yet voluptuous and idolatrous inhabitants, “O ye men and women of Corinth, Christ died for our sins.” No doubt Mr. Meikle elsewhere remarks that the expression “first of all” refers not to the priority of announcement, but to the prime importance of the truths enunciated concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We do not think that this criticism will commend itself to any unprejudiced reader of the Word. Or if these doctrines stand out on the apostle's page as first and foremost in importance, it is because we are told that they fell first and foremost from his lips as a herald of the cross.

When he approached the question of the nature and extent

of the atonement, Mr. Meikle made a statement which should have caused him to pause and review the real scope and tendency of his own theology. He said, "the atonement is in itself a fit means of, and sufficient for, the salvation of all men; and nothing more would have been required though the whole human race were to have been saved." If this were the case, how arbitrary and unkind of the Divine Father to limit its efficacy and application to only some members of the human family! Yet Mr. Meikle thought there were certain passages of Scripture which taught such a view of restricted grace. He called special attention to the opening words of our Lord's intercessory prayer: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." But why should words with so comprehensive a reference be shut up in a strait Genevan gorge? Why should Christ get power over *all flesh* if his heart, from the first, had gone out in love only to some? He did not need power over all to save only some. Do not the remarkable words clearly bear out the very interpretation which Mr. Morison put upon them, and upon the whole Bible too?—an interpretation the discovery of which had at once made his Saviour's love clear to his own soul, and had thrown a flood of light upon the entire Scriptures of truth—namely, that the mediator between God and man had literally, as Paul elsewhere says, given himself as a ransom for all flesh, and that the individuals out of that mighty whole who would comply with his overtures and solicitations of grace, would be given to him by his Father as his own elect people, or had already been given to him, according to the divine foreknowledge of their repentance, faith, and holiness. Thus the two successive clauses of the verse are rendered harmonious, which otherwise would conflict hopelessly with one another; and thus, too, are all the other passages of Scripture which speak of God's general love for mankind reconciled with those in which we read of a special love for the church—the Lamb's wife. The limitation springs not from a deficiency in the love of God, but from the unbelieving non-compliance of some rebellious men. If all would repent and believe, all would be given by the Father to the Son.

Passing on to the subject of saving faith, Mr. Meikle boldly attacked the view that faith was an intellectual act, although he must have known that both Dr. Chalmers and

Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh had maintained that view, not to speak of Dr. Gordon of the same city, and Dr. Russell of Dundee. He seems to refer to these respectable authorities in his remark—"It may appear to some that it accords better with the philosophy of mind to describe faith as consisting merely in the intellectual perception of the truth of the divine testimony, and to regard the change produced on the heart, in all its affections, and in the life, as the results of this belief." Most certainly that is both the philosophical and the scriptural view; and the passages which Mr. Meikle quotes in support of his opinion, that faith proper includes the love of the heart and the obedience of the life, are quite beside the mark. Consider, for example, the exhortation in Heb. x.—"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," &c. Now we have in these words plainly not a definition of faith but a description of the way in which it acts in the souls of believers. The same criticism may be made on Heb. xi. 13, also quoted by Mr. Meikle. Surely it was the result of the faith of the patriarchs, rather than of its essence, that "they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

The only other extract which we will give from Mr. Meikle's address is the following near the close, on the question of human ability:—

"Besides, the doctrine of Mr. Morison that all men are able of themselves to believe the Gospel, and to put away unbelief, the only obstacle which the atonement has not removed, is obviously a scheme of doctrine that makes the salvation of sinners to depend, not on the divine purpose of mercy through the mediation of Christ, but on the right use of that moral power which he asserts they possess. And does it not, therefore, I ask, in so far convert the covenant of grace into a covenant of works? If the only obstacle in the way of our salvation is unbelief, and if, as sinners, we are able of ourselves to put this obstacle away, then of consequence our enjoyment of salvation depends on the contingency of our using our moral ability aright. Was not the enjoyment of eternal life under the law of works suspended on the right use of the moral power with which our first parents were endowed,—on the perfect obedience which they were able to give to the commandment of God respecting the tree of knowledge? Now, according to Mr. Morison's scheme, is not the enjoyment of eternal life under the constitution of mercy, still dependent on the right use of the moral power of man, though that power is now to be put forth in a different form, according to his altered circumstances, namely, in renouncing the sin of unbelief which he asserts we are able of ourselves to put away? According to this scheme of doctrine, eternal life is still to

be obtained partly by works, and not as the apostle declares, entirely of grace."

We must, of course, again protest against the insinuation here repeatedly thrown out, that Mr. Morison and his followers could dispense with a Saviour altogether, and "save themselves" by their own power. It seems to be almost impossible for controversialists to state the views of their opponents fairly. Any one who knew how devoted Mr. Morison was to his Saviour would understand at once that the charge of advocating salvation by works was most unfounded. Besides, what power have we that we can call absolutely our own? Has not God given us our faculties of believing, and loving, and willing, with all the sister-powers that philosophers have particularised and named? And does he not as much maintain these in their respective orbits of exercise as he keeps the planets wheeling in their courses? True, we have the awful power of self-determination, without which we could not be morally responsible at all; but even that faculty has a Godward as well as a manward side, which should never be forgotten—not to speak of the indisposition of the sinner for the things of salvation, which renders necessary the suasive influence of the Holy Spirit. Independent in church government, we have never claimed to be independent of God. The testimony given by the founders of the Evangelical Union has all along been the very opposite of that mad position, which indeed is the one which only the irregenerate, the unholy, and the profane are bold enough to occupy.

With this explanation we would, if present, have been disposed respectfully to say to Mr. Meikle, "Is there not a most important sense in which 'our enjoyment of salvation depends on the contingency of our using our moral ability aright'? What does Mr. Meikle himself mean when at any time he waxes warm with his subject of discourse, and beseeches his hearers to give their hearts to God immediately and be saved? If he should speak some day with solemn earnestness from the text, 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live,' how could he do so except on the principle that 'our enjoyment of salvation depends on the contingency of our using our moral ability aright,' and that, in an important sense, that blessing is, under the constitution of mercy, still dependent on the right use of the

moral power of man, though that power is now to be put forth in a different form, according to his 'altered circumstances'?" Indeed, we accept this statement, made so long ago by our opponent, as really an admirable way of putting what we believe to be the very truth of God, and what *he himself must admit to be the truth of God, and practically proceeds upon*, moreover, every time he presses a hearer to do anything in the matter of his salvation, whether he call upon him to repent, or believe, or pray, or like a cautious old Scotch minister, to "*mak' a mint at an attempt at an assaye to pray to God!*" If a sinner be left like a stone, to be lifted by lever power, in that case no moral agency is exercised, and in that case let ministers preach *before* people, but never *at* them or *to* them. Let no *active verbs* be used in the discourse, but only *passive* ones; for the poor creatures are purely passive in God's hands! But if men are to be commanded, right and left, to be up and doing in the matter of their own salvation—yea, if the smallest and most initial onus of responsibility be laid at their door, the use of *moral power* is most undoubtedly taken for granted, and should not be denied. Blessed be God we are "in altered circumstances!" We do not need to go about to "establish our own righteousness." We have only to lay hold of the righteousness which another has wrought out and brought in. Still, in order to the due exercise of faith, a certain amount of moral power must be brought into play. We must pause. We must ponder. We must attend. We must determine. We must be candid. We must act up to our convictions. To all this the Spirit seeks to draw us. For this good fruit he waits. And "he that believes shall not perish." Without doubt the mediatorial dispensation is for us a most easy and favourable branch or manifestation of moral government; yet still it is a branch of moral government, in which the free decision of man is not ignored, but is brought into play—the term or condition being made simple and gracious, because the Lamb had been made sin for us. How very wrong, then, in Mr. Meikle to say that it is "partly of works" and not "entirely of grace," when "it is of faith that it might be by grace." If it be replied that, according to us, *faith is a work*, we answer, It is not a work of law. If it may be called, in a certain sense, a work of activity, as opposed to the indolence of unbelief, it must be borne in mind that it is a work

which has a meek mouth that disclaims all merit, and cries out "None but Christ," "None but Christ."

Mr. Ronald, of Saltcoats, spoke, as usual, more kindly and apologetically with respect to Mr. Morison than any of the other members of Court. We make the following brief extract from his address :—

"He thought he saw how Mr. Morison had been led into the error. A number of persons at one time came round to his (Mr. R.'s) locality and preached the same doctrine ; and he did not wonder they should have made an impression. These persons said, 'Jesus died for the whole world; and don't you belong to the world? Believe this and be saved.' It was a fascinating doctrine, and it had been thought a grand thing by many who had embraced it, but who, unlike Mr. Morison, had not the enthusiasm to carry them through with it."

Mr. Ronald might call this view, somewhat slightly, a fascinating doctrine ; but the fascination is only the charm of the "good tidings of great joy" which God has sent to "all people." It was thus that Paul reasoned when he said "Christ Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am chief ;" and it was thus that Dr. Calamy's half-witted hearer reasoned when he said, "Christ came to save sinners, and why not poor Joseph?" The tract, we suppose, which was written to improve that saying, was circulated in thousands by the Secession Church to which Mr. Ronald belonged ; and we venture to assert that it could not be circulated consistently on the basis of any other theological views than those which the young accused minister was defending that night at the Presbytery's bar.

Mr. Bruce of Newmilns, in the course of his address, made the courteous admission that Mr. Morison had delivered an able defence. His words were,—“Though an able defence it did not meet the case.” We learn from this gentleman's speech, what we otherwise would not have known, that action had been taken, even before Mr. Morison's trial came on, in the Kilmarnock Sabbath School Society against a considerable portion of the teachers who had embraced Mr. Morison's views. Mr. Bruce quoted the following passage from the Sabbath School Report :—

"Do not put us off with the vague assertion that you mean to teach what you find in the Scriptures ; for even those sects who are confessedly the most erroneous in sentiment—the Arians, the Socinians, the Unitarians, and the Papists—make the very same profession ; and yet they propagate opinions most derogatory to the character of our blessed Lord, and most injurious to the interests of immortal souls."

We think that it was very bigoted and narrow-minded of the Sabbath School Society indeed to put the views of Mr. Morison's adherents on a par with those of Papists and Unitarians. Surely they will be ashamed of themselves when they look at that passage to-day in the light of Mr. Morison's subsequent career, as well as of the present position held by the churches in Kilmarnock which are identified with his doctrines. The Rev. A. M. Wilson, of Bathgate, was one of the teachers who were thus rudely ejected from the Sabbath School Union ; but the Lord has since that time so abundantly owned his teachings, both in public and in private, as to cover with disgrace the board of well-meaning, it may be, but illiberal men who sought to silence him.

No report was preserved of the speeches of Mr. Brown of Cumnock and Mr. Cairns of Stewarton, who followed Mr. Bruce in the debate ; but a large space is devoted, both in the *Kilmarnock Journal* and the *United Secession Magazine*, to the closing address—namely, that given by the Rev. Mr. Thomas, of Mauchline. Indeed, his speech is given in full in both of these publications, having been evidently printed from the orator's manuscript, as the numerous italicized passages bear witness. These italics, moreover, abundantly demonstrate Mr. Thomas's *animus* against Mr. Morison ; for, as the chief burden of the proof of heresy had been devolved on Mr. Meikle, of Beith, that of alleged moral obliquity had been assigned, by common consent, to the minister of Mauchline. And with much zeal and apparent relish did he discharge the duty. We would have thought that the ingenuous statement made by the young minister in the forenoon of that day, which we quoted in last chapter, would have disarmed the speaker's prejudices, and made him fling away his poisoned arrows, even if they had already been feathered and concealed in his quiver. Had the accused at the bar not explained that the tract so much complained about had resulted both from the work of God in his own heart and in the localities to which he had been sent to labour ? Was it not a fact that, while promising on his ordination day to alter certain expressions which had been misunderstood, he had nevertheless asserted that he would not, and could not, preach any other doctrines than those which were contained in the tract ? And should not the frank admission of regret that he had not prevented, by legal measures, the publication of the pamphlet by others

(although his friends regretted his expression of regret) have sufficed to allay the wrath of the appointed mouthpiece of the Presbytery? But no. It was observed that Mr. Thomas left the evening sederunt shortly after its commencement, and did not return till it was nearly time for him to speak. He had evidently been preparing and conning his address. And certainly the cannon, being fully charged and primed, went off with a great explosion. The soldier, not of the Cross, but of the Confession, tried to drive his sword of vituperation up to the very heart into the body, or rather the spirit, of his young adversary. A great attempt was made to damage the work in Clerk's Lane by damaging the character of him whom God had so signally used there to do undeniable good. But the "iron did not enter his soul," nor the souls of the people. They knew that they had got a man after the Lord's own heart, whose whole aim it was to spend and be spent for their good and His glory.

When he had put himself out of breath with his attack on Mr. Morison's character, Mr. Thomas tried a few closing flings at his doctrines; but, as might have been expected, these, being the efforts of an exhausted gladiator, were not eminently successful. He attempted an original line of argumentation which is always dangerous, unless one is pretty sure of his ground. He tried to show that Mr. Morison's doctrines were not self-consistent. On one point, as we have already admitted, full consistency had not been reached—the system of the young theologian not having been fully developed in his own mind; but on all the other points alluded to, we join issue with the speaker. Thus he tried to show that while with one breath Mr. Morison maintained that the atonement had done something important for every man, with the other he held that it had done nothing—since no man would be saved unless he repented and believed. But can nothing important be done for a man by his Saviour unless his salvation be absolutely secured? Is not the provision of salvation, as a gift to be accepted by the sinner, a most momentous matter? And this was what, according to Mr. Morison, Christ had done for every man. Again, Mr. Thomas thought he had discovered a great inconsistency in the matter of faith; for whereas Mr. Morison had again and again asserted that there was only one kind of faith, he had that day, when quoting the verse, "now have they both seen and hated both

me and my Father" (John xv. 24), admitted that these Jews "saw" and yet "saw not" in a saving sense. But surely there is some difference between seeing and believing not, and believing and believing not! Evidently although these Jews saw Christ's miracles with their bodily eyes they did not see them with their minds at all—that is, they did not believe. Finally, Mr. Thomas thus pointed out a supposed inconsistency on the subject of prayer:—

"Mr. Morison taught, and taught very particularly, the doctrine that no person ought to pray who was not sure that he was in a saving state—in other words, that he was a believer. Doubting sinners were not to pray; sinners that were anxious about their salvation were not to pray for grace; no man was to pray who did not entertain the persuasion that he was a saint of the living God. Well, were Mr. Morison asked if he really held such doctrine as this, what would be his answer? He would state that he held a doctrine just the very opposite, and would refer to a passage in one of his tracts, in which he stated that the 'anxious sinner' may come to God by prayer, even though he were not converted. 'If you will come by prayer,' was his language, 'fix your eye believingly on Jesus, and, with the publican's confiding heart and confessing mouth, exclaim, God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

We are certain that Mr. Morison's friends, and the friends of truth in general, will thank us for this quotation, for it serves to make plain, and that on the showing of an opponent, what the accused minister's views on prayer really were. The only prayer to which Mr. Morison was really opposed was the prayer of the wicked, which was "an abomination to the Lord." And, as already explained, he conceived the too common pulpit advice, given by ministers to inquiring sinners, to go home and pray for faith, a dangerous misdirection, as being one which leads them away from the cross to their own hearts. But no one could more willingly recognise the fact than he did, that new-born faith was often expressed to God in such a prayer as the publican's—that being not an unsaved sinner's supplication for faith, but the believing cry of a penitent, returning soul.

Several hours had passed away during the delivery of these addresses, and as the close of the proceedings approached, the multitude, both within and without the chapel, became intensely excited. Generally, the Moderator of a Presbytery informs the audience, if they make any signs of approbation or disapprobation during the delivery of addresses on an important case, that they are only present by courtesy, and that therefore the place of meeting must be

cleared if any such demonstration be repeated. In this case, however, after sundry attempts at restraint, it was seen to be vain to renew such appeals, and the crowded hearers were at length permitted to cheer or groan as if they had been members of the court of judicature. One gentleman has informed us that when anything adverse to Mr. Morison was uttered, we can have no idea of the strength of the *hiss* that was evoked from the people,—especially during those portions of Mr. Thomas's address in which an attempt was made to reflect on their beloved minister's character. Its sibilant power was so cutting that it seemed as if it might pierce through the body of the speaker who had called it forth, as well as his spirit. One reason, possibly, why these manifestations of feeling were permitted was that the Presbytery, to a large extent, were in the hands of the multitude, so tightly were they wedged in by them. This became very apparent as, one by one, the members of the Court retired for refreshment during the course of the evening. Those of them who had made themselves unpopular by their speeches and mode of acting, had a little difficulty in getting in again, for the word was passed among some of the more waggish spirits around the door to "keep them out." For a time the stern call, "Make way for Members of the Court there," "Make way for Members of the Court," produced no effect, and when, at length, a narrow passage was cleared, the reverend wrestlers arrived at their seats again, panting not a little after their struggle in the doorway.

A deep impression was produced when the evening debate was pretty far advanced, as it was observed that the Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate entered, and took his seat beside his son. Mr. Morison had travelled all day, first by the coach from Bathgate to Glasgow, and then from Glasgow to Kilmarnock. His resolution to be present had been formed somewhat suddenly,—as it was only after rising in the morning that it had appeared to him to be his duty to go. He was much respected in the Secession Church (as we remarked in our first chapter), of which he had been a minister for twenty-seven years, and had always held a high place as a man of mind in the estimation of his brethren. His very presence on the occasion must have been a moral support to his son. But all day long the latter had been sustained by the felt nearness and the aid of his Heavenly Father, and of that Elder Brother, for the liberality of whose atoning love

he was contending, even unto the loss of earthly status and worldly goods.

But the excitement was as great outside in the town among Mr. Morison's friends and the public generally, as it was among those who had been so fortunate as to gain admission to the chapel, or whose health could stand the pressure. An elderly lady informed us lately that about ten o'clock on that eventful night a friend called for her and said, "O Mrs. A——, I wonder you can sit in the house. Do you not know that that poor young lad has been on his feet all day contending with these ministers; and they say they are at it yet! Put on your bonnet and come away down the town with me, and we'll hear at any rate what is likely to be done." So the two ladies sallied forth at that late hour, and, proceeding along King Street, passed through the square at the Cross, and drew near to the place of meeting. The elder son in the parable heard afar off "the sound of music and dancing;" but they heard at a considerable distance the uproar that re-echoed from the crowded building. When they reached Clerk's Lane they found that it was almost impassable with the multitude who were waiting to hear the result of the proceedings, and who were eagerly discussing the merits of the case, both doctrinal and practical, besides relating to one another the latest particulars of the trial,—as people report the state of the poll at a contested election, or the newest aspect of a great criminal case. Without pushing their way through the crowd towards the chapel, they went forward to the manse to call for Mr. Morison's sister, who then kept his house. They found her sitting all alone in his study, and calmly waiting the result. She was surprised to learn from them that her father had arrived; for he had gone straight from the coach to the chapel.

Meanwhile, the case had reached its climax there, and the excitement too. About eleven o'clock at night, the stormy pleadings having at length come to an end, Mr. Elles moved, as the *Kilmarnock Journal* informs us, that "Mr. Morison, having in various instances concealed his real sentiments before his ordination, and having given the Presbytery reason to believe that he adhered to the standards of the Secession Church: having also, on the morning of his ordination, promised to suppress the tract, which he had not done—and his conduct subsequently having been inconsistent with his

pledges : be admonished, and suspended from the exercise of his ministerial functions, aye, and until he retract his errors and express his sorrow to the Presbytery for propagating such errors." Mr. Campbell of Irvine seconded the motion. Before we announce the result we must call attention to the wording of this Resolution. It did not provide for an honest finding on the case. The points in dispute were far more truly doctrinal than practical—the long libel itself being witness, which we quoted in last chapter ; and yet the Presbytery here tries to ride off triumphantly under a paltry attempt to blacken a character which remains spotless to this day. What although the young man, in an agony of uncertainty, and not knowing very well what to do, had been comparatively reticent before his ordination, being naturally anxious to remain in the church of his fathers? There was no reservation now. The colours, as we have already said, were nailed to the mast now. Manifestly their duty was to leave all that obsolete charge of disingenuousness behind, and now that the ingenuousness of their youngest co-presbyter was so transparent, address themselves to the charge of doctrinal error alone. "Mr. Duncan of Girvan then proposed an amendment to the effect 'that the Presbytery adjourn until to-morrow, that a free and friendly conference might be held with Mr. Morison.' This milder motion was seconded by Mr. Bruce of Newmilns. Mr. Fleming, elder of the congregation, moved that the matter should be carried to the Synod ; but this was not seconded. The roll was then called, when there voted for Mr. Elles's motion, 20 ; for Mr. Duncan's amendment, 5 ; majority, 15. The Rev. Mr. Thomson declined to vote. The Moderator then intimated to Mr. Morison the finding of the Presbytery ; upon which Mr. Morison dissented from their decision, and appealed to the Synod."

These few sentences gave a very inadequate idea of the scene which occurred when this decision was reached. According to an old custom, Mr. Morison required to *table a shilling* when he appealed to the Synod, which he did amid breathless silence, remarking at the same time that he was "deeply pained by the decision to which his fathers and brethren had come." Whenever he made this announcement it looked as if a riot would take place. The people could hardly keep their hands off the men who had condemned the teaching and aspersed the character of their beloved minister. At the same time a whole range of pews

near the western door of the chapel gave way under the pressure of the crowd, and some screams following the noise, a little alarm began to be felt. Mr. M'Kay in his *History of Kilmarnock* makes this reference to the scene: "At length, in March, 1841, the matter was brought before the Presbytery in Clerk's Lane Chapel. Considerable excitement prevailed during the trial. Mr. Morison advocated his cause in an earnest and eloquent manner, and carried along with him the feelings and sympathies of a considerable portion of the auditory. The meeting took place at an early hour of the day, and the deepest interest seemed to be taken by all parties in the proceedings of the court, which continued its sittings till midnight. An hour or two before the business was closed, the pressure and agitation so much increased, that some of the pews were fairly broken down, the window panes were smashed, and even life itself appeared to be in danger. The court wound up the affair by passing a deed of suspension against Mr. Morison; who, in his turn, lodged a protest, and appealed to the meeting of Synod." (p. 146.) Doubtless there had been some danger to life and limb for an hour or two before the proceedings terminated, and especially when the threat was made by some excited persons to impede the exit of the Presbytery. But just at this critical juncture a powerful and well-known voice was heard, which had the effect, like the town-clerk's at Ephesus, of "appeasing the people." This was the voice of Mr. Thomas Adam, a member of the Clerk's Lane Church, and also a much respected and influential townsman. Mr. Adam, besides being one of the middle-class tradespeople of the place, had, for many years, taken a leading part in the politics of Kilmarnock—no mean honour, when it is remembered that every man there claims to be a politician. He was, moreover, a fluent, forcible, and accurate speaker; and when he was seen standing up on a pew, with his hat in his hand, and beginning to address the meeting, the din and the tumult ceased in a moment. He spoke to the following effect:—"Moderator, Mr. Morison has protested in his own name against the decision which has just been reached; but I protest in the name of the Commissioners, and of the congregation. It will be left, however, to the congregation to say whether they will appeal to the Synod or not. But, friends, I counsel you to let the Presbytery depart in peace. As a people we have been much tried with them in past

days, and they have often met here; but this is the last time they will ever meet in Clerk's Lane Church." The *Kilmarnock Journal* says, "This address was received with vociferous cheering from several quarters of the house." It had the happy effect of removing the influence of the adverse vote from the minds of the people, and of making them remember that, instead of being vanquished, they were in reality the victors, inasmuch as, being numerically the great majority, they would have the power to keep the property, in terms of the title-deeds. Indeed, such was the impression produced by this unexpected, short address, that many an old person who was present, and who may have forgotten all the other particulars of the case, does not fail to exclaim, when questioned about the exciting occasion, "Yes, I was there; and *I mind of hearing Thomas Adam*. I remember seeing him standing up on the seat and begging the folk not to meddle the Presbytery, for it would be the last time they would ever be in the kirk. And I remember the cheering and clapping of hands when Thomas Adam sat down." That respected spokesman has now gone to his rest; but he remained an attached adherent of Mr. Morison, as long as the latter remained in Kilmarnock, and afterwards, of his esteemed successor, the Rev. William Bathgate—being a member of the eldership, as well as of the congregation, at the time of his death. There is no doubt that he, on that eventful night, and not the Moderator, "dismissed the assembly."

Possibly some sensitive and pious minds may be pained by such a detailed narrative of controversy as that which we have just set before them. They may be disposed to say, "Here are good men, on both sides, going home after such a scene, and praying to the same God to bless them and to guide them into the truth. Could the same God hear and bless them all?" We have no hesitation in answering in the affirmative. At the time of the American war the Northern and Southern armies alike sang hymns and prayed to the God of Sabaoth. Stonewall Jackson, mistaken in politics, but meek in piety, stole out beyond his lines, Cromwell-like, to hold secret communion with his God; while many a fervent supplication rose up, at the very same hour, from the gallant army of the Potomac. Could the Lord hear both parties, and bless both? He could. He answered the prayers of those who were on the right side

by giving them ultimate victory after many discouragements; and he answered those who were on the wrong side by "terrible things in righteousness," all ending in final discomfiture. The good who were among the latter he saved "as by fire," and brought them through a bloody baptism to a wealthy place. Now we would solve the practical difficulty of theological controversy in the same way. The Lord knows the weakness and frailties of our minds, and pities the errors of belligerent ministers, as well as of belligerent soldiers. That night He could hear the prayers of James Morison as he knelt with tear-bedimmed eyes to commit unto him his future way; and he could also hear the prayer of his bitterest antagonist,—while sorrowful for whatever alloy of self and intolerance might be there, and determining, at the same time, to rid both parties by the illumination, alike of Time and Eternity, of the misconceptions which might yet cleave to their minds.

## CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Morison's Kilmarnock Pastorate between the Meetings of the Presbytery and the Synod in Glasgow—His Marriage—Publishes "On the Extent of the Atonement"—Abstract of the Work—His Trial before the Secession Synod—His Reasons of Protest and Appeal—Those Lodged by the Clerk's Lane Church—The Presbytery's Reply to the same—Mr. Morison's Defence on the first Count of the first Charge.

As the Synod, to which Mr. Morison had appealed against the deed of separation passed by the Presbytery on the 3rd of March, was appointed to meet in Glasgow, on the 7th of June, 1841, only three clear months require to be accounted for in the ministerial career of our theological hero between these two important dates. Neither his pastoral standing nor his evangelistic labours were in any way affected by the adverse vote, with the account of which our last article closed. An ecclesiastical appeal from a lower court to a higher as entirely sists procedure, and screens the menaced individual from the execution of a sentence, as does an appeal in any of our law courts. Therefore had Mr. Morison the right, during the interval to which we have referred, to occupy his own pulpit, dispense the ordinances of the church, and even attend the ordinary meetings of the Pres-

bytery, if he so pleased, as being still a fully accredited minister of the United Secession Church.

This liberty was indeed of the utmost importance to him; for the revival of religion which had been produced in Kilmarnock by God's blessing on his earnest ministrations, instead of being slackened, was even stimulated by all these judicial proceedings. It may seem strange, and almost impossible, at first sight, that acrimonious controversy and genuine soul-saving could go on at one and the same time; but the explanation of the apparent anomaly is to be found in the spiritual experience of him who was the human centre around which all this excitement revolved. He did not allow his heart to be embittered by anything that was said or done against him. He could hardly spare the time to attend these exciting debates on account of his engrossing engagements with sin-sick souls; and whenever the ecclesiastical field-day would be over, he quickly doffed all the formidable armour with which he had been compelled to equip himself and ran back eagerly, like a spiritual Cincinnatus, once more to bend over his beloved gospel-plough. If some irate antagonists sent any barbed arrows after him, he only lifted the missiles of malignity meekly out of the furrows where they fell, praying, as he did so, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Dr. Morison has recently been kind enough to show us the carefully preserved church-book in which the names of all the members admitted into Clerk's Lane Church were enrolled at this time. It appears from that register that no fewer than 403 individuals were received into fellowship during 1841, and 183 of these during the quarter that elapsed between March and June. And let it be noted that these arithmetical numbers imply an immense amount of anxious and painstaking labour. Every applicant was seen again and again;—the object aimed at in all the conversations being *peace with God on an evangelical foundation*. This scriptural phrase, "Peace with God," appears thus prominently for the first time, as far as we know, as a term of communion, in connection with the labours of Mr. Morison and his friends. Wesleyans speak of "the witness of the Spirit;" Independents generally of evidence of regeneration; while Presbyterians are commonly satisfied with a "credible profession" of Christianity. The leaders of the Evangelical Union, however, asked all their applicants for

church fellowship if they had “peace with God.” Doubtless, the now characteristic expression can be traced to Mr. Morison of Kilmarnock; and more particularly to his fondness for the epistle to the Romans; and yet more particularly to the first verse of the fifth chapter of that epistle: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The passage does indeed appear to be a *locus classicus*—a remarkable place—worthy of being printed in capitals, and intended to be a reference text for the student of Scripture—even as in a fortified country towers of special strength rise every here and there, or as in the course of a brawling stream, deep and quiet pools will every now and then sweetly intervene. The sacred writer having elaborately and argumentatively set forth the doctrine of justification by faith in the previous chapters, there enters upon the consequences of believing. All at once his train of thought loses the murmur of argument, and settles down into the deep calm of tranquil deduction—“*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Mr. Morison’s eminently practical mind seized upon this sentence as being one of intense and special importance, and with all the vehemence of his early oratory he used to cry—“Look here: the inspired apostle of the Gentiles concludes that whenever a man believes and is justified, he enters upon the possession and enjoyment of peace with God. He is not afraid of God. Because he sees that Jesus has made a complete atonement for all his sins, his guilty terror has all fled away.” This initial blessing of “peace with God” he distinguished from Assurance. It might be almost identical with what other evangelical writers had meant by “the Assurance of Faith;” but he reserved that term (Heb. x. 22) rather for the subsequent confidence that springs from the joint testimony of Faith and the Graces which are her spiritual daughters.

Napoleon’s “hundred days” were the days of fighting that elapsed between the departure from Elba and the final struggle at Waterloo. James Morison’s Ninety days, between the fight in the Presbytery and the fight in the Synod, were very different. They were days of holy calm and usefulness, extending between an enforced truce and the subsequent outbreak of hostilities. One or two days in the week were set apart for conversation with the “anxious” in the minister’s own house. On these occasions, as we have already

described, the manse would be full of people eager to converse with him from morning to night. He patiently strove to remove the difficulties of each inquirer—hurrying over no case superficially, as far as time would allow, because feeling, to some extent, the value of each immortal soul. “My sins are too great.” “But does not the blood of Christ cleanse from all sin?”—“I have a very bad heart.” “But Jesus died for your bad heart.”—“I have a very hard heart.” “But Jesus died for your hard heart; believe in his love and it will be softened.” Thus did the subdued strain of comforting exhortation go on, from hour to hour, during the Ninety days. It generally happened that not all who waited upon him at the time set apart for conference would be satisfied, or brought to evangelical rest. A note was taken of the case, and a subsequent interview appointed. In this way would Mr. Morison’s time be largely occupied for several days every week. Indeed, he had little time left for study, much as his heart was set upon it. Even his sermons were hurriedly prepared; but his mind was so full of the truth which he had lately found out for his own soul, and which he had been called upon to defend, that he literally overflowed with the love of Christ when he entered his pulpit on the Sabbath day.

One very interesting episode falls to be recorded here, namely, Mr. Morison’s marriage to the lady who shared, till the autumn of 1875, and shared so nobly and so meekly, both his honours and dishonours, his sorrows and his joys. Amid so much talk of cutting off and separation, this domestic union comes in with a fine comforting and counterbalancing effect. The young bridegroom had to go to London for his bride; but he took only one Sabbath’s rest for holiday and honeymoon, and even on a part of that day preached for the Rev. Thomas Aveling, of Kingsland, the same Congregational minister who had issued, on his own responsibility, an edition of the tract, “What must I do to be saved?” The people used to come running to their doors and look after Mrs. Morison when she was first brought to Kilmarnock. They wondered that she would have come into the midst of so much commotion and strife. But they seemed to forget that charity or love “endureth all things,” and that when we walk in the path of duty there may be the deepest peace in the midst of surrounding trouble.

Luther had so much delight in his commentary on the

epistle to the Galatians that he used to call it "his wife"—"his Catharine de Bore,"—of whom again he was accustomed to say that "he would not exchange her for the kingdom of France, nor all the riches of the Venetians." Immediately after his return from his brief marriage jaunt, Mr. Morison was very busy with the preparation of a work for the press, which must have imposed a heavy tax on his already over-taxed energies, and yet must have been so agreeable to him as almost to rival his new domestic affection. We refer to his work on "The Extent of the Atonement; or, the Question, For whom did Christ die? answered." In a former chapter we gave an epitome of the pamphlet entitled the "Nature of the Atonement," which had been issued in the beginning of the year. That on the extent of the Saviour's work was intended to be its sequel. The preface to the first edition is dated "1st June, 1841." So that the book must have appeared the week before the meeting of the Synod. As we have hitherto endeavoured to observe chronological order in our narrative, we must notice briefly this important publication before we give an account of the exciting debate in the Supreme Court of the Church. For as we have already remarked, the new generation that has sprung up since cannot form a correct idea of the state of things in these early days, unless they are made acquainted with the literature of the movement, as well as with the ecclesiastical proceedings. Thousands of these pamphlets were circulated over the country, and did more to shape public opinion, and bless the souls of men, in many quarters, than sermons, lectures, or discussions.

"The Extent of the Atonement" was the largest of the Kilmarnock series of Gospel publications. It had only paper covers, and sold at a shilling. It contained more than a hundred of those long, closely printed pages, that seem to have been preferred in the early editions from that local press. Although not so philosophical in its structure as "the Nature of the Atonement" (and the subject did not admit of so much original research) it was even more important, in one view of the matter; and more popular, because all its arguments and illustrations centred round that point, which was the most prominent one in the whole controversy—"Did Christ, or did he not, die for all men?" If we should succeed in giving our readers a clearly condensed summary of this work, we will at once let them

understand what was the sum and substance of Mr. Morison's preaching at this time, and prepare them for the discussions of the Synod, which all hinged on this momentous question.

The treatise is divided into four parts. The first is entitled "Direct Scripture Evidence in support of the Universality of the Atonement." (In later editions Mr. Morison substituted the word "Propitiation" for "Atonement," but we give it as it stood in this first edition.) In this first chapter the author elaborately expounds and arrays on the side of his darling doctrine the following passages of Scripture—1 Tim. ii. 1-6; 1 Cor. xv. 1-4; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; 2 Cor. v. 19-21; 1 John ii. 1, 2; John iii. 16, 17; 1 Tim. i. 15; 1 John v. 10, 11; Luke ii. 10, 11; 2 Pet. ii. 1, besides other apposite, although minor, texts. It was generally supposed that it was to this kind of argument that Dr. Candlish referred in his work on the Atonement, published some years afterwards, when he ridiculed the procedure of "those writers who strung so many texts together and called it theological argument, much after the fashion of children who heap stones together on the sea-shore, and call their tottering fabric a house." But how can a really scriptural theology be formed except by the induction of Scripture texts? What if the children be the children of God, over whom their father approvingly smiles? What if the stones be "living stones," dug from the quarry of Inspiration? What if invisible cement be supplied by the invisible Spirit? What if the house be the house Beautiful?—also

"A Refuge from the stormy blast  
And our eternal home?"

What if the sea-shore be the shore of the sea of Everlasting Truth? And what if its ever-rolling billows sound in their unceasing anthem an applauding Amen?

The second chapter is entitled "Indirect Scripture Evidence in support of the Universality of the Atonement." The separate heads are as follow:—(1.) "I would argue the Universality of the Atonement from the fact that God sincerely invites, urges, implores, and commands all to come and take salvation, as freely given unto all in Christ Jesus." (2.) "Another side-light is cast upon the blessed doctrine by the doctrine of Faith. Faith is the credit which

we give to a testimony. . . . Faith can bring no more out of a testimony than is really in it. If the testimony, then, do not tell the sinner that Christ came into the world to save *him*, the sinner is not entitled to believe that he did; and if he do believe it, his belief of it, instead of being faith, must be presumption." (3.) "I would again argue the unlimited extent of the Atonement from the fact that 'The Gospel is good news to every creature.'" (4.) "Because peace of conscience immediately follows the belief of the Gospel." (5.) "Because nothing but unbelief is now standing between any sinner on earth and salvation." (6.) "Because the non-elect have a greater interest in Christ, and relation to him, and reason of hope from him, than devils have." (7.) "Because the inspired writers speak of the extent of the Atonement in language very different from what they employ when they speak of election, justification, sanctification, or glorification." (8.) "Because it is the duty of every sinner to look upon himself as having by his sins 'pierced the Saviour;' and as therefore bound to 'mourn and be in bitterness.'" (9.) "From the universality of the resurrection of the dead." (10.) "From the nature of the institution of the Lord's Supper." (11.) "From the immense difficulty of getting into Christ on any other principle." (12.) "From many other Scripture truths." The author here refers successively to the cities of refuge as types of Christ, for "every one to flee to;" to the manna which fell for all the camp in the wilderness; and to the brazen serpent which was lifted up for all the bitten Israelites.

In the third chapter he "answers the objections that are usually alleged against the Universality of the Atonement." (1.) "If Christ died for more than those who shall ultimately be saved, has he not died in vain for many?" Answer—God's glory is secured by the Atonement, whether men accept it or reject it, and it becomes the ground of the condemnation of the impenitent. (2.) "If Christ died for the ultimately unsaved, is it just in God to make them pay the penalty of their sins over again?" Answer—He did not so die for them that they can demand their freedom. (3.) "Would it not be ridiculous to suppose that Christ died for those who were in hell long before his death?" Answer—Would it not be ridiculous to suppose that Christ died for those who were in heaven long before his death? (4.) "Can we conceive that God would send his own Son to

die for the ultimately unsaved, when he had determined to create them only to be damned?" Answer—God never created any number or class of men only to be damned. (Here follow some objections of the same sort, drawn from the positions of high Calvinists, which we need not recapitulate.) (9.) "Are there not passages of Scripture which intimate that the Atonement is limited to the ultimately saved?" We will insert an extract from this paragraph, for the satisfaction of our readers, and as an example of our author's style.

"Is John x. 15, quoted? It is this,—'I lay down my life for THE SHEEP.' But mark, it is not said, 'I lay down my life for the sheep only.' It is true that he laid down his life for 'the sheep,' but how that can prove that he laid it down for none others, I am at a loss to comprehend. Paul says, 'Christ loved me and gave himself for me;' and whilst such a saying is undoubtedly a proof of the love of Christ to him, it would surely be wrong to infer from it that there are none others, besides Paul, whom he loved, and for whom he gave himself a ransom. Christ, in the passage quoted, is not contrasting his treatment of the sheep and his treatment of the wolves; he is contrasting himself with the thief and the hireling; and whilst he says of the thief, 'he cometh for to steal, and to kill, and destroy;' and of the hireling, 'he seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth;' he says of himself, 'I am the good Shepherd, I lay down my life for the sheep.' He is making no reference at all to the extent of his expiatory death. Had I occasion to speak of a certain poor family, and of what I had done for it; and were I to say that I had taken a deep interest in it, and had again and again made sacrifices for its comfort; would any man be warranted to conclude that I took no interest in other poor families, or that I had made no sacrifices for them? No more warranted is any one to conclude that because Jesus—having occasion to speak of his sheep—mentions his sacrifice for them, he therefore made no sacrifice for others besides them."

In like manner he shows that when Christ said to his Father in his intercessory prayer, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world," he really prayed for the unity of his little flock, that the whole world might be ultimately blessed through their instrumentality—as also, by collating Matt. xxvi. 28 and Rom. v. 15—that "many" does not mean "some," but "all."

In the fourth and last chapter he adduces the opinion of good and learned men in all ages in favour of the doctrine of universal atonement, beginning with the Fathers, and going down through the German Reformers to the British.

Hear the following from "Fruitful Sermons, preached by the right reverend father, and constant martyr of Jesus

Christ, Master Hugh Latimer, 4to ed., London, 1653, leaf 208:”—

“The eminently devoted and fearless bishop and martyr, Hugh Latimer, held and proclaimed the same glorious truth. In one of his sermons, preached in 1552, on Philip. iii. he has the following passage: ‘For what other cause did Christ come, but only to take away our sins by his passion, and so deliver us from the power of the devil? But these merit-mongers [the papists] have so many good works, that they be able to sell them for money, and so to bring other men to heaven by buying of their good works; which, no doubt, is the greatest contempt of the passion of Christ that can be devised. For Christ only, and no man else, merited remission, justification, and eternal felicity for as many as will believe the same; they that will not believe it, shall not have it, for it is no more but *believe and have*. For Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter; Peter believed it, and therefore he was saved; Judas would not believe, and therefore he was condemned—the fault being in him only, and in nobody else.’”

After divers other extracts from Usher, Williams, Dwight, &c., Mr. Morison gives some remarkable quotations from the writings of Boston of Ettrick, and the two Erskines, who founded the Secession Church in the early part of last century. It appears that these earnest men felt hampered and confined by the strict doctrines of the *Confession of Faith*, in which they had been brought up; and therefore they earnestly sought some outlet for that zeal which burned in their souls. We will again let Mr. Morison speak:—

“In this extremity, the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* was found and republished. The grand peculiarity of that book is a doctrine, not in the Westminster *Confession of Faith*,—this, viz., that ‘Christ is God-gift to all mankind-sinners as such.’ It maintains that he died only for the elect: it asserts, however, that he and all his benefits, such as his righteousness and eternal life in him, are ‘freely gifted to all mans kind-sinners as such.’ The Bostons and the Erskines were trained in this school; they denied the *universal death* but they maintained the *universal gift*, and they insisted on every man, woman, and child, believing that Christ was ‘theirs,’ and ‘that all that he did on Calvary he did for them.’ It was on this doctrine of the *universal gift* that they risked their own souls; it was by this doctrine that they ‘won’ the souls that were their ‘hire;’ and yet it is not a doctrine taught in their ‘*Confession of Faith*.’ This *universal gift* was the only door by which they could get themselves into Christ, or let other sinners enter into him. It was, therefore, their favourite, and darling, and everlastingly reiterated theme. Take it out of the sermons of those true Scottish worthies, and their sermons are idle, frivolous essays; or lifeless, spiritless, soulless, most marrowless skeletons. That you may certify yourselves that I am not misrepresenting, take a passage from

Boston as a specimen. It occurs in his sermon entitled 'Christ gifted to sinners.' He says, 'The third thing is, *the party to whom Christ is given.* To whom, then, is he given? He that believes the Son of God to be given to sinners, and lays the matter to heart, will be ready to say, "O, but whom is he given to? I fear he is not given to me; and what am I better then?" But

"'Christ is given to mankind-sinners indefinitely. It is not to the elect only, but to sinners indefinitely, elect or not elect; sinners of the race of Adam without exception, whatever they have been, whatever they are; whatever qualifications they have, whatever they want. The Father, in making of this gift to us, had no eye to any qualification in us, but our misery and extreme need; and in the view of that, he made this gift for their remedy.

"'1. This gift and grant is conceived in the most ample terms, without any restriction to any particular set of men. John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You see here it goes as wide as "the world," the world of men, to exclude fallen angels, but none of the family of fallen Adam. Therefore says the prophet, "To us a Son is given." They will get no approbation of Christ nor his Father, who curtail and hem in this grant, as they consult not his nor his Father's honour therein.

"'2. Christ is given to mankind-sinners as the manna was given to the Israelites. Now, the manna was given to the Israelites indefinitely; to them who loathed it as well as to them that loved it. John vi. 31-33, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat: verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not the true bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And therefore Christ is given to sinners indefinitely, without exception of any; therefore says Christ to the *unbelieving* Jews, verse 32, 'My Father giveth *you* the true bread from heaven.'

How these excellent men could consistently hold that Christ had died only for the elect, and that yet he was a gift unto all, is a puzzle to us as it was to Mr. Morison. He occupied the only sure ground, both logically and scripturally viewed, namely, *That the Saviour had died for all, and therefore was a gift to all*; but it was much to the point in him to adduce this "marrow" testimony, when endeavouring to persuade his fathers and brethren in the Secession Church to see no harm in the view of Universal Atonement, for which he contended. We think it highly probable that this Bostonian belief of a limited death, but universal gift, was the origin of that double reference scheme which Drs. Brown, Heugh, and others excogitated during the progress of these controversies in their Church.

Such then was the tractate which Mr. Morison published just the week before the meeting of Synod, and which must

have been in the hands of the clergymen who assembled in Glasgow to adjudicate on his case. Like the companion pamphlet which had been published a few months before, it was a singular union of learning and zeal. It bristled all over with quotations from Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Davenant, but also with oft interjected appeals to anxious souls. In one page there was Greek, in another Latin, and in a third the striking characters of the Syriac language which Jesus spoke; but, side by side with these ancient dialects, were also to be found the homeliest exhortations in the mother tongue. It was plain that, young though he was, the appellant was more competent to discuss points in theology than many senior ministers, and even than many professors of divinity.

On the Monday night, before proceeding to the Synod, Mr. Morison made a touching address, at the close of the weekly prayer-meeting, to his congregation, which crowded every part of the building. He said that "he was going into Glasgow next day, in the strength of the Lord. He had not sought his present position: but he would not resile from the stand which he had been led to take. He asked their prayers that he might be enabled to state the truth clearly and scripturally. He had no fear but that the issue of the commotion that had been raised would be glorifying to God. And whatever might be that issue, he hoped that none of them would cling to him out of sympathy and friendship, if they were not fully persuaded that the doctrines for which he had contended were the doctrines of the Word of God. It was indeed that he might be able to present to every one of them a personal Saviour that he had been striving and contending." There were many wet eyes in the assembly, as these artless words were uttered. Those who had read the fascinating pages of D'Aubigné, which were just beginning to be issued in this country, by Oliver & Boyd, thought of the undaunted Luther, proceeding all alone to the Diet of Worms,—

Defying devils and their wiles,  
 Although as numerous as the tiles  
 That lay upon the German roofs—  
 Then, boldly rang his horse's hoofs.

It may be proper for us here to inform those of our readers, who are not fully conversant with all the stages of Presbyterian church courts, that, in a fully developed deno-

mination of that ecclesiastical order, an appeal may be made by an aggrieved party from the decision of the Kirk-Session, that is, the elders of a single church, first, to the Presbytery, or court of ministers and elders in the immediate neighbourhood, then to the Synod, or representatives of a wide district of country, and lastly, to the General Assembly, or representatives of the entire church. The Secession Church, now the United Presbyterian, never were ambitious and aspiring enough to have a General Assembly, although the Free Church, the last-born daughter of Scottish dissent, has closely imitated the Established and endowed communion in all her forms. The Synod, then, which met alternately in Edinburgh and Glasgow, thirty years ago, was the highest judicial court in the United Secession Church of Scotland.

Our young theologian must undoubtedly have felt that his case had been transferred to a more important arena of debate when he entered, on Tuesday, the 8th of June, 1841, the scene of Synodic deliberation. What the Court of Session in Edinburgh is, compared with a Sheriff's chambers in a burgh town; what the House of Commons is, compared with a Town Council Board; what Glasgow was as a city, compared with rustic Kilmarnock—somewhat similar were the relative proportions of the metropolitan Synod and the provincial Presbytery, at whose bar he had formerly pled. Now he would meet men fully worthy of his steel. There was the holy Dr. Mitchell, of Glasgow, who ever seemed to be in communion with his God. There was the able and politic Dr. Heugh, of whom Gilfillan has truly said, that "his tact bordered on genius." There was the polished David King, ready to deliver one of his ornate speeches with figures and flowers, like "apples of gold in pictures of silver." There was his friend and former Professor, Dr. Brown, of Edinburgh, to whom he owed much of his love for books, as well as that clear and liberal shape which his theology had assumed. And last, but not least, there was the fearless, and also the learned, Marshall of Kirkintilloch, able to trip him up if he made a mistake in scholarship, and willing to trip him up, too, because he believed he had made mistakes in scriptural interpretation.

The general audience, moreover, which crowded the spacious chapel in which the meetings of Synod were held, was both more numerous, and, as a whole, perhaps, more intellectual than that which had hung upon Mr. Morison's

lips in Kilmarnock. Gordon Street Chapel (Dr. Beattie's)—to-day displaced by unhallowed warehouses—was one of those edifices of a now almost obsolete style of architecture, which were reared more for comfort than for show. Plain but substantial, it could contain easily 1600 hearers. A friend has described to us the scene that presented itself to his view, when he stole a brief respite from business and ran in to hear the juvenile ecclesiastic who had created such a schism in Israel. Here was a sceptic who had cast off all regard for God and the Bible, because he could not reconcile its supposed contradictions; but he stood in the aisle, not feeling the fatigue of his position, being spell-bound under the oratory of the young divine who "*cleared the character of God,*" and represented him to be a God of love to all. In another passage he could notice, to his surprise, a member of the Established Church, whose pious mind had often been much exercised, doubtless, on the more abstruse points of Calvinism, and who "would give all he had in the world, if he could only say what that young man was saying, that he, 'like all the Roman believers, had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ!'" Indeed, the more thoughtful people from all denominations of Christians were there; because the newspaper reports of the case in Kilmarnock had already thoroughly aroused the interest of the public—not to speak of the wide circulation of tracts and pamphlets. And there is no doubt, whatever the antagonists of the doctrine may say, that a universal atonement is popular with the masses. Untaxed bread for all; liberty for all; a suffrage for all—these have been popular political cries. Not less is a Saviour for all—if men were only set free from theological leading-strings. And for this very reason we have always felt that the doctrines of the Evangelical Union were a protest against religious conservatism, and in harmony with the liberal and liberalising spirit of the age.

We may also notice that besides many other clergymen, the Rev. Messrs. Russell and Pullar of Glasgow attended during both the days of debate. As Independent ministers, they must have felt interest in seeing not only how Presbyterianism worked, but also in the doctrinal discussions themselves. For the young appellant occupied at that time exactly the same standpoint in evangelical belief which their own denomination did, and frequently quoted, in the course

of the debate from the writings of Dr. Wardlaw, in support of his own views.

The meetings of the Synod had been opened on the Monday night, when "an able and appropriate sermon on Ephes. i. 22 ('And hath put all things under his feet,' &c.), had been preached by the retiring Moderator, Rev. James Harper of Leith." Thereafter the Rev. Archibald Baird of Paisley had been chosen Moderator. On Tuesday forenoon, after devotional exercises, and the disposal of some routine business, Mr. Morison's appeal was taken up. The minutes of Presbytery connected with his case were read, followed by Mr. Morison's Reasons of Protest against their decision. We give these in full. Our readers will observe that they are as brief and simple as they could well have been made.

*"Reasons of Protest by the Rev. James Morison against the Decision of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, in his Case.*

"James Morison protested against the said decision of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, on the following grounds:—

"I.—In reference to the first 'head' of charges, he conceives that he has by no means deviated from the main scope of the subordinate standards; and he does not understand that ministers of the United Secession Church in general consider themselves bound to adhere to every minute aspect of doctrine set forth in these standards. That he has not deviated from the main scope of the subordinate standards, and that the tenets charged against him as errors are in truth scriptural doctrines, he conceives to be evident in reference to the

"1st doctrine adduced. The object of saving faith is *the Gospel*: and the Gospel is this—'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.' The nature of saving faith is a 'setting to one's seal that God is true' in the record he has given concerning his Son. Whosoever believes a truth is conscious of believing it; whosoever, therefore, believes the saving truth must be conscious of believing it; and whosoever is conscious of believing it must know that unbelief, the only obstacle on the sinner's part, standing between him and salvation, is removed.

"2nd doctrine adduced. Men are not required to do more than they have 'strength' to do; and if they were, they could not be responsible for not doing it.

"3rd doctrine adduced. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God' in prayer. Prayer to be acceptable must be offered up 'in the name of Christ.'

"4th doctrine adduced. *μετανοια* means, and always means, 'a change of mind;' which change of mind, in reference to sin, necessarily involves as a consequence, change of feeling and change of conduct.

"5th doctrine adduced. Justification is not pardon, for a person can be only once justified, but he may be often pardoned. As to the obtaining of pardon it is said, 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Justification and pardon refer to the

same blessing substantially considered, but they refer to it as viewed in quite different aspects.

6th doctrine adduced. Eternal, personal, and unconditional election is maintained; but as the elect are said to be 'chosen in Christ,' Christ or his atonement is obviously presupposed.

"7th allegation. It is not wrong for a saint to pray, 'deal not with me according to my deserving.' It is election and not the atonement that secures the removal of unbelief.

8th allegation. All men are guilty of Adam's sin, if by guilt be meant mere obligation to punishment; and it is certain that no man will suffer eternal death merely on account of Adam's first sin.

"II.—In reference to the second head of charges, James Morison never used any active measures to circulate the tract; but he decidedly regrets that he did not employ active measures to hinder others from circulating it. Considering that he said to the Presbytery, on the day of his ordination, that he could not, and would not preach any other doctrines than those contained in the tract, and considering that the tenets charged against him as errors are scriptural truths, and truths not inconsistent with the main scope of the subordinate standards, James Morison protests against the sentence of the Presbytery, and hereby appeals to the supreme court.

"JAMES MORISON.

"KILMARNOCK, *March 9th*, 1841."

The Reasons of Protest and Appeal by the Clerk's Lane Church and Congregation were also read at the same time. They were as follows:—

"The Congregation of Clerk's Lane, Kilmarnock, appeals to the Synod against the decision of the United Associate Presbytery of Kilmarnock, on the 2nd March, 1841, on the following grounds:—

"1st, Because the Presbytery in their proceeding against Mr. Morison have not acted in accordance with the law of Christ. Instead of conversing with him in a private manner, they at once instituted public judicial proceedings against him on the foundation of vague reports,—thereby doing what they could to injure his usefulness, and excite prejudice in the congregation against him.

"2nd, Because the Presbytery agreed to suspend Mr. Morison from the discharge of his ministerial duties for holding doctrines which we conceive to be quite sound and scriptural, and did make the compositions of men the test of orthodoxy, in place of the Holy Scriptures, in their proceedings against him.

"3rd, Because Mr. Morison's adherence to the *main scope* of the standards of the Secession Church is, in our opinion, all that was required of him by assenting to them; that it never was the intention of the Church in enacting them to bind her ministers to every form of expression, or even to every sentiment contained in them, either in stating or explaining the leading doctrines of the Gospel, when such expressions or sentiments may be at variance with the clearly revealed will of God in the Holy Scriptures—the only supreme standard of faith and practice.

"4th, Because, by this mode of procedure the Gospel of the grace of God is obscured both in its simplicity and freeness, and an attempt made to perpetuate in the Church that mystified, incoherent, lifeless,

pointless style of preaching—the sad effects of which are seen in the low state of religion amongst us, and consequent decline of the Secession Church.

“5th, Because Mr. Morison had told the Presbytery on the day of his ordination that he neither could nor would preach any other doctrines than those contained in his tract, and while the Presbytery could not deny this, yet they groundlessly charged him with disingenuous conduct in concealing his sentiments from them.

“6th, Because the Presbytery had evidently prejudged Mr. Morison’s case, before hearing his defence, by their bringing written speeches with them, ready made, in their pockets, and reading them, consequently they never attempted to contradict the statements he made, nor met the many irresistible arguments he used, to prove the soundness of his views before they came to such a decision.

“For these and other reasons to be proposed in discussing this appeal, the Commissioners humbly hope that the Synod will sustain the appeal and reverse the decision of the Presbytery.

“Signed, in name and by appointment of the Congregation,

“James Guthrie.	John Peden.	Andrew Aitken.
Robert Thomson.	David Gilchrist.	Thomas Adam.
William Bushbee.	William Morton.	John Stewart.
Samuel Bryden.	James Boyd.	Andrew Stewart.
James Thomson.	James Aird.	

“KILMARNOCK, 11th March, 1841.”

The Presbytery’s reply to these Reasons of Protest next fell to be read. This is doubtless a very long and elaborate document; but it would be quite impossible for us to enter into any examination of its arguments. Suffice it to say, that the changes are rung over again, on all the eight points of the Kilmarnock Controversy. The only new statement that struck us as being worthy of notice, after wading through this paper, was the following:—“It did not enter the mind of any member of the Presbytery that Mr. Morison would maintain that the mere seeing of what rendered salvation possible, was itself all the believing necessary to render it certain, and give full assurance and joy.” Now this argument, although plausible, is most unsound. Does not the New Testament cry everywhere to the sinner, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”? What does that conditional promise plainly imply? Why just this—that *salvation is possible before a man believes; but is made certain by his believing.* And how could the atonement of Calvary be better explained, in consistency with this conditionality, than as *that sacrifice which made salvation possible to all?* For the Lord’s gracious decree is this, that whenever we believe in his benevolence as expressed in the

cross, a deed of amnesty is passed for all our sins, so that, like the courtier of Queen Candace, we may go on our desert-way rejoicing.

As soon as the Presbytery's answer to his Reasons of Protest were read, Mr. Morison stood forth to deliver his defence. We can readily believe that whenever the grave divines and eager auditors would see the mere youth rise to support such an appeal in such a cause, the thought would pass through their minds, "Surely this daring David must have been helped by the Lord, or he would not have flung down this Gospel gauntlet so fearlessly"—a persuasion which doubtless would be deepened as the speaker proceeded with his address of six hours' duration. And here we must make a word of explanation for our honoured friend. Dr. Morison has lately explained to us that he had been kept so busy with the evangelistic work already referred to, as well as with the preparation of his volume, that he had no time to study the defence which he made at the Synod. Therefore, he has often thought that he did himself injustice, in so far as his own reputation was concerned, before that erudite assembly. There was another appellant on the Atonement Controversy, whose case came off immediately after Mr. Morison's, the Rev. R. T. Walker, of Comrie, in the Presbytery of Perth, and who was thought by some to make a more finished defence than Mr. Morison. He had his reply carefully written out, and read it with deliberation. His appeal does not awaken much interest now, for the same reason that when we see at the end of a long trial for murder, that the man got off, we do not care to read all the details of the proceedings,—whereas, if the man is to be hung, we devour them with avidity! Mr. Walker satisfied the Synod, and returned to all the comforts and honours of his Comrie charge; but James Morison was first *suspended* and then *cut down*, only however to rise up in Kilmarnock again as if he had been touched with a more vivifying spear than Ithuriel's, and with the strange power of quickening others besides. Walker's case is almost forgotten now; but Morison's is an immortal memory; because a goodly and flourishing ecclesiastical tree was planted by his struggle and his sufferings. And, further, we will not allow him to say that his defence was in any way spoiled by being unwritten. We verily believe that it was thereby improved. Fresh and buoyant as he then was, the *oratio directa* was

better than the *oratio lecta*. We know that it produced an immense effect as spoken. The following statement, recently made to a member of one of our churches, was communicated to us the other day:—"Your denomination was not formed so much by James Morison's words, as by his way of uttering them. My mother heard him before the Synod in Glasgow; and she said it was the *manner* not the *matter* that won the people's hearts. When all the ministers were maligning and condemning him, he answered with such meekness as showed that he truly had the Spirit of Christ." We will not accept the worthy woman's explanation altogether; but we will admit that the *matter and manner combined* produced the mighty effect on the audience that was produced. And since the style of extemporaneous address was more favourable for the setting off of that loving manner, we are glad that the young disputant adopted it. Moreover, we cannot admit that he was unprepared. His studies for years had prepared him. The book he had been labouring at had prepared him. The opposition he had met with had prepared him. The weeping Marys and Thomases he had conversed with had prepared him. The Holy Ghost had prepared him.

Although Mr. Morison had no pile of manuscript with him, he had brought a great pile of theological books, from which he quoted every now and then, with a readiness which showed how familiar he was with their contents. We propose now to lay before our readers a portion of the defence of Christ's truth which he made before the Synod of the Secession Church. We have directed the printer, on account of its great importance, to insert it in larger type than has been given to our other quotations. Let us suppose then that we are in the old Gordon Street Chapel, and that we actually listen to the sacred orator as, in the clear ringing and powerful tones of other days, he speaks as follows:—

"Mr. MORISON then addressed the court in support of his protest and appeal. He began by stating that he felt compelled to appear before them that day by the demands of his own conscience. He felt compelled, by the obligations under which he conceived himself bound, to advocate the truth of God,—that truth which he considered to be intimately connected with the welfare of immortal souls, and the glory of Christ's kingdom,—to dissent most decidedly from the decision of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock in reference to his

case. He did so not from any disrespect towards his fathers and brethren in that Presbytery, but because he was persuaded that he had truth on his side, because he was persuaded that, in their proceedings against him, they had been instrumental in checking the progress of the truth, and because, unless the supreme court should reverse their deed, the triumph of the Gospel would be greatly marred, not only in the district in which he laboured, but throughout the country generally, and in particular throughout the Secession Church. He was persuaded that they had greatly degenerated in these times from the reformation Gospel, and from the Gospel of the apostolic ages. After having in all sincerity and simplicity searched out for something on which he himself could venture his soul for eternity; and after having found a truth on which he could rest it, he could not help telling it to his poor fellow-men. When he had found out this 'truth as it is in Jesus,' he never fancied that it could be opposed to the subordinate standards of the Church, which standards he had from his infancy been accustomed to look upon as almost the Bible in epitome. He had not studied these standards so minutely as he had studied the supreme guide to all truth—the word of God; and for long after he came to the knowledge of the truth he had no conception that there was any man, who had any claim to be considered a Christian at all, in the whole world, that could have any difficulty in subscribing these standards. In perfect ingenuousness, therefore, did he conceive the views he had drawn from the Bible to be those of the *Confession of Faith*. He would now state to them what those views were, in humble reliance on the aid of the Spirit of God. Before, however, entering on this statement, he had to say that he could not have recognised his own system of divine truth in the representation of it given by the members of Presbytery; and were it not that he was assured that it was against him that the charges were preferred, he would not have thought that he had anything to do with the matter—so much was his system misrepresented and caricatured (far be it from him to say intentionally), and so far was it from anything like what he had ever preached or published. He would now proceed to take up the charges *seriatim*; and, as he had already said, that he was better acquainted with the Holy Scriptures than with the subordinate standards of the church, he hoped that if he were able to prove his views to be in

accordance with that holy word, that his fathers and brethren would admit that they were not in discordance with the *Confession of Faith* and the other symbolical books. He would not, however, shrink from collating his views with the *Confession of Faith*, holding as he did that his sentiments were by no means opposed to these subordinate standards of the church. The first charge was, that he held that 'the object of saving faith to any person was the statement, that Christ made atonement for the sins of that person, as he made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and that the seeing this statement to be true was saving faith, and gave the assurance of salvation.' There were three grand doctrines embodied in this charge, viz., the object, the nature, and the immediate consequence of saving faith. Now, as to the object of saving faith, he was prepared to say that it was this—'Jesus Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*, just as he loved every one and gave himself for every one.' It was because this view of the Gospel was not everywhere promulgated that he considered the might and the mastery of that Gospel to be maimed. Before adducing arguments from Scripture to show that the object of faith was presented in the words—'Jesus loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*, just as he gave himself for *all*,' he would refer to four sermons of the venerable Ralph Erskine on that text, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' The design of these sermons was to show that the text quoted was 'the language of faith,' and that he was no believer who did not say 'that Jesus loved *him*, and gave himself for *him*.' The venerable author's design was to prove that every sinner was not only warranted but bound to say, 'Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.' Now, he (Mr. M.) was in the habit of proclaiming no other doctrine than this. His language in the pulpit continually was, 'O ye sinners, to every one of you all, without exception or distinction, is the soul-saving, heart-sanctifying truth of the Gospel sent; you are to believe that Jesus Christ loved you, and gave himself for you, just in the sense that he loved and gave himself for every other person.' That this was the true object of saving faith, he was prepared to prove from Scripture. Ralph Erskine said that every sinner was warranted and bound to believe this, whilst, at the same time, he held that Christ did not give himself for every sinner. A sinner, however, cannot be bound to believe what is not previously true;

neither can faith bring out of a testimony more than God has put into it. Faith cannot make a Bible to itself; it only takes out of the Bible what God has put in it. If this be true, and if it be at the same time admitted, that every Gospel hearer is warranted and bound to believe 'that Jesus loved *him*, and gave himself for *him*,' it must also be conceded to be true that God, in the testimony, really says to every sinner, 'Jesus loved *you*, and gave himself for *you*.' Was it, then, a fact, that God really does say in the Bible what is equivalent to this? He (Mr. Morison) held that it was. In proof of this, he would adduce a passage from the 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. It ran thus: \*—'Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you';—and observe that it was the Gospel which he preached unto them *before they were believers*; for he immediately adds, 'which also *ye have received*, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved,' &c. Observe that it was the belief of this Gospel that 'saved' them. What, then, was this Gospel which he preached unto them, before they 'received' it, and were 'saved' by it? The apostle tells us in what follows;—'for I delivered unto you, first of all,'—the first thing that he preached unto them, after he arrived in their heathen city—'that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures.' The very first thing that the apostle told the heathen and unbelieving Corinthians, after he went amongst them, was this;—'Christ died for your sins, and my sins, according to the Scriptures.' This was 'the Gospel'—the object of saving faith;—and it is therefore the thing which every sinner is called upon to believe, and to 'believe first of all.' He (Mr. Morison) did not mean to say that they were not also to believe that Christ was 'buried and rose again;' they were, on the contrary, not to dissociate the death from the resurrection; but what he meant to say was this, every sinner was warranted and bound to believe that 'all that Christ did on Calvary, he did *for him*.' Another passage to which he would refer, was the close of the 5th chap. of the second epistle to the Corinthians. There the apostle says to unreconciled sinners, 'be ye recon-

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\* Although, in the next two pages, Mr. Morison repeats what he had said in his address before the Presbytery, we have inserted the paragraphs on account of their importance, and because, in the Synod speech, the truth was more fully expressed.

ciled unto God; for God hath made him to be sin for *us*, who knew no sin, that *we* might be made the righteousness of God in him.' The argument that the apostle there employs to persuade impenitent sinners to become reconciled to God, is one that shows that the object of saving faith is the atonement which Christ has made for each sinner in particular. This is obvious from the fact that the apostle tells the unreconciled sinners that Jesus was made sin *for them*, that *they*—the unreconciled sinners—might be treated by God as if they had 'righteousness' of their own, and were really 'righteous.' All unreconciled sinners are to be told, then, that Christ 'became sin for *them*,' and if they be not told this, they are robbed of the Gospel. He would next refer to the second chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, where the Ephesian Christians are enjoined to pray 'for all men,' which duty of praying for no fewer than 'all men,' is grounded on the fact that 'God wills *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' The evidence of this universal 'will' of benevolence on God's part is to be found in the historical fact that 'Christ gave himself a ransom *for all*.' This historical fact is the great truth of the Gospel which is to be proclaimed to every sinner, and which is thus constituted into the object of saving faith. The apostle says of it, it is 'to be *testified* in due time,' it is the Gospel 'testimony' which, in 'due time,' shall be everywhere made known. The apostle, in this passage, has a special reference to Nero, and to other ungodly rulers then at the helm of the Roman government; hence, after enjoining prayers 'for all men,' he adds, 'for *kings*, and for all that are in authority.' Nero was the 'king' or emperor then 'in authority;' and the Ephesian Christians were to pray for Nero, because 'God willed Nero to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,' and the evidence of this 'will' is to be found in the fact that 'Christ gave himself a ransom for Nero.' If this were true, then it must be evident that Christ gave himself a ransom for all without exception. That this is true the apostle there asserts; and that it is the object of saving faith is evident from the fact that it constitutes the Gospel testimony—the thing that is to be 'testified' to all in due season. Another passage that he would refer to was 1 John vi. 11—'This is the record that God hath given to us'—us, mankind sinners, as such—'eternal life, and this life is in His Son.' From this

passage it is evident that every sinner is to believe that God 'hath given him eternal life.' If he do not believe this, he 'makes God a liar.' He contradicts God. God says to him, 'I have given unto thee eternal life.' He says to God, 'No, O God, I do not believe it; thou mayest have given it to believers, and to the elect, but I cannot believe that thou hast given it to me.' God, however, here asserts it; and it is the refusal to believe it that constitutes a man an unbeliever. If it be true, however, that there are some Gospel hearers for whom Christ has not died, then it cannot be true that eternal life is 'given' unto all; for how could a good and just God give to *all*, that which is a *nonentity to most*? If the thing, then, that every sinner is to believe be, that 'God has given to him eternal life,' it must be true that the object of saving faith to every such sinner is that which Christ has done *for him*. What Christ did was *dying for sinners*; every sinner, therefore, is to believe that 'Christ did love him, and give himself for him.'

"He (Mr. Morison) did by no means stand alone in his views of *the object of saving faith*. He had shown that Ralph Erskine held the same opinion, though he coupled with it a doctrine utterly inconsistent. He had now to state that the same view was maintained by the author of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and by the Associate Presbytery in their Act of 1742. He was not here referring to their views regarding *the object of saving faith*. The passage in the Marrow to which he referred was that one where Evangelista says to Neophytus, 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; that is, be verily persuaded in your heart that Jesus Christ is yours, and that you shall have life and salvation by him; *that whatsoever he did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for you*.' The Marrow-men could, and did, insist on every Gospel-hearer believing all this; while, at the same time, they held that there were many Gospel hearers for whom Christ did nothing at all. They were right in what they held up as the object of the sinner's faith;—they were wrong in maintaining, alongside of it, another doctrine, which, if rightly understood, took all *truth* out of the object of faith, as far as it regarded most of those who were called upon notwithstanding to believe it. He (Mr. Morison) agreed entirely with the Marrow-men in their opinion regarding the object of faith. Their opinion was also that of the old Associate Presbytery; and surely it

would not be condemned by the present United Secession Synod. Their opinion on this matter had all along—since he knew the Gospel—been his opinion; it was what he always preached, and never would he preach any other Gospel.

“Not only did he thus agree with the Associate Presbytery, and *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, as to what was the real object of saving faith, he found his views to be agreeable to the views of the most eminent divines of all ages, and the most illustrious reformers. Here Mr. Morison proceeded to read large extracts from several of the most eminent divines. He quoted passages from Luther, in which he says, ‘whatsoever sins I, thou, and we all have done, or shall do hereafter, they are Christ’s own sins, as verily as if he himself had done them.’ ‘Not only my sins and thine, but also the sins of the whole world, either past, present, or to come, take hold upon Christ, go about to condemn him, and do indeed condemn him.’ He quoted from Calvin such passages as, ‘Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world—of the whole human race; and by the kindness of God is offered indiscriminately to all, though all do not embrace him.’ ‘Now, we shall have a perfect definition of faith, if we say that it is a steadfast and assured knowledge of God’s kindness *towards us*.’ He quoted from Latimer, the British reformer, a passage to the following effect:—‘I say that every one of us must have a special faith; *I must believe for myself that Christ’s blood was shed for me*. I must believe that when Christ saith, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will ease you,” here I must believe that Christ calleth *me* unto him, that I should come and receive everlasting life at his hands; with such special faith do I apply his passion unto me.’ He quoted from Bradford, ‘He that believeth, that is, he who certainly is persuaded God’s love to be so much *towards him*, that whereas through sin he was lost, and made a fire-brand of hell; yet the eternal Father of mercy (who is all-sufficient God, and needeth nothing of us, or of anything that we can do), to deliver us out of hell, and to bring us into heaven, sent even his own most dear Son out of his bosom, out of heaven into hell, as a man would say, to bring us, as I said, from thence into his own bosom and mercy, we being his enemies. He, I say, that is thus persuaded of *God’s love toward him*, and of *the price of his redemption*, by the dear blood of the Lamb immaculate, Jesus Christ, the same man

cannot but love God again, and out of love do that which might please God, and heartily desire to do still better.' From Hooper the martyr he quoted:—'I call justifying faith a certain assurance and earnest persuasion of the good will, love, and grace, bounteousness, and mercy of God toward *us*, whereby we are assured and verily persuaded in our hearts of the mercy, favour, and good will of God the Father, that he is *on our side*, and *for us*, against all that are against us.' He made various other similar quotations from others of the reformers, and referred also to the fact that similar sentiments were entertained by most eminent theologians of more modern date. He referred to Usher, and Davenant, and Scott, and Bellamy, and Dwight, and Hall, and Angell James, and others; and he asked if his fathers and brethren would be prepared to excommunicate such men from their communion *as heretics*? *He preached what they preached*; they preached what he had shown to be the Gospel which the apostles preached; and shall that Gospel be condemned by the United Secession Church, and be thus banished from its pulpits? He could scarcely persuade himself that this would or could be the case. He then went on to prove that the doctrine of the universal atonement was in reality the basis of all the charges brought against him; that it was 'the head and front of his offending.' The Presbytery might attempt to contradict or deny this, but it was all in vain. The publications issued from the press against him, the presbyterial examinations to which he was subjected, the universal agitation on *this one topic in particular* throughout the whole surrounding neighbourhood of Kilmarnock, was evidence decisive that it was his grand original sin. He wondered, however, that it should be so, for it was a doctrine which seemed to him to be identified with the whole power and glory of the Gospel. It was the doctrine by which Luther resuscitated Europe, and it was, moreover, the doctrine of the first three centuries of the Christian era. This might appear to some to be a startling statement, but it was not more startling than true. In proof of its truth, he needed only to refer to Bishop Davenant's *Dissertatio de Morte Christi*. In this dissertation, that illustrious divine, so eminently versed in the writings of the early fathers, gives an account of the history of the controversy respecting the extent of the atonement, and he shows most clearly that, till the fifth century, the dogma of an atone-

ment for the elect alone was never heard of. 'The Fathers,' says he, 'when speaking of the death of Christ, describe it to us as undertaken and endured for the redemption of the human race; and not a word (that I know of) occurs among them of the exclusion of any persons by the decree of God. They agree that it is actually beneficial to those only who believe, yet they everywhere confess that Christ died for all mankind. Thus, Clemens Alexandrinus says, that 'Christ freely brings and bestows salvation on the whole human race.' And of the same opinion is Origen—'Jesus is declared to have come into the world for the sake of all who ever were sinners, that they might leave their sins, and give themselves up to God.' With him agrees Primasius, who, on 1 Tim. ii. 6, says, 'For all men, indeed, the blood of Christ has been shed, but it is beneficial only to those who believe.' Primasius was a disciple of Augustine; and so we may conjecture from him what was the doctrine of Augustine himself. The learned Bishop then proceeds to prove that even Augustine—strenuous advocate, as he was, for the doctrine of predestination—never held the novel dogma, that Christ died for the predestinate alone. If, then, the whole primitive church, in its purest and holiest days, held and propagated the doctrine for which he (Mr. Morison) was called in question, surely considerate men would pause before pronouncing condemnation. Was the United Secession Synod prepared to excommunicate the entire churches of the first three centuries of the Christian era? During the reign of the Papacy itself, this doctrine was a matter of forbearance; and there were whole synods who maintained that, 'as no man is, was, or will be, whose nature Christ did not assume, so no man is, was, or will be, for whom Christ did not die.' Towards the breaking of the Reformation day, it was universally admitted by the schoolmen, that Christ died for all men, at least in some sense. In the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, there is a section entitled, 'Christ hath made satisfaction for the *sins of the whole world*,' in which it is asserted, that 'the vices and sins which men, from the beginning of the world even to this day, have committed, and which, from henceforth even to the end of the age, they shall commit,' were laid upon Christ, and he 'blotted out the sins of all ages, and fully and cumulatively satisfied the Father for them.' Now, the reforming churches came out as *protesting* churches, as churches *protesting* against the

errors of the Popish Church. If this blessed doctrine of the universality of the atonement be so great, and so dangerous, and so Arminian a heresy as it is alleged, how is it to be accounted for, that there is no *protest* against it in any of the reformed confessions? It is an historical fact, that there is no such *protest* entered in the confessions of any of the *protesting* churches. So far from this being the case, almost all of these confessions most explicitly homologate and acknowledge the doctrine as their own tenet. Thus, it is said in the Geneva Confession, ‘Christ offered up himself as the only sacrifice, to purge *the sinnes of all the world.*’ The following question is put in the Palatine Catechism—‘What believest thou, when thou sayest, Christ suffered?’ The answer is memorablè—‘That, in the whole time of his life, which he continued here upon earth, but especially in the end thereof, he sustained, both in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of all mankind,’ &c. In the English Confession, composed by Bishop Jewel, it is said, ‘Christ, by the same only sacrifice, which he once offered upon the cross, hath brought to effect and fulfilled all things; and for that cause he said, when he gave up the ghost, “It is finished,” as though he would signify that the price and ransom was now fully paid for *the sin of mankind.*’ In the later confession of Helvetia it is said, ‘Christ took on himself, and bare *the sins of the world,* and did satisfy the justice of God.’ This later confession of Helvetia, the Geneva Confession, and the Palatine Catechism, were all received formerly by the Kirk of Scotland, and sanctioned by it as expressive of the sense in which it understood the Scriptures. Now the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was sanctioned by the General Assembly of that kirk, ‘as in nothing contrary to its received doctrine;’ and thus we cannot suppose that the universal atonement, as stated in those ancient books embodying the kirk’s ‘received doctrine,’ can be condemned in the confession which contains ‘nothing contrary to its received doctrine.’ Moreover, the Westminster divines, according to the Act of Parliament by which they were assembled, were constituted into an assembly, ‘for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of *the Church of England* from all false calumnies and aspersions;’ and we cannot, therefore, suppose that they would expressly run counter to their commission, and contradict that doctrine. What, then, was the doctrine of *the Church of England* on the extent of the atonement? In the 31st

‘ article,’ it is said, ‘ the offering of Christ once made, is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual.’ With this agreed also the doctrine of its catechism, and its book of homilies. Seeing, then, this doctrine was to be cleared and defended, not contradicted and opposed by the Westminster divines, many of whom had signed the ‘ Articles of the Church of England,’ it is not credible that I can be contrary to the present *Confession of Faith*. On this ground he (Mr. Morison) contended that his doctrine was not at variance with the symbolical books of the Secession Church. He hoped that he had satisfactorily shown it to be the doctrine of the great reformed churches, the doctrine of the great and illustrious reformers and martyrs, the doctrine of the three first centuries of the Christian era, and the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. Surely the Synod would not be prepared to unchurch so large a portion of the Christian community, and brand, as heretics, such men as Luther, and Calvin, and Latimer, and Hooper.”

## CHAPTER VII.

Continuation of Mr. Morison’s Defence at the Bar of the Synod on Faith and Assurance—Replies of Messrs. Meikle and Thomas—Speeches of Rev. Messrs. Fraser of Alloa and Marshall of Kirkintilloch—Description of the Personal Appearance of the latter as well as of Dr. Heugh of Glasgow—Speech and Motion made by him—Remarkable Speech made by Dr. Brown of Edinburgh—Its effect upon the Synod.

Two divisions of the first charge yet remained to be discussed, namely, the nature of Faith and Assurance. On these points Mr. Morison’s statements were substantially the same as those which he had made when pleading at the bar of the Presbytery, except that his quotations from the divines who favoured his own way of thinking were more numerous, and the references to his own change from darkness to light more touching, as if he felt he had possibly a more appreciative and more sympathetic audience of clerical brethren. He thus referred to the views of his “venerable professor,” Dr. Brown, on the subject of faith, who, it must be remembered, was present on the occasion :—

“The Doctor describes faith as ‘the persuasion of the truth of the notices about God.’ Again, the Doctor defines one who is ‘strong in faith,’ as one ‘who has clear and accurate apprehensions of the meaning and evidence of the revelation of mercy.’ These were precisely the views of faith which he (Mr. Morison) entertained, and these views exactly harmonised with his own experience. When he passed ‘out of darkness into marvellous light,’ he was entirely occupied with the glorious truth which he had discovered in the Bible, that ‘Jesus loved *him* and gave himself for *him*.’ It was the meaning of this truth and its evidence that alone absorbed his mind, and he was conscious that he did not believe it in a manner different from the way in which he believed any other truth. All the effects which followed in his history flowed from the peculiarity of the thing which he believed, and not at all from any peculiarity in his way of believing it. The moment he *saw* the truth, that same moment he got peace of conscience. He repudiated, from the bottom of his heart, that theory of faith which put into it as much of the moral law, and as many good feelings, as possible.”

In this last sentence he referred to the statement made by Mr. Meikle, of Beith, before the Kilmarnock Presbytery, to the effect that “faith includes, besides the assent of the understanding to the Gospel testimony, the consent of the heart, and even comprehends works of holiness in the life.” “Was not this dangerous heresy?” exclaimed Mr. Morison, after making the quotation. “Would not the members of Synod, in a spirit of even-handed justice, take notice of this?”

On the question of Assurance he again quoted from Dr. Brown—

“Dr. Brown, in his treatise on the *Lord's Supper*, says that ‘personal reliance on the Saviour's sufferings and death, as the expiation of our guilt and the price of our salvation, is the necessary and immediate result of the belief of the testimony in its true extent, and is so closely connected with it, that it is not much to be wondered at, if it has sometimes been identified with it.’ In his *Opinions*, also, he says, ‘Is the hope of eternal life necessarily connected with the faith of the Gospel? and does every believer, from the Gospel, at all times, enjoy the unclouded hope, the undoubting expectation of eternal life? To the first of these questions we reply unhesitatingly in the affirmative.’”

With these sentiments Mr. Morison expressed his entire concurrence, but added his own explanation about the “doubts” of believers, fortifying his remarks again by a reference to his own experience—

“He by no means held that a believer never was in doubt. He admitted that most believers were at times under clouds. Their doubts, however, arose from the temporary absence from their minds of the object of faith. He had no conception of persons actually engaged in believing the divine testimony, and at same time actually in doubt as to their interest in Christ. If, moreover, Satan or the world seduced

their attention away from the saving truth of the Gospel and led them into sin, they would fall *into temporary unbelief and consequent darkness and doubt*. It had been supposed that this doctrine of instantaneous assurance did not admit of faith growing in degree. This, however, was a great mistake. Faith grows stronger as the views become clearer. One passage of God's Word fairly understood was sufficient as a basis on which to rest faith and build peace. When, however, other passages were found to contain the same truth, and to present it perhaps in a plainer or a more striking aspect, faith could not but be confirmed. This was the history of his (Mr. Morison's) own experience. When he first found out that 'Christ loved *him* and had given himself for *him*,' he found it in a single passage; he believed it, and got peace from it. When he discovered, however, that so many whom he was accustomed to respect, did not believe for themselves the same all-glorious truth, he could not but be a little staggered in his confidence. As he continued to examine, however, he found out new passages declaring the same truth, he saw admitted doctrines and facts throwing light upon it, and discovered that it was the darling Gospel of sainted reformers and martyrs,—and all this additional evidence gave additional strength to his faith, so that now he never heard or read anything to make him waver for a moment even to the slightest degree. He might add, that this doctrine of the necessity of assurance was one of the *main points* for which the Reformed churches contended in opposition to the doctrines of the Papacy. The 'general and doubtful faith' of the papists is 'detested and refused' in the 'National Covenant;' and it is expressly 'protested' against in almost all the reformed confessions. Here Mr. Morison read various extracts from the books referred to."

We need not continue our *resumé* of the rest of Mr. Morison's defence. Suffice it to say that for six hours he held the audience spell-bound under his irresistible demonstrations of truth—his hearers feeling that their hearts were blessed, as well as their intellectual curiosity gratified; while not a few of the clergymen seemed to be afraid that the crowded Glasgow assembly were drinking in what they deemed to be heresy with too much avidity. We should perhaps explain that the youthful appellant did not get the whole of his defence delivered at one diet. So much time had been consumed by the preliminary readings and the mere statement of the case, that it was not till the evening sederunt on Tuesday was considerably advanced that Mr. Morison stood forth to address the court. He had only finished the consideration of the first two charges, namely, those on Faith and Man's Ability, when the hour for adjournment had arrived. On Wednesday forenoon, however, he resumed his address, and discussed the subjects of Prayer, Repentance, Justification, Election, and Original Sin,—ending as before with another artless and ingenuous

reply to the charge of disingenuousness as to the circulation of his tract. His powerful peroration ran as follows:—

“He would now close his remarks, and conclude by saying that it signified little what was done in relation to himself, but it signified much what was done in relation to the doctrines which he taught. His own character was of small moment; his importance as a man or a minister was nothing, compared with the interests of eternal truth. He could conceive that he, as an individual, might be sacrificed, his character might be stabbed and massacred—he could conceive all this to be done, and yet the sacred doctrines he taught be left untouched; and he hoped that, if anything *was* done in the way of imputation on his character, nothing would be done to injure the blessed truths he had endeavoured to proclaim. He trusted that the Spirit of wisdom would direct them to a right understanding in this matter; and he would repeat that he was willing that his own character should be dealt with according as they might think it deserved—he was willing to be dealt with even harshly by his fathers and brethren, though, at the same time, he could not think that there would be one of them disposed to deal harshly with him, or who would be desirous, through him, to wound the doctrines he held; he would ask no mercy for himself, but he would and did ask a candid and patient consideration of the doctrines; he would and did ask them to pause and ponder before they condemned. It would surely be a dangerous thing to denounce as heresy opinions held as the apple of the eye by the best and holiest men both in ancient and in modern times; and he could not think for a moment of the Synod being guilty of such a course. He would now leave the case in their hands, trusting that, under the Divine Spirit, they would judge righteous judgment; and he felt confident that, whatever might be the upshot to himself, all would tend to the furtherance of the Gospel in the land, and to the promotion of the glory of the Gospel's God.”

A very clever pamphlet entitled *The Synod's Judgment Reviewed*, by a writer who hides himself under the name of “Nicodemus,” thus describes the scene which took place at the close of Mr. Morison's address:—

“The defence was bold and decided, and indicated a strong conviction of the truth of his own views. The course he pursued was evidently quite unexpected by the great proportion of his judges. By his statements they seemed to be both perplexed and alarmed. The auditors present were under the influence of very different feelings. No one could fail to perceive that he had fairly enlisted their sympathies, however little impression he might have made on his judges. This fact was sufficiently demonstrated by the full-toned response which burst from them at the conclusion of his address. The applause of the audience brought up an indignant scowl on the countenance of the Moderator, and threw a dark shade over the faces of a great number of the members of court. To satisfy the people at a distance who might read the reports, it was stated that the cheering in the galleries was supposed to proceed from a few of the congregation of Kilmarnock who were present. To produce such a cheer would have required nearly the whole congregation. A few could not have made such a sound, nor would they have produced such a sensation in the court.”

We do not wonder that such an address called forth such a cheer. And when we remember that not only were the positions of the young appellant most reasonable and scriptural, and supported by a truly amazing amount of philosophical and theological learning, but that he stood there alone and unaided (save by his God), and sacrificing everything for the sake of truth, conscience, and Christ, we wonder that the Moderator did not condone the outburst of applause, on the ground that it might indicate chivalrous sympathy, as much as doctrinal agreement. The judge of many a civil and criminal court, in similar circumstances, would have taken no notice of such a formal breach of order.

It now fell to the lot of the members of the Kilmarnock Presbytery to defend, at the bar of the Synod, the judgment against which Mr. Morison had appealed. It was undoubtedly a rare opportunity which they thus enjoyed (and one for which they were indebted to the youngest member of their court) of appearing before a city audience, and a supreme ecclesiastical assembly. Nor do they appear to have been unwilling to take advantage of the opportunity; for the long and elaborate speeches of Messrs. Campbell, Elles, Meikle, Ronald, and Thomas, showed that they assayed to do their very best. Yet we can quote comparatively little from these addresses; for we find in them only a recapitulation, with enlargements and variations here and there, of pleadings which have been already before us. On reading over Mr. Meikle's speech, we find him unanswerable only when he hits Mr. Morison on his weak point, that is, on the doctrine of unconditional election, to which he then still clung, although he has since given it up. The minister of Beith is reported to have spoken thus:—

“Mr. Morison also said that he could not offer salvation to all the hearers of the Gospel, except on the principle that atonement was made for all men. He holds the doctrine of eternal, personal, and unconditional election, in reference to the application of redemption; and, when he asks us, How can you consistently offer salvation to all, if Christ has not made atonement for all?—We ask him, How can he consistently offer salvation to all, if God has decreed unconditionally to bestow it only on some? This difficulty is as great, on the theory of the particular application of redemption, as on that of definite atonement; and, when Mr. Morison shall reconcile the universal call of the Gospel with the former, which he admits, then we shall be prepared to reconcile it with the latter, which he denies. Mr. Morison stated that atonement for the elect alone was never heard of—never dreamed of, during the three first centuries of the Christian

era. Now, sir, in contradiction to this, I beg to read an extract from the epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians. He was Bishop of Rome, and that Clement mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Phil. iv. 3, whose name was in the Book of Life. I have not the original, but quote from the translation of that epistle by William, Lord Bishop of Lincoln, published 1710, 2d edition, section 49,—‘By charity were all the elect of God made perfect ; without it, nothing is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. Through charity did the Lord join us unto himself, whilst, for the love towards us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his own blood for us ; by the will of God ; his flesh for our flesh ; his soul for our soul.’ Elect is the antecedent to all these affirmative propositions ; and, consequently, Clement here declares that Jesus Christ gave his blood for the elect. In proof that the doctrine of a definite atonement was held by the fathers, in the age which immediately followed the apostolical, I shall quote a sentence from the 17th section of the epistle of the church of Smyrna, to the church at Philadelphia, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John (translated by the same),—‘Neither is it possible for us ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the world—the righteous for the ungodly—nor worship any other besides him.’”

We shall see in the sequel how Mr. Morison disposed of Mr. Meikle’s second-hand quotation ; but meanwhile we note, in passing, that the contradiction between the unconditional election of some to special grace, and an earnest call to all sinners is, in our opinion, complete, and such as should lead all thoughtful and conscientious men over to the Arminian side.

Mr. Ronald, of Saltcoats, startled the Synod by informing them that the Presbytery had not charged Mr. Morison with heresy on the Extent of the Atonement, and that his errors lay rather in the direction of Faith and Assurance. We have already explained the reasons why the Presbytery, mainly through Mr. Ronald’s influence, had adopted this strange course at the eleventh hour, although the general impression throughout the country was that Mr. Morison’s teaching on the Atonement was “the head and front of his offending.” These, as will be remembered, were mainly two—namely, that Mr. Ronald himself was in reality more liberal than the rest of his co-presbyters, and wished to hold that Christ had, in a certain sense, died for all, inasmuch as he “had opened a door of mercy for all ;” and also, because they were afraid lest Professors Brown and Balmer, with an influential following, would sympathise with young Morison as to the Extent of the Atonement, were it bluntly charged against him, and thus make a great secession from the Secession Church. Therefore did Mr. Ronald labour most energetically to show, to the great astonishment of the Synod, that the

Kilmarnock Presbytery had not been displeased with their young brother so much for maintaining that Christ had died for all men, as for insisting upon it that whosoever simply saw it to be true that Christ had died for all, and therefore for him, was immediately assured of his personal salvation. Mr. Thomas ended with a still more elaborate attempt to bring home the charge of disingenuousness against Mr. Morison, or as the latter styled it in his reply, "an attempt to massacre his character."

We must here explain why it was that Mr. Morison had a right to reply at the bar of the Synod, while he had none at the bar of the Presbytery. The reason was that the Presbytery themselves had served a libel upon him. Had his case come before them as an appeal against the judgment of the session, the appellant would have had a right of reply in Clerk's Lane Chapel, Kilmarnock, as well as in Gordon Street Chapel, Glasgow; but since his own session were unanimously with him, and the Presbytery had ultroneously summoned him to their bar, he had no right to speak a second time. Such is the somewhat curious order of Presbyterian Church Courts. We propose to give a quotation from Mr. Morison's extemporaneous reply at the bar of the Synod. It was believed to be, if possible, even more forcible than his opening speech. We will see how he first laid good Mr. Meikle on his back in the matter of the quotation, and then how he exposed the weakness of Mr. Ronald's several positions:—

"Mr. Morison, after the meeting had been constituted, resumed. He went over the speeches of the members of Kilmarnock Presbytery who spoke, and remarked on many of their arguments. He stated that he heard nothing from any of them, by way of reply, which could induce him to modify any of his sentiments. In remarking on Mr. Meikle's speech, he took particular notice of two passages which Mr. Meikle had quoted—the one from the 'apostolic' Clemens, and the other from the church of Smyrna to the church of Philomelium—to prove that an atonement for the elect alone was held as a doctrine in that early period of the church. He (Mr. Morison) was astonished that Mr. Meikle should have produced such passages, as they only proved what was admitted on all sides, that the early fathers believed that Christ died for all believers, while they did not contain one word to the effect that he died for none else. He (Mr. Morison) had read both of the epistles he referred to, not only in that translation from which Mr. Meikle had quoted, but also in the original Greek, and he had read them for the very purpose of ascertaining the views of the early fathers on the extent of the atonement, and he could assure Mr. Meikle that there was literally nothing in these writers that could be

made to accord with his limitarian views. In this judgment he was confirmed by the learned Bishop Davenant, whose knowledge of the fathers could not be questioned, and whose authority even Mr. Meikle might have respected. Here Mr. Morison read a quotation from Milner, the ecclesiastical historian, in which he says that 'the notion of particular redemption was unknown to the ancients, and he wished that it had remained equally unknown to the moderns.' Surely Mr. Meikle would not set up his own opinion as to an historical matter of fact, in opposition to two such authorities as Davenant and Milner.

"In reference to a remark which Mr. Ronald made on the drift of the first charge—viz., that the Presbytery did not bring forward, as a charge against him, the tenet of the universality of the atonement, he (Mr. Morison) said, why, then, was it made the principal topic of presbyterial inquiry? Why was it universally understood that this was the grand peculiarity that was preached in Kilmarnock? He never for a moment dreamed, till the last meeting of Presbytery, after the answers to his reasons of protest had been drawn up, and after Mr. Ronald had stated that he (Mr. Morison) need not take up the doctrine of universal atonement—he never dreamed till then, that, in the mind of any of his accusers, this was not the 'head and front' of his offence. He could understand why Mr. Ronald did not wish to bring this forward as a charge against him. Mr. Ronald differed from the rest of his brethren on this point, and entered his dissent in committee, although that dissent was dropped when the minutes was read over. If this doctrine be not involved in the charge against him, which ran in these terms—'that the object of saving faith to any person, is the statement that Christ made atonement for the sins of that person, as he made atonement for the sins of the world, and that the seeing of this to be true, is saving faith, and gives the assurance of salvation,'—he could not understand what was involved in the charge. He did hold that the doctrine of universal atonement was the object of saving faith. This doctrine was the Gospel, and the Gospel alone was the object of saving faith. Mr. Ronald had stated that there were two meanings of the word atonement. This, however, was not a question about what meaning *might* be attached to the word atonement. He cared not though the word were discarded from every human language; but there was something that Christ had done, call it by what name they might, and that something was what every sinner was to believe—and it was the belief of that something that was to bring salvation, and the consciousness of salvation, into the soul of the believer. God required no more than that man should give him credit for the truth of what he says about this something, in order that he may be saved. It might be said that the mere giving God credit as to the matter of fact which happened on Calvary was too simple to be justifying, saving faith; but it was this simplicity which deprived man of all ground of glorying in his salvation. Mr. Ronald had stated that the atonement was a mere channel of mercy. It was more; it was *an act* of mercy, it was in itself mercy to the unbeliever—kindness—love. It had completely satisfied God, completely propitiated him for the sins of us all, so that if we give God credit for it we shall be saved. Mr. Ronald thought it a paradox to say that a sinner could derive assurance from the doctrine that he (Mr. Morison) held. He represented the sinner as saying, 'my sins are not so atoned for, but that I may be punished;

how can I, from perceiving such an atonement as this, ever learn that my salvation is certain, when the truth I believe only tells me that my salvation is possible?' It was true that the atonement only made the sinner's salvation possible, but the sinner's belief of what God says about the atonement, renders it certain and secure. Faith is the *hinge* of the sinner's destinies. Mr. Ronald had spoken of prayer—he had said faith was just prayer. This was most strange jumbling of distinct doctrines. Faith was giving God credit for telling the truth—prayer was asking him to confer a blessing. Then as to repentance; Mr. Ronald held that it was godly sorrow for sin, but if this be admitted, it must also be maintained, that godly sorrow for sin goes before faith in Christ. It was, however, impossible for a man to feel godly sorrow before he be in a believing state. Some might think that it was a small matter whether one held that repentance came before faith, or faith before repentance. It had been made a *questio vexata* in theological systems, but let it not be supposed that it was a trivial matter. It was trivial so far as a system of theology is concerned, but it was no trivial matter to a sinner who was crying out, 'What shall I do to be saved?' He (Mr. Morison) referred to passages of Scripture, and to several authorities, in support of the opinion that the sinner must be a believer before he can feel godly sorrow for sin."

After administering a well-merited castigation to Mr. Thomas for the savageness of the attack which the latter had made on his character, Mr. Morison concluded this his second speech, as follows:—

"As to his doctrines he asked no favour; he asked a righteous judgment, and he trusted that these doctrines would not be injured in the eyes of the public by any decision of this court. These were the doctrines which he must preach so long as he did preach the everlasting Gospel. He now committed his case to the hands of his fathers and brethren, and he looked up to God, hoping that the doctrines would be left untouched, and that his protest and appeal would be sustained."

It was by this time late on Thursday evening, and the reverend court had already spent three days on the case. The appellant and his adversaries had now been fully heard, and it only remained for the Synod to debate and deliver judgment on the appeal. Before parties were removed from the bar, a good impression was produced by the brief speeches of two lay gentlemen from Kilmarnock, who appeared as commissioners from Clerk's Lane Church, and who both declared that the congregation would adhere to Mr. Morison, whatever might be the decision of the Synod, and also testified to the value of his labours in the town and neighbourhood. Independently altogether of what man might think, it was evident that the Lord thought highly of him. Dr. Heugh then acted as the mouthpiece of those whom Mr. Ronald's statement had taken by surprise, and asked

“Whether the holding of the doctrine of universal atonement was distinctly charged against Mr. Morison as an error?” The Presbytery answered “that it was not. Many of them held it to be an error by itself; but they had agreed not to make it a distinct charge. They considered that there was a sufficient ground for charging Mr. Morison with departure from the standards independently of it.” Parties were then removed; but as the night was now far advanced, the Synod agreed to hear members of Court and deliver judgment at next sederunt—namely, on Friday forenoon.

Meanwhile the greatest excitement prevailed, in connection with the case, throughout Glasgow and Scotland generally. The “daily press” was not in existence then; but such papers as the *Herald*, the *Courier*, the *Argus*, and *Morning Chronicle*, being published on different days of the week, kept the public well informed as to the progress of the debate. The *Argus* of Thursday, June 10th, after giving several columns of Mr. Morison’s address, and announcing the adjournment of discussion till the following day, contains the following foot-note in a parenthesis:—

“The above case is exciting the deepest interest in the public mind; and, during the period it has been before the Court, the church has been filled by respectable audiences, listening with eagerness to the proceedings. We have never, in the whole course of our experience, seen so numerous a meeting of Synod; while the attendance of the members is more numerous and regular than we ever before witnessed—so anxious are they to hear every part of the interesting case in which they are the judges. In so far as the interests of the Secession Church and of religion generally are concerned, a more important cause was never before tried in Scotland.”

The debates were not confined to Gordon Street Church, but were transferred to thousands of tea-tables, and were even briskly conducted on the public streets. Excited groups of civilians and ecclesiastics were seen arguing theological points on the pavements; while fists were clenched and sticks flourished with unevangelical vehemence. One reverend interlocutor was heard saying to a band of his brethren, in the neighbourhood of Gordon Street Chapel, “We must keep him to the standards; for, if we don’t, he’ll do us altogether!”

When the Court met next day, Mr. Fraser, of Alloa, delivered the first address. This gentlemen made a kind of apology for appearing before his brethren at so early a stage, adducing as a reason the fact that Mr. Morison had done

him the honour to mention his name twice, and animadvert upon the statements which he had published in reply to a member of his own Presbytery, who sympathised with Mr. Morison. Nothing in his address calls for special remark, save that he had not proceeded far till he was called to order by Mr. Pringle, of Auchterarder, for introducing the question of universal atonement, which, the latter maintained, was not in the record. But the Moderator ruled that, as Mr. Morison had been heard for two hours on that point, it was but fair that members of Court should be heard on the other side. It was already becoming plain that there were two parties in the Synod—the strict limitarians, and the general-reference-men. Fraser belonged to the former class, and Pringle to the latter. Mr. Fraser concluded with the following motion:—"That the protest and appeal of Mr. Morison be dismissed as ill-founded; that the sentence of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock be affirmed, and Mr. Morison's suspension from the exercise of his ministry be continued; and that a committee be appointed to deal faithfully and tenderly with him, in reference to his erroneous tenets, with a view, through the blessing of God, to bring him to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus." How strangely the last sentence falls upon our ears! To how many had James Morison shown the truth as it was in Jesus! A cloud had always hung around the truth, to their minds, till he, by his words and his writings, under God, had dispelled it. O Mr. Fraser! Mr. Fraser! perhaps Heaven's recording angel thought, that day, as he took down your words, that young Morison knew more about the truth as it was in Jesus than you! The Synod seemed to feel that Mr. Fraser's motion was not the thing; for, as we shall afterwards see, that made by Dr. Heugh carried the day.

But who is this who has already come forward to second the unfortunately worded motion? Let us take a good look at him; for he is a remarkable man. We have time to consider him well; for we should perhaps have mentioned sooner that while brethren, who had only a few words to say on a point of order, were allowed to speak from the part of the chapel where they were sitting, the members of Court who had anything like set speeches to deliver were expected to take their stand within the railing that was on a level with the precentor's desk, in which the Moderator

was sitting. Indeed the earliest orators had been called thither by acclamation, at the commencement of the proceedings. There Mr. Morison had delivered his long defences; and there the members of the Kilmarnock Presbytery had spoken on behalf of their own judgment. Who then is the minister who advances to second Mr. Fraser's motion? It is Andrew Marshall, of Kirkintilloch. He is already well known as a man of learning and of power; for it was a sermon which he delivered, some years before, in Greyfriars' Chapel, Glasgow, that had provoked the entire "Voluntary Controversy," and thus led ultimately to the secession of the non-intrusion party from the Church of Scotland, and the formation of the Free Church. Ah! he does not know, as he mounts that stair, and takes his place on that elevated rostrum, that this "Atonement Controversy," in which he is about to make his *début*, is to affect his future career far more powerfully, both personally and socially, than the "Voluntary Controversy" had done; for this speech he is on the point of delivering made him all at once the chieftain of the limitarian party in the Secession Church, and led, years after Mr. Morison's case was settled, to his being the libeller of Professors Brown and Balmer, as the abettors of too free a Gospel. These eminent men, however, were too influential to be overthrown even by his fearless assault; and when the great majority of the Secession Church espoused their liberal, rather than his strictly limitarian, though perhaps more consistent views, disgusted and broken-hearted, he left the Church altogether, and ended his days in gloomy and fretful isolation from all his brethren. Alas! the young man whom he rose to condemn was to have more effect upon his life than he dreamed. In view of such subsequent events, it is almost affecting to read the first words which Dr. Marshall uttered:\*

"The Rev. Mr. Marshall, of Kirkintilloch, said, they would give him credit when he said that he took part in this discussion with no ordinary pain. He had particular reasons for feeling pain on the occasion. Though Mr. Morison was a young man, with whom he had no acquaintance, whom he never saw till Thursday last, he was yet a person of great interest to him. He was not only the son of an old friend and brother minister, but of late he had become connected with him by family ties, and so connected as to give him a deep interest in all his concerns. He gave this as his excuse for not entering, as he might otherwise have done, into the discussion of the defences. In

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\* The degree of D.D. was conferred upon Mr. Marshall in 1842.

these defences he had shown no small ability, much self-possession, but still they were injudicious in the extreme, and calculated, in his opinion, to do anything rather than to serve his cause."

Reference was made in this exordium to the fact that Mr. Marshall was related to the young wife of the appellant at the bar. Although he had passed middle life he could not be called old. He was above the medium height, and had a powerful body as well as a powerful mind. "Nicodemus," who seems to have been a phrenologist, is wicked enough to say that "time had thinned his locks, and had revealed two most commanding bumps, Veneration and Destructiveness." Veneration made him worship the *Confession*; while Destructiveness made him glad to get a fling at his young "relation," whom constrictor-like, he had buttered before trying to devour. Of course "Nicodemus" says that Mr. Marshall should have kept the animal part of his nature under more complete control.

Like Mr. Fraser, Mr. Marshall was interrupted when he broke ground on "the extent of the atonement;" but he fearlessly said that he would sit down if he were not allowed to discuss that point. He declared that any one of common intelligence would see that the whole argument was summed up in that point. Grant to Mr. Morison that Christ died for every man, and all his positions would follow as a matter of course. Overturn that position, and all was overturned. For his part he intended to speak on nothing else.

His address produced a considerable effect upon the assembly. He became very excited as he warmed with his subject. He had no table before him on which to lean or *thump*, if at any time he wished to give effect to his words; but every now and then he slapped his right thigh with his right hand, or his left thigh with his left hand—an elocutionary resort which although rare, and not according to rule, was nevertheless neither undignified nor without effect.

Yet to one who knows the world-wide graciousness of "the truth as it is in Jesus," it is easy to silence and capture all the forts of limitarianism from which he aimed his heaviest guns. The anonymous writer already referred to, who was present on the occasion, says, that the passage in his speech which made the greatest impression was the following:—

"Mr. Morison said the atonement removed all obstacles to salvation except those existing within ourselves. Now he asked if the atonement did not remove obstacles within ourselves. If it did not, it was not

the atonement he had trusted to, or to which the people of God had always trusted. Christ had given himself for the Church to redeem it from all iniquity. Did not iniquity exist within ourselves? He died to take away an evil heart of unbelief—a heart at enmity with God—and were not these obstructions within ourselves? He had no doubt that every one who heard him would answer in the affirmative."

Now if Dr. Marshall had only been humble enough to read and ponder the tract on "The Nature of the Atonement," which his young relative had published about half a year before, he would have found an easy and satisfactory answer to this objection of which he made so much. In that tract, as our digest has already made plain, Mr. Morison distinguished between Atonement and the consequences of Atonement. Reconciliation, Justification, and *Redemption* were consequences of the Atonement. The Atonement was made equally for all men; but those are redeemed—that is, delivered from the power of sin—who believe the Gospel and yield their hearts to God; and, of course, the Saviour had this blessed result before his mind when he died upon the tree.

It is pitiful, moreover, to hear the eminent Dr. Marshall confessing, like the humbler lights of the Kilmarnock Presbytery, the *utter impossibility* of reconciling the free Gospel calls that are addressed to all men, with the doctrine of election. Strange if there indeed be points in our Father's scheme of grace that are *irreconcilable*. Though above reason in some particulars, surely none of the deep things of God are contrary to reason. We are sure that Marshall's departed spirit, if it could communicate with us to-day, would say, "My young friend was right and I was wrong. The key of reconciliation lies in Atonement for all, and Redemption for those who believe." We feel sure, also, that he would express regret for another passage in his speech, which, as to both matter and manner, is thus noticed by "Nicodemus:"

"It has been said before, that in order to be able fully to estimate the character of the speeches, it was necessary to have been present to hear them delivered. In no case is this remark more strictly true than in that of Mr. Marshall. There is an acerbity in his writings at all times, which no one acquainted with them can have failed to remark; but when that acerbity is coupled with the living voice,—a voice, in his case, by no means pleasant in its tone,—these together give a severity to the language which it does not retain in its written form. During this speech, Mr. Marshall made good use of these qualities or defects, or whatever else they may be considered, to make his words tell on the hearers; and when he came to that part of it in

which he says, respecting Mr. Morison and those who hold his views, 'I trust many of them will get to heaven notwithstanding their absurdities; I trust many of them will be the foremost to join in singing the song of the redeemed; *but one thing is certain, they must first change their principles,*'—when he uttered these words, his voice and features were strained to the uttermost. The most sarcastic sneer, of which even he is capable, accompanied them; and no one who heard him will soon forget the bitterness of temper in which they appeared to be uttered. The sound must still reverberate in their ears. If they had only seen his face and heard his voice, without knowing that he was using the language of hope, they must have supposed him to be denouncing curses both loud and deep."

We suppose that Mr. Marshall meant to say, that Mr. Morison and his friends could not sing the new song "Worthy is the Lamb." He showed himself by such a statement to be both undiscerning and inconsistent—undiscerning, because Mr. Morison still clung to the substitutionary view of Christ's death; and inconsistent, because he and his brethren had always been accustomed to extend the right hand of fellowship to the Wesleyans, who plead for universal but resistible grace. Does the captain deserve no praise who nobly swims out to save a drowning mariner, because the latter has eagerly clutched the rope that was extended to save?

The respectable speech of Dr. Stark of Dennyloanhead, who followed Mr. Marshall, contains nothing calling for special remark; but we are arrested both by the individual who next presented himself to the Synod (the Rev. Dr. Heugh, of Glasgow), and by the address which he delivered. This divine exercised no small influence in his day and generation. Of fluent speech, graceful carriage, and winning countenance, he was eminently gifted with the power to persuade. He was then fifty-eight years of age, and, as yet, showed no signs of that collapse of health which removed him, five years afterwards, to a better world. He published a pamphlet on the Atonement controversy, in one of its later stages, which he entitled *Irenicum*—that is, a plea for peace; and both title and pleadings were characteristic of the man. As a friend of our own somewhat facetiously remarked, "the pamphlet proceeded exactly like a pendulum, giving now a stroke on the one side, and anon one on the other." In the opening of his address, Dr. Heugh gathered up all the points on which all parties were agreed, such as the Sinfulness of man, the Divinity of Christ, the reality of the Atonement, &c. He expressed a hope that, as the result of the Synod's deliberations, Mr. Morison "would be among them

as before, and even more abundantly than before." He complimented the young appellant in the following terms:—

"In regard to his mental qualifications, it must be gratifying to them all to see a person so young exhibiting so much talent, so much learning and reading, beyond his years; and his ever ready elocution—why, it appeared to him he had too much of it. It was a great misfortune to many young men to have the power to speak without limits; the tongue is apt to damage the intellect; and it was perhaps to this cause that so many of his sentiments had in them the character of crudity. He believed him to be a person of great piety and zeal, and he bitterly lamented, for the sake of Mr. Morison and the Church, that the talents of such a man should be lost by what he would call the sins of his youth."

The "sins of his youth," which David confessed, were very different indeed from the imaginary transgressions to which Dr. Heugh referred. We do not believe that when Dr. Morison looks back to these exciting years, 1840 and 1841, he sees much sin to confess, in the public acts of his life. Strange, indeed, if that defence of truth should be *sinful*, which led so many to see their "sin put away by Christ."

When Dr. Heugh approached the debated points, the pendulum swung beautifully. Amid loud cries of "Hear, hear," he advanced a view which "he believed would satisfy the minds of ninety-nine out of every hundred ministers of the Secession Church—namely, the general reference of the atonement to all men, and its special reference to the elect," or, as he expressed it, "that the gift of God was to all men in *exhibition* through the Atonement, but to the elect in *possession*." Now, rightly understood, that was an admirable exposition of the Arminian view. We hold exactly this, that the elect—that is, believers—*possess* the gift of eternal life—a gift which is *exhibited* to all men for their acceptance by faith. But we are afraid that by the word "possession" Dr. Heugh meant that possession which is the result of eternal, arbitrary, and unconditional appointment.

We need not follow the Doctor through the various counts of the indictment, but content ourselves with remarking that, at the close of his speech, being not satisfied with the wording of Mr. Fraser's motion, he proposed the following in its stead:—"That the Synod, without sanctioning everything in the papers and pleadings, approve of the diligence and fidelity of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, dismiss the appeal on account of the erroneous and inconsistent opinions set forth by Mr. Morison, and his blameable conduct in

regard to the suppression of his tract—continue his suspension—and appoint a committee to deal with him, with power to restore him to the exercise of his office if they are satisfied.” When Dr. Heugh read this motion, Mr. Marshall started up, and said that he begged leave to withdraw his support from Mr. Fraser’s, and second Dr. Heugh’s in its stead, as he liked it better.

It was now two o’clock, and the hour for mid-day adjournment had nearly arrived; but another address was yet to be delivered by which the excitement of the assembly would be wound up to a higher pitch than it had yet attained. See, there is Professor John Brown of Edinburgh mounting the rostrum, and about to give forth his deliverance on the great subject of debate. Now, it must be premised that this very deliverance had been looked forward to with no little interest, not to say uneasy apprehension. It was well known that Dr. Brown had published theological opinions scarcely distinguishable at all in scope and bearing from Mr. Morison’s. The latter, as we have already seen, had again and again quoted from his professor’s books in defence of his own positions. The remark was quite current already among the ministers, that “the evil had begun in the Divinity Hall.” No wonder, then, that the question had often been asked, Would Dr. Brown speak? and if so, What would he say? For the reverend Doctor, it must be remembered, was a host in himself. Perhaps no one stood higher in Scotland, at that day, as an exegetical theologian; and if he should cast the weight of his great influence into the scale, on the side of his favourite pupil, that single vote, it was thought, would be worth hundreds of votes from ordinary men. It need not be matter of surprise to our readers, therefore, that when Dr. Brown rose to speak, a murmur of expectation ran through the crowded assembly.

Although barely sixty years of age, Dr. Brown had already begun to present a venerable appearance. He had not been in robust health for some time; and he begged leave to read the observations he was about to make. We will give his entire speech because it was brief and concise and had an important bearing on the case:—

“The Rev. Dr. Brown of Edinburgh next addressed the Synod. He said he had given the subject all the attention in his power, and his conscientious conviction was, that the most of the doctrines charged against Mr. Morison had not been, and could not be, proved to be

contradictory either to the Holy Scriptures or to their symbolical books; and that any impropriety which he might have committed in reference to the concealment of his views, and not using all his influence in suppressing the tract objected to by the Presbytery, though it might have called, and in his apprehension did call, for brotherly correction, and even presbyterial caution and admonition, by no means warranted the proceeding, so soon, to the inflicting so high a censure as suspension. He would briefly state the grounds on which he came to this conclusion, and would go over the charges preferred against Mr. Morison. The doctrine in the first charge seemed to him to be substantially as follows:—The object of saving faith is the statement that ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,’—that Christ ‘died for our sins according to the Scriptures,’—that ‘he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world,’ a statement implying that the sins of the individual believing have been atoned for. This is the Gospel; to believe this, in its true meaning, is the faith of the Gospel; and the holy, benignant character of God, as ‘a just God and the Saviour,’ revealed in this truth, in the measure in which it is discovered, gives peace to the conscience, purity to the heart, confidence towards God, and the good hope of final salvation. If Mr. Morison meant anything different from this, he had nothing to say in defence of his doctrine; but this appeared to him the meaning of his statements, and if he was sure in his own mind of anything, he was sure that that was the doctrine contained in the Bible; and he was not aware that it was inconsistent with the symbolical books of their church. The second statement with which Mr. Morison was charged was equivalent to this:—That the man to whom the Gospel is preached labours under no physical inability to believe it, and that, now that the atonement has been made, no obstacle in the way of salvation remains, but his wilful rejection of the divine testimony, and his obstinate indisposition to receive the holy salvation which it reveals and conveys. There is surely no heresy here. The third statement imputed to Mr. Morison, as he understood it, was equivalent to this:—That awakened sinners ought to be warned of the sin and danger of putting off, on any consideration, their immediate duty to believe the plain accredited testimony of God regarding his Son,—cautioned against supposing that anything can serve the purpose of faith, or can be any good reason for not immediately setting to their seal that God is true—assured that solid peace and good hope can never be obtained in any other way; and that, though they should be commanded to pray, they should be told that to pray in unbelief, or substitute the mere saying of prayers—the asking what they neither desire nor expect—to substitute this in the room of immediate faith, is but to insult God, and increase their own condemnation. It appeared to him that the language of Mr. Morison on this subject was exceedingly liable to misapprehension; yet, at the same time, he was fully persuaded that the evil Mr. Morison intended to guard against was a real and important one, and that the point to which the convinced sinner had come when this particular statement of doctrine was intended for him was a critical point, where he was in danger of making shipwreck; while at the same time he thought that, practically, the language was not likely to do much harm; for, when the sinner became alive to his real position, as an object of the con-

demning sentence of the holy God, trembling on the brink of a miserable eternity, if the unhappy creature obtained but a glimpse of the true character of God, the eloquence of Mr. Morison, though it were ten thousand times greater than it was, would not prevent that man from praying; his mind and heart would rise to God in—"God be merciful to me a sinner," and this would be acceptable prayer; but still it was prayer in the faith of the truth, though the man had got but a glimpse of that truth. The next statement imputed to Mr. Morison, so far as he could understand it, was equivalent to the following proposition:—That the repentance enjoined in the New Testament is a change of mind chiefly in reference to God, and that it is through means of this change of mind that men are led to a true sorrow for, and thorough forsaking of, sin. He could see nothing erroneous in this. As to the fifth charge, the distinction referred to did not appear to him a happy one; but he could scarcely bring himself to think that a man was to be set down as a heretic for holding by it; it was nearly the same thing they met with in the works of some orthodox divines, the distinction between judicial and fatherly forgiveness. As to the order of the decrees, Mr. Morison had better let that alone, and they had better all let that alone. They would sadly lose themselves if they made their conceived order the basis of argument. Mr. Morison had quoted a sentence from Bishop Davenant on the subject; he wished he had gone farther, and taken the Bishop's advice.—[Here Dr. Brown quoted a passage from Davenant, deprecating needless discussions on this mysterious subject.] With respect to the "*many* unscriptural, unwarranted expressions, calculated to depreciate the atonement," that Mr. Morison was charged with—only three were given. The first was far from being a happy expression—that where he described it as a 'talismatic something.' It seemed, however, to be just an out-of-the-way mode of stating its exclusive and perfect fitness for its purpose, and its mysterious *modus operandi*. He did not think Mr. Morison was wise in using expressions of that kind; it was not 'speaking the words that became sound doctrine.' The second expression specified appeared to be a very sober statement of a most indubitable fact, that to all eternity a saved sinner must continue *deserving* of hell, and could deserve nothing else; and though he might hope for and obtain 'eternal life,' that would be entirely 'the gift of God through Jesus Christ his Lord,' which, however secured to him, could never be deserved by him. As to his doctrine that the atonement did not secure heaven for the elect, or the removal of internal obstacles to the obtaining of a personal interest in the blessings of salvation, that was the most objectionable thing he was represented as having said. He endeavoured to explain it away, but, in his apprehension, he had much better at once have admitted that the expressions were inaccurate. He said the atonement did not secure the removal of the obstacles; and he got over this by saying, that the atonement, *per se*, did not remove them. Who ever thought so? The blessings of salvation were the result of the sovereign love of God, and obtained through believing; but the love of God had opened a channel through the atonement for that divine influence, by means of which that faith was produced that put the sinner in possession of these blessings. He had read Mr. Morison's productions with a good deal of interest; and, though there were in them many expressions which, for various reasons, he would not choose to

employ—could not employ, yet he could not say he had found *many* unscriptural and unwarrantable statements, and *not one* which, taken in its connection, and according to its obvious object, could be truly considered as calculated, as he was sure none of them were intended, to 'depreciate the atonement.' With regard to original sin, though he did not sanction all that Mr. Morison said on that head, neither Scripture nor their standards affirmed, that all men were 'deserving of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, entirely on account of Adam's sin.' Not one of the statements on this head was contradicted, either in the Bible, or their symbolical books. The charge of disingenuousness (continued Dr. Brown), referred to the concealment of the tract previous to ordination—to his avoiding all objectionable modes of phraseology on his presbytery trials, and the alleged breach of his pledge afterwards. He could not account satisfactorily to his own mind for Mr. Morison's conduct in some of these instances; but still, as he expressed regret for some of them, they could scarcely lay the foundation for such a sentence as that which had been pronounced on him. Such were his convictions with regard to the whole subject. He did regret that the matter should have been brought before that Court in its present form. He sincerely regretted that more means had not been used for the purpose of bringing the Presbytery of Kilmarnock and Mr. Morison to a mutual understanding with regard to these points, and he could not but think that the highest censure but one that a court could inflict for the grossest heresy, or immorality, should not have been resorted to till every other means had been tried in vain. His conviction, in looking to the whole matter was, that it was, in a great measure, a war of words. Good would, however, come out of it, for it would lead, not merely to an explanation of words, but to an elucidation of doctrine, and the ultimate result would be in a high degree advantageous to the Secession Church. He was persuaded that the present breeze, though it had almost mounted to a gale, would be found a healthful one; and he was conscious of a feeling which, he trusted, was something better than pride, though he could scarcely get any other name for it, when he looked on that assembly, gravely though earnestly discussing 'the deep things of God,' and contrasted it in his imagination with another assembly, recently held elsewhere, debating fiercely with regard to their 'beggary elements.' He should be happy to see some method adopted by which the good that might be brought out of this might be realised with the least possible measure of attendant evil; he had no talents himself for public business, and was not prepared to point out any course, but he trusted some other member of Synod would. He fondly hoped that, on the present occasion, they would not have the Synod desecrating the high censure of suspension, by inflicting it upon what, so far as he could see, was a misapplication of phrases, rather than a perversion of doctrine, and that Mr. Morison would have more good sense than to become the martyr of words—mere words."

It can easily be understood how the reading of this paper produced a profound impression on the Court. For, in the first place, as the old woman said of Dr. Chalmers's pulpit performances, "it was *fell* reading." The speaker forgot his

recent illness and became thoroughly warmed up as he proceeded, making the large chapel re-echo the tones of his noble voice, while his noble countenance beamed with holy enthusiasm, and his flowing white hair rose and fell, owing to the vehemence of his elocutionary excitement. Besides, it was quite apparent that the professor virtually threw his shield over the pupil. He took up all the points one by one, and summarily disposed of them. A gentleman who was present informs us that we can have no idea of the impression which was produced when, at the close of his decisive comments on each count, the Doctor exclaimed, "Surely there is no heresy here!"

We would respectfully draw the attention of our theological opponents in Scotland to this remarkable speech. They are constantly telling us that "Morisonianism" is very deadly error indeed. We say to them, Look here, gentlemen. You admit that Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh was a very learned and godly man and a very accomplished theologian. You have his *Expository Discourses on First Peter* and his *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord* on the shelves of your libraries. Well, that man of penetrating intellect and angelic piety rose up in the Synod of his church, when this system of truth was on its trial, and declared that he saw no heresy in it, but that, as far as he could discover, excepting a few questionable expressions, it embraced the true Gospel of the grace of God! What think ye of that? Ponder the fact well.

One paragraph of the address brought down the applause of the whole house. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had concluded its annual meetings in Edinburgh on the preceding week. Heaving with the excitement that issued in the Disruption of the Free Church, that anxious conclave had been almost exclusively occupied with the battle of its state-paid endowments. When Dr. Brown contrasted the theological discussions of his own Synod with these grovelling contentions about what he scornfully called "beggarly elements," the belligerent divines before him forgot the asperities of theologic strife and broke out into a unanimous cheer. They had no endowments other than the intellectual; and the young appellant had no "living" to fall back upon. Yet the smile and the sunshine were short-lived; for, as the address closed, and they who heard it realised that the respected speaker virtually endorsed the

alleged errors of Mr. Morison of Kilmarnock, they felt that a serious crisis had arrived for their church, and that clever helmsmen would be needed to steer her clear of the rocks of difficulty into the midst of which she had been drifted.

When Dr. Brown's speech was concluded three o'clock had arrived, and the Synod adjourned. The loud buzz of excited conversation showed that it almost broke up in confusion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Final Sederunt in Mr. Morison's Trial before the Synod—Speeches of Drs. Hay, King, and M'Kerrow, and of Messrs. Scott and Baird—Motion carried for Mr. Morison's Suspension—Rev. Robert Morison and Rev. John Guthrie Protest—Reasons of Protest by the former—Dr. John Brown also Protests, but his Reasons clandestinely destroyed—Mr. Morison deeply affected by the Decision—Meets with the Committee appointed to confer with him—Preaches on the Sabbath-day, notwithstanding the Synod's Prohibition—Receives 183 New Communicants at the Lord's Table—Declines to meet subsequently with the Committee—Is declared no longer a Minister of the Church.

WHEN the Synod assembled in the evening for their final sederunt on Mr. Morison's case, the first words uttered by the minister who re-opened the debate (Rev. Mr. Scott of Leslie, in Fife,) showed how profound the impression had been which Dr. Brown's speech had produced in the afternoon, as well as the estimate which the best friends of the Secession Church formed of the gravity of the crisis in her history which she had at length reached. Mr. Scott thus commenced his speech: "The cause before us is of immense magnitude. This is a crisis in our Secession, unparalleled during all its bygone history."

Mr. Scott was rather a remarkable man in his way. Although possessed of some property and generally well enough attired, there was something coarse and vulgar in his appearance and manner of speaking, while at the same time he had a force and power of his own. His peculiarity of address was increased by the fact that in his pronunciation he always gave to the letter "s" the sound of "sh." Even although he had been an Ephraimite, he would have saved his life at the fords of the Jordan (Judges chap. xii.), for he could not have said "Sibboleth," but only "Shibbo-

leth." He spoke on the ultra-limitarian side, and therefore was dead against the appellant, Mr. Morison. One of his characteristic utterances was the following: "Those who hold this new doctrine concerning faith should be prepared to affirm that the mental agency of the angels in heaven is the same in kind with that of the hosts of hell." Of course it is. Who can doubt or deny it? When the angels fell and lost their first estate, what was the cause of their fall? A difference in mental powers between them and the pure angels? No; a difference of heart. And the same contrast remains still, save in so far as the prolonged commission of sin may produce the deterioration of the mental powers.

Since it was announced that we intended to collect materials for this history, we have received many kind communications from people in all parts of the country, and even in distant lands, who were, thirty-five years ago, spectators of these stirring scenes, and auditors of these stirring speeches. One correspondent—a warm friend of our cause in New Zealand—thus writes: "When you come to give an account of the speech of Mr. Scott of Leslie, in the Synod, do not fail to notice what I heard him say in Gordon Street Church with my own ears—'That rather than preach Mr. Morison's doctrines he would turn beggar outright, and travel the country with a meal-pock and a string!'" We can see clearly enough the place in the reverend orator's speech at which this strange expression was used; but the editor of the *United Secession Magazine* evidently thought the remark too undignified to be reported. We feel disposed to exclaim across the intervening chasm of thirty years, "Indeed, Mr. Scott; we had thought that the risk of privation and self-sacrifice was all on the other side. You were pretty safe on the side of so-called orthodoxy and the *Confession of Faith*. But suppose you had taken to 'the string and the meal-pock,' to quote your own elegant phrase, for the sake of unconditional election and a limited atonement, and that, some summer evening, you had been entertaining a few less fortunate mendicant brethren on the banks of a rivulet in Fife, out of the contents of your half-filled bag. Loosening the string, suppose that, at the same time, you had thus unloosed your tongue: 'Hungry and hapless comrades! there really is not provision for you all here; but, nevertheless, I make a free, wide, and unlimited offer to every one of you. If any of you remain unsatisfied, it is not my fault; for I take

the vocal grove and purling brook to witness that I have made a free offer to you all.' If some of the starving fraternity had replied, 'But how can you make an offer to us all if you have not provision for us all? can our eating create the food if it be not there already?'—the force of the analogy, when applied in a theological direction, would surely have been sufficient to drive you from your mendicancy to your ministry again."

Both Mr. Scott and Rev. Dr. Fraser of Kennoway, who followed him in the debate, called special attention to Mr. Morison's reasoning on Gal. ii. 20—"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." They held that the young appellant had no right to encourage any sinner to use these words, "he loved me, and gave himself for me," simply because he was a member of the family of man, since Paul did not use them in his epistle till he had been seventeen years experimentally acquainted with the life of God. But the appellant was wiser than his critics. Paul's experimental life sprang from his faith. It was the faith of the truth that Christ had "loved him and given himself for him" that made Paul so holy, bold, and self-sacrificing. Let men doubt that fact, and the divine life in them will be weak, or a nullity altogether. Let them receive that fact intelligently and realisingly, and the life of God will be vigorous in their souls. No faith, no holiness; no truth, no faith. No Christ for me, no Gospel for me; and, therefore, no purifying power at work in the secret chambers of the heart.

Passing by the speech of Dr. M'Kerrow of the Bridge of Teith, we gladly linger for a little over the kind and truly Christian address of Dr. Mitchell of Glasgow. This venerable man survived the meeting of Synod only two years; and it was a common saying, at the time of his death, that "not a whisper ever could be raised against the name and fame of John Mitchell." So pacific was he in his spirit that he would take no part in "the Voluntary Controversy," fearing lest he should lose the friendship of the ministers of the Establishment, with some of whom he enjoyed sweet Christian intercourse. He acted as one of the Professors in the Secession Church, and thus referred in the exordium of his speech to Mr. Morison's behaviour in his class:—

"I know my young brother well. As a student, he was talented, exemplarily assiduous, and by no means unpersuadable. If, therefore,

he has erred, which I fear he will be found to have done in some respects—I hope he will be open to conviction, and ready to retract what he shall see to have been wrong in doctrine or in expression. *In expression*, I say; for much of the evil lies, I apprehend, in an unhappy phraseology; and, from whatever cause it may have proceeded, he has adopted language, in several cases, which is sure to be mistaken, and, if his sentiments were sound, sure to mislead.”

In the main body of his address Dr. Mitchell contended that he had always felt free to preach the Gospel to every creature, and expressed his hope that the whole warfare of words might yet be amicably terminated.

A very different orator next mounted the rostrum—Rev. Dr. Hay of Kinross. This gentleman afterwards became, along with Dr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch, a leader of the limitarian party in the Secession Church. As might have been expected, he spoke with asperity of Mr. Morison,—of whom, indeed, and of his doctrines, he had not one good word to say. Yet we glean information from his speech on an important point. We did not know, till the report of his address made us aware of the fact, that this was not the first time that Presbyterial and even Synodical action had been taken in the Secession Church on the question of the Atonement:

“ This special reference of the death of Christ for the redemption of the elect only has been maintained by the Secession Church from its very commencement. For opposing this doctrine Mr. Mair of Orwel was deposed by the General Associate Synod in 1757; and, within these few years, in 1830, the Rev. Mr. Forrester of Kinkell brought a charge of libel against the Rev. William Pringle of Auchterarder, for teaching the doctrine of universal redemption. Mr. Forrester was heard in defence of the libel, and Mr. Pringle in his own defence. Parties being removed, the Synod proceeded to give judgment, and found that the libel was groundless; it appeared evident that Mr. Pringle had taught no doctrine inconsistent with the standards of our church. But the Synod, at the same time, declared that, as, from a misconception of the phraseology of Scripture, a false liberality or affectation of accuracy in language, and of simplicity in their views of divine truth—as if the mysterious scheme of salvation could be disencumbered of all difficulties—many assert and maintain that Christ made atonement for the sins of all men, and thus infringe the sovereignty of divine grace, and encourage the presumption of the sinner, the Synod enjoin all ministers and preachers to be on their guard against introducing discussions in their ministrations, or employing language which may seem to oppose the doctrine of particular redemption, or that Christ, in making atonement for sin, was substituted in the room of the elect only.”

It seems to us that the Synods of 1830 and 1841 would

have counselled Paul, John, and even the blessed Saviour himself, to guard against the use of invitations too liberal, loving, and world-wide in their extent.

Even as when in a great debate in the House of Commons, a friend of the Government and a member of the Opposition alternately address the deliberative assembly, so, on this occasion, did a comparatively liberal speaker always succeed one of the more strait-laced side of the house. When Dr. Hay sat down, a man of genuine genius and eloquence rose—Dr. David King of Glasgow. He seemed to sympathise with Mr. Morison as one man of intellect might be expected to sympathise with another. He had no pleasure in seeing him hounded to death as some of the smaller men evidently had. His first words on rising were—"I feel induced to make a few remarks, chiefly because several of the later speakers have used stronger language in characterising the debated points than I am prepared to adopt." Like Dr. Brown, he seemed to think that the differences were rather verbal than real; and confessed that it was with "painful reluctance" that he would vote for Dr. Heugh's motion, evidently hoping that the committee to be appointed would reconcile Mr. Morison and his co-presbyters, both as to matters of doctrine and practice. We quote Dr. King's peroration, both because it will give our readers a specimen of those finely strung sentences which used to delight Glasgow audiences thirty years ago, and because it shows the eloquent speaker's good-will towards the appellant at the bar:—

"If such averments as these are to be thrown on our Christian societies, then farewell to their tranquil prosperity. Contention will take the place of devotion; we shall have reciprocal injuries, instead of aggression on common enemies; the God of peace will quit the arena of strife; and a long age may not see the conclusion of consequent disasters. Let us stop in time. Let Mr. Morison give up with diction which he may see to be so misguiding; let his admissions be received with a kind and generous interpretation; and let us close these deliberations, so dreaded in prospect, by mutually acknowledging, in joyous and grateful strains, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

It was now eleven o'clock at night, and it looked as if every member of Court had spoken who wished to give a prepared address. One other influential minister, however, desired to be heard—the occupant of the Moderator's chair. Mr. Baird asked leave of the Synod to vacate his seat, and

express his mind on the grave cause which had rendered those deliberations necessary over which he had presided for several days. Leave having been granted, a substitute took his place, and the Moderator delivered an earnest and even excited harangue. It was felt by Mr. Morison's friends to be hardly fair in him, with all the influence of a presiding judge, to sum up with so much acrimony against the young appellant at the bar. His speech was not remarkable for argument but for *animus*; and being the last that was delivered, its effect was all the more considerable. Dr. Heugh's motion, as it originally stood, referred the whole matter to a committee, to which power was to be given to restore Mr. Morison to his charge, if they saw fit, without reporting publicly to the Synod. The Moderator declaimed vehemently against this proposal. He declared it to be unprecedented, that a case involving points so vital should be huddled up in secret, and ended with the threat, "If this idea does not fall in with the judgment of the Court, I shall feel it to be my duty to take my stand under a solemn and deliberate protest."

After some conversation all the motions were withdrawn, with the exception of Dr. Heugh's, which was carried without a vote, as amended by the Moderator. It ran as follows:—"The Synod, without sanctioning everything in the papers and pleadings, approve of the diligence and fidelity of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock—dismiss the appeal on account of the erroneous and inconsistent opinions set forth by Mr. Morison, and his blameable conduct in regard to the suppression of his tract—continue his suspension, and appoint a committee to deal with Mr. Morison, and to report to the Synod on Thursday morning first at furthest."

It may possibly seem strange to our readers that, while we have all along represented one portion of the Synod as leaning more favourably to Mr. Morison than the other, this adverse vote should have been given on his case without a division. But it must be recollected that very few indeed of the members of Court *wholly* sympathised with his doctrinal positions. Besides, those who were friendly fully expected, as already hinted, that the private dealing of the committee would have a more powerful effect on Mr. Morison's mind than exciting and irritating public debate. But what of Dr. Brown? Why did he not propose a counter-motion to that of Dr. Heugh in defence of his favourite pupil? The

fact was that *potent private influence was brought to bear on Dr. Brown* immediately after the delivery of his surprising speech. It is no gossiping small talk we utter, but simply the truth, in a matter of great public moment, when we say that Dr. Heugh and other influential men were seen to attach themselves very tenaciously to the influential professor. The two doctors spent the interval together between the afternoon and evening sederunt; and it must be admitted that if the Glasgow doctor had admirable powers of persuasion, the Edinburgh doctor, owing to his amiability of disposition, was very susceptible of being persuaded.

When the decision of the Synod was announced, Mr. Morison was much moved. He did not wish to leave the church of his fathers. He only desired liberty to preach a free Gospel within her pale. Amid deep stillness he rose up and said, that "he felt astonished and grieved at the result to which his fathers and brethren had come. He felt persuaded in his own mind that it was God's truth for which he had been libelled and suspended; and, seeing that he was persuaded of this, and seeing, moreover, that the congregation over which he presided were in peculiar circumstances, having in immediate prospect the observance of the Lord's Supper, he felt that his duty to his own conscience, his people, his Master, and his Master's truth, compelled him to enter his solemn protest against the decision." He then read the following protest:—"Seeing the supreme Court has passed sentence against me, even to a suspension from the exercise of my ministry, and that on most unjust grounds, as I conceive, I protest against the decision; and I will hold myself at liberty to maintain and preach the same doctrines, as if no such sentence had been come to."

But this was not the only protest that was made against these extreme proceedings. His much respected father, Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate, now approaching sixty years of age, handed in the following "Reasons of Dissent:"—

"The undersigned dissents from the decision of Synod, continuing the suspension of the Rev. James Morison, of Kilmarnock, for the following reasons:—

"1. Because the process against him was commenced and prosecuted by the Presbytery without a single attempt being made to deal with him privately and personally, in order either to ascertain precisely what were his views, and what their grounds and bearings, or to induce him by paternal counsel to alter or modify them; nothing being resorted to but instant judicial procedure, upon the ground of vague and

unproven reports, as if it had been more the object of desire to find him wrong than to find him right, or ever to make him right, unless by dint of direct presbyterial authority.

“2. Because the subscriber holds and ever has held, that it is an unrighteous measure,—sinfully disparaging to ‘the lively oracles’ of God, and at once unscriptural and unprotestant in principle, to judge of the soundness of doctrine, or try alleged error, by any other standard than the Holy Scriptures, and acquit or condemn on the footing of any other authority than the Word of God alone. He submits that while judging in the name and authority of Christ, it is warrantable to the Court to employ the statements of the subordinate standards of the church, not as the ground of the sentence to be passed, but only as an important item of attendant mitigation or aggravation as the nature of the case may be; but that it is highly derogatory to the Scriptures, and dishonouring to God, to go further, and make human formularies the rule of judgment in the matter of God’s own revealed truth.

“3. Because he is convinced that the tenets censured, if not directly condemned, by this Court, as unsound and inconsistent, are both sound and consistent, at once agreeable to the Scriptures, and unopposed to the standards of the church.

“4. Because in that decision there is not a sufficiently certain sound given in an explicit and direct judgment of the doctrines in question, but a seeming indication that these might be allowed provided certain forms of expression were corrected; whereas the subscriber holds and ever has held, that though mere language is very important, and may well be the subject of advice or caution or warning, it never can justly be the ground of censure, or the subject of judicial decision.

“5. Because he is convinced, from minute personal knowledge, that the allegations of disingenuousness hurled against the appellant (except that one point on which confession was made by him) are a mere tissue of groundless and overstrained mis-statement; and moreover, as they rest merely on the assertion of one party at the bar, and are denied by the other party at the bar, the Court was bound in common equity (in the absence of all proof on either side) judicially to disbelieve them, as unproved and consequently judicially untrue, and not to add their sanction to that which, so far as they knew, may be a mere disingenuous device to discredit the appellant’s doctrines through the destruction of his character.

“6. Because the appellant, while he has adopted no new or strange theology different from that professed and preached by ministers of this church, has, as he himself avows, been led, by the grace of God bringing him to peace in Christ, to understand a little more clearly and precisely than he formerly was able to do, how to distribute and apply the practical bearings of God’s saving truth to the consciences of sinners; and as it is principally, or wholly, on account of the precise and minute methods of the practical application of truth, which the personal experience of the grace of the Gospel has suggested from the word of God, that he has been censured by this Court, this sentence, however far from being so intended, appears to the subscriber to be in itself materially, and in effect, a judicial censure of the work and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

“ROBERT MORISON.”

Not only is this document most affecting, as containing a fond father's defence of a most useful and deserving son ; but it is interesting as being the first specimen we have yet met in these historical notices of the style and spirit of Mr. Morison, senior. In subsequent chapters we shall find the promise of logical power and felicitous diction on the part of the worthy writer amply borne out, when we come to sketch his career and the part he played in this honourable campaign.

The minutes of the Synod's proceedings mention that "another minister" also entered his dissent. That unnamed protester was Rev. John Guthrie, of Kendal, who had been, both at college and at the divinity hall, the young appellant's bosom friend, and who did not desert him in the hour of trial, but took his place honourably and faithfully at his side—a post which he still bravely keeps to this day. The reason why his name was not given in the synodical documents was that Mr. Guthrie, from his ignorance at the time of ecclesiastical law, had not given in his reasons of dissent when the minutes were read next day. He had them in his hand and offered to record them at the close of the meeting, but it was then too late.

But there was another protester, whose name is not mentioned as such in the *United Secession Magazine*, nor in any other authorised report of the proceedings. And thereby hangs a tale. The Rev. Dr. Brown of Edinburgh, although he made no counter-motion in Mr. Morison's behalf, protested, and actually gave in reasons of dissent, as well as Mr. Morison, senior. Where are they then? Echo answers "where?" The fact is that they were destroyed in some clandestine manner, and never given to the public as they should have been. In truth, Dr. Brown was *privately dealt with*; and we suppose that our readers will all have a tolerably correct idea of what is meant by such an expression. It seems to have been represented to him that it would never do for a man of his eminence in the ecclesiastical world to have his great name mixed up or identified with what so many regarded as a heterodox movement. And simply because he did not insist upon the publication of his reasons of dissent, they seem to have been surreptitiously removed. But without doubt the deed was dishonourable, no matter on whose head the blame should fall ; for such documents, when publicly given in, most assuredly belong to the public.

We must now lift the veil from private life, and give our readers a glimpse of a scene that was witnessed by but few. Mr. Morison and his young wife had been the guests, during this anxious week, of a Christian lady in Glasgow, belonging to the Congregational body, who felt it at all times to be a pleasure to entertain the servants of Christ, and who certainly thought none the less of Mr. Morison for all the outcry that had been raised against him. Indeed, the Scottish Congregationalists as a class rather welcomed him all the more on account of his peculiarities, because he seemed, for that very reason, to approximate more closely to the early itinerant zeal of the Haldanes and Greville Ewing—a zeal which had, just a year or two before, been revived in the apostolic labours of Henry Wight of Edinburgh.

The ladies had not gone to the evening meeting with Mr. Morison, but were waiting anxiously for his return when the hour of midnight had passed. On his arrival, near one o'clock in the morning, his hostess met him at the door, with the eager inquiry, "Well, how have things gone?" His only reply was, "All is well." On reaching the apartment in which the family and friends were assembled, he said, feelingly, "Let us pray!" It is still remembered that the first words he uttered were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." From the earnest and touching supplication which followed, those present gathered that the deed of the Presbytery had been confirmed by the Synod—that he who knelt beside them had been disowned by man—that he felt his position deeply—but that, strong both in faith and love, he could return good for evil, and expect that "the things which happened unto him would fall out unto the furtherance of the Gospel."

One other trial yet remained for Mr. Morison before he was finally and for ever cut loose from the church of his fathers,—and one which was, in some respects, the sorest of all. He was under the necessity of repairing next morning, once more, to the Gordon Street Session-house, that he might confer there with the Committee which had been appointed to converse with him in private. The interview is thus notified in the minutes of the Synod's proceedings:—

"The Committee appointed to converse with Mr. Morison met. Present—Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Hay, Dr. Fraser, Dr. Heugh, Dr. Beattie, Dr. King, Mr. William Fraser, Mr. Marshall, Mr. George Lawson,

Mr. Baird, Mr. W. Pringle, and Mr. W. Johnston. The meeting was opened with prayer by Dr. Mitchell. Mr. Johnston was chosen clerk. Mr. Morison was present, and expressed his willingness to enter into friendly conversation with the Committee.

“Mr. Morison having been asked whether he was bound by any engagement or understanding to abide by the congregation to which he was at present ministering, whatever might be the decision come to in his case, stated that he was not. Mr. Morison declared that no change had been produced in his sentiments by the discussions in the Synod; and the Committee, after a protracted and friendly conversation of nearly three hours, did not succeed in effecting any.

“Serious and affectionate counsels and advices were addressed to him, on the importance of acting with wisdom and discretion in his present circumstances.

“Adjourned to meet on Monday, at half-past five o'clock, P.M.—Closed with prayer.”

The numbers here were twelve to one,—six doctors of divinity and six ministers of experience, dealing for three hours with the youngest pastor in the denomination. But the Lord was with him; and thus the scales were turned in his favour. Dr. Marshall, of Kirkintilloch, took the chief lead in the conversation, which assumed the form of exhortation, persuasion, and even entreaty, rather than of argument and debate. Dr. Morison bears witness that he found it far more difficult to withstand the kind words, compliments, and flatteries of the Committee, than the sharp retorts and unsparing criticisms of the Presbytery and Synod. But the artful coaxing which won over John Brown and Robert Walker produced no change on the resolute purpose and devoted heart of the self-denying James Morison. He burst the wordy withes with which these Delilahs of divinity tried to bind him, and went out to Ayrshire that evening with all the strength of the unshorn Samson in his soul. If he had yielded, he would have “become weak as other men.”

As it was, he left for Kilmarnock in the afternoon, with his conscience “void of offence,” and his moral influence as a religious reformer unimpaired. The railway had now been opened between Glasgow and Ayr, so that he had the advantage of its rapid conveyance as far as Irvine. When the Irvine omnibus stopped in the streets of Kilmarnock, he was met by a few of his elders, who welcomed him and his young wife warmly back after the trials and fatigue of the week. Mrs. Morison had attended the meetings of the Synod in Glasgow every day. The beadle of the church came to

know her after a sederunt or two, and always tried to get her a good seat. It must have been most exciting for her to hear bitter harangues delivered against the husband of her youth hour after hour, and day after day. Now that she has reached the heavenly rest, she will not regret that she had to bear her share in these valorous contendings for the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

But if the quiet Saturday evening in their manse must have been an agreeable change after the turmoil and fever of the week, yet more grateful must have been the dawn of the hallowed day of rest. The God of the Sabbath seemed to smile upon them and say, "Peace be unto you!"

For that day was "an high day" in Clerk's Lane Church, for more reasons than one. In the first place, the young minister had returned from his five days' temptation in the Glasgow wilderness, and had not fallen! Every countenance in the crowded chapel seemed to glow with welcome, sympathy, and love. He would find warm hearts at home. They would make up for all the unkindness with which he had been treated, by their own cordiality and the special sincerity of their Christian friendship. Such was the unexpressed but easily understood language of the sea of faces on which Mr. Morison looked.

In the next place, it was a crucial day. If he dared to preach, his suspension became excommunication. He had been entreated and warned by reverend divines not to occupy that pulpit, but to resile gradually from the position which he had taken up. But the voice of imperious duty had more weight with him than the voice of cozening flattery and worldly-minded prudence. There he was in Clerk's Lane Church conducting the worship as if no ecclesiastical menace hung over him! But, lo! the dove-like spirit shone through the cloud of threatening; and the whisper could be heard by sympathetic listeners, "Men may frown on him; but I, his God, am well pleased."

Then, in the third place, it so happened that the quarterly Sacrament was to be dispensed that day, and the 183 individuals who, as already stated, had been added to the church during the past quarter, as the result of the revival of religion which had been produced by God's blessing on Mr. Morison's labours, were to be publicly recognised as members. They were all seated near the pulpit; and before the sacred feast began in the afternoon, according to the plan

which Mr. Morison had followed during his brief ministry, they all stood up and answered to their names, one by one. Then they all nodded simultaneous assent to a series of printed questions which their pastor held in his hand, and which, of course, was his own composition. We add a specimen of these questions that our readers may be better able to appreciate the scene.

“Do you feel assured that it is your duty to ‘love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and that you ought, in every thought and word and deed, to have regard to his will and glory?”

“Do you admit that, while in a state of unbelief, you never for a moment thus loved God, and never, for a single day, with undivided heart, thus served and glorified him?”

“When you thus view your own base ingratitude toward so loving and so lovely a God, and your constant violation of his holy law, can you honestly say with the patriarch Job, ‘Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth’?”

“While you admit most freely that it would be just and glorious in God to visit your sins on yourself with his wrath and curse to the uttermost, do you at the same time believe it to be true that he so loved you as to send his Son to become a curse for you, and in your room and as your substitute to bear the punishment of your sins, that you might not be punished yourself, but go free?”

“Do you believe God’s Son, Jesus Christ, to be at once true man and true God; true man that he might suffer; true God that his sufferings might have an infinite value?”

“Are you now conscious that this same Jesus is to you ‘the chiefest among ten thousand,’ and ‘altogether lovely’?”

“Is it now your deliberate resolution to follow this same Jesus through good report and bad, whatever men may say, or think, or do? and are you resolved to make it your study to manifest, by a godly walk and conversation, that ‘while in the world, you are not of the world’?”

“Is it your deliberate resolution to *follow all holiness, and carefully to avoid all sin*; not that you may get your soul brought into such a state that you may venture to die, but because you love God, who has already brought you into that state, by the work of Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit leading you to rest on that work?”

“Can you sincerely say that you are conscious within yourself that the work of holy transformation into the image of Christ and of God has already begun in you, and do you thus derive evidence of your adoption into God’s family by faith in Christ Jesus?”

“While you are conscious that sin is still dwelling in you, like a traitor within the camp, can you, at the same time, conscientiously say that this sin is your burden, and your grief; and do you really hate and detest it, and long and strive and cry to be altogether free from it?”

“Does pure—unadorned—Jesus-like—God-like holiness appear to you to be the loveliest of all things; is it with *it* that you wish to be ‘beautified;’ and is it *it* that makes heaven a place where you earnestly desire to be?”

“Do you see clearly that Jesus has taken out the sting of death for you, so that you would not be afraid to venture your soul into the eternal world?”

“Do you feel desirous to do good to the souls of others, and do you promise to try to win souls?”

“In partaking of the Lord’s Supper, can you ‘discern the Lord’s body,’ that is, can you see by faith, that his body was broken for *you*, and that his blood was shed for *you*?”

“Do you promise, while you continue in connection with this church, to be subject to those who have the oversight of you in the Lord,—in such a manner as to receive their admonitions, their warnings, and, if need be, their reproofs?”

A fastidious critic might perhaps be disposed to find fault with one or two of these queries as somewhat repetitious; but it evidently was the aim of him who drew them up to make the truth plain by reiterating it under diverse aspects. And whereas he had been blamed for encouraging men to cherish assurance of salvation apart from holiness of life, it is manifest that the grand object sought after in these sacramental obligations was sanctification of heart and life, based upon faith in the cross.

Let us contemplate, then, these 183 converts, in the presence of a crowded congregation, and also in the presence of an unseen “cloud of witnesses,” bowing assent to these momentous queries; and let us at the same time bear in mind that he who was presiding at the solemn ceremony was by the very act cutting himself off from the church of his fathers! Strange anomaly, and one calculated to make the friends of the Synod pause and ponder! An earnest and successful preacher and pastor uniting nearly two hundred new and ardent communicants to the church over which he had been placed about nine months before, and by that very act drawing down upon himself the severest punishment which his ecclesiastical superiors could inflict! Hailed at the eucharist as a spiritual father, and therefore ejected by the Synod as a dangerous heresiarch! Verily, verily, the rejoicing angels of heaven and the indignant doctors of divinity were on opposite sides!

When the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper had been dispensed, Mr. Morison came down from the platform below the pulpit to which he had already descended, and gave all the young communicants the right hand of fellowship, in name of the elders and of the church. It was with difficulty that he could make his way through the crowd. And thus “the great day of the feast” ended at Kilmarnock, on which

the Synod's deed of suspension became the Synod's deed of excommunication.

Let us now turn to the last record of Mr. Morison's case in the minutes of the Synod's proceedings:—

*Monday, 12th June, 1841.*—The Committee met at the hour appointed. Were present—Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Fraser, Dr. Heugh, Dr. Beattie, Dr. King, and Mr. Wm. Johnstone. The meeting was opened with prayer by Dr. Fraser.

“The Committee waited an hour for Mr. Morison, but he did not make his appearance, nor was there any communication from him—Closed with prayer.”

*14th June.*—“The Committee met. Present—Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Hay, Dr. Fraser, Dr. Heugh, with Messrs. Clapperton, Marshall, Mure, Pringle, and Wm. Johnstone.

“The Convener of the Committee reported that he had addressed a letter to Mr. Morison, requesting to know whether he intended to meet with the Committee again, and whether he had preached on Sabbath last. A letter from Mr. Morison having been received, was now laid before the Committee.

“The Committee having considered the letter, and the whole subject, agreed to recommend to the Synod, that as Mr. Morison has disregarded the sentence of the Synod, suspending him from the functions of the ministry; as he knew that he had given no satisfaction to the Committee regarding his opinions, and was not prepared, as his letter intimates, to change them in any degree, and had been warned of the effect which his preaching in such circumstances would produce, —agreed to recommend to the Synod, that it should be declared that he is no longer connected with the United Secession Church.

“The Synod approved of the conduct of the Committee, and adopted the recommendation which it contained, adding, that all ministers and preachers in this church must consider themselves prohibited from preaching for Mr. Morison, or employing him in any of their public ministrations.”

It will thus appear that Mr. Morison was finally and fully separated from the Secession Church of Scotland, not for error in doctrine exactly, but for preaching the Gospel on the Lord's Day, and dispensing the Lord's Supper to happy converts when the Synod of his church desired him not to do so. Probably this will be a new view of the matter to many of his friends throughout the country, and one which certainly will not lower him in their esteem. In one word, he was declared no longer a minister of the United Associate Church because he dared to say with Peter, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

That sad interdict still remains in force—“All ministers and preachers in this church must consider themselves prohibited from preaching for Mr. Morison, or employing him in any of their public ministrations.” We know for a fact

that certain of the ministers have a great desire to break through the prohibition; and we verily believe that even although they did so, no ecclesiastical action would be taken against them. Quite recently the U.P. Magazine advised all the ministers of the body to procure the Doctor's *Commentary on Matthew*, and weigh well its utterances; and there does not seem to be a great difference between letting a man teach in print and preach in canonicals. But in truth there is many a strange contradiction and unreformed abuse in this wonderful old world of ours.

## CHAPTER IX.

Case of the Rev. Robert Walker, of Comrie, first in the Presbytery, and afterwards in the Synod—Its peaceful Settlement—Mr. Morison's career at Kilmarnock after his separation from the Secession Church—Several remarkable Conversions—Exhortation Meeting on Sabbath evening—Increase of Elders—His large Bible Classes—Preaches much in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock, and itinerates throughout Scotland—His Pamphlet entitled "Saving Faith."

WE have already mentioned, in the course of these historical notices, that another case of alleged heresy on the Doctrine of the Atonement was tried and settled at the same Synod of 1841 which disposed of the case of Mr. Morison, of Kilmarnock, in the way in which we have already described. And inasmuch as the minutes of the Synod's proceedings in connection with it occupy as large a space in the Magazines of the time as the account of Mr. Morison's trial, we would fail in our duty as theological chroniclers if we passed it over altogether in silence, even although the discussion had little direct effect on the progress of the Evangelical Union, since the gentleman referred to eventually satisfied the Synod, and remained in the fellowship of the United Secession Church.

The Rev. Robert Walker, of Comrie, in Perthshire, was the name of the appellant in this second case, which detained the reverend court at Gordon Street for several days after the Kilmarnock appeal was settled. Comrie is a little village which nestles among the Perthshire hills, a few miles distant from the town of Crieff. It was the birth-place of Mr. Gilfillan of Dundee, whose father (a highly respectable

and able clergyman) preceded Mr. Walker in the rural pastorate. The readers of the Dundee divine's numerous works will remember many descriptive references to the scenes of his boyish memories and earliest literary aspirations. For one thing, Comrie was celebrated for its earthquakes; and if ever a more than ordinary disturbance of subterranean calm took place in Scotland, one might be certain that the dread trepidation had been felt at the romantic village on the Erne. Perhaps it was quite in keeping with the due "fitness of things" that there should be a small theological earthquake there too, as if to keep the terrestrial tremors in countenance. Unfortunately, however, the shock, when it came, did not yield so much evangelical lava, precious to souls and destructive only to sin, as the simultaneously agitated crater at Kilmarnock.

It would appear that for several months a *fama* had been in circulation throughout the district concerning the alleged heterodoxy of young Mr. Walker. One Sabbath evening, however, he had preached to a large congregation in the church of Dr. Young of Perth, on the text, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," when his discourse had been so 'sound, while yet liberal, as to allay all the alarms of that venerable and eminent minister, who was *facile princeps* of the Presbytery for theological power. Still the rumours again gathered and grew; and when it was at length affirmed that Mr. Walker was reading extracts in his pulpit, with approbation, from "The Way of Salvation," and the "Nature of the Atonement," by James Morison of Kilmarnock, it was thought, in Perth, that it was high time to call the Comrie pastor to task for his extravagances.

The young man was quite unprepared for the unexpected attack which was made upon him in the North Session House, March 2nd, 1841; but he seems to have stood his ground very well. They must have had a strange old-fashioned way of managing things at Perth at that time, as we may judge from the use of such antiquated phrases as "Which day and place," "Like as," &c., and also from the peculiar style in which the examination of the suspected presbyter was carried on. At three successive meetings there were actually eighty-one questions proposed to Mr. Walker on abstruse theological points, ranging from Adam's fall, down through the work of redemption, to final and

everlasting reprobation. On the first day they got over only nine queries; but on the second day they must have had a long and determined sederunt, for, beginning at "No. 10," they did not halt till they had reached "No. 69." Of a truth they deserved a good rest after such a long day's work. Next diet, however, opens with "question 70," and ends with "81." If at any time the poor badgered victim, "being asked, declines to answer," or "desires time to consider," his tormentors just framed the interrogation in a new shape, and presented it to him again. One of his chief antagonists and catechists seems to have been the Rev. Mr. Milne of Edenshead, a gentleman of some literary ability and theological attainment. If the village at which he laboured was at all well named, he must have been eminently qualified to question the agitated panel on Adam's fall and all it led to; but one shrewdly suspects that Mr. Milne knew as little about that subject as any of his co-presbyters. Mr. Walker, indeed, seems to have been able to instruct them all on Edenic matters; for we find him resolutely maintaining "the salvation of all infants dying in infancy,"—an admission which the rigid Confessionists of the Fair City seem hardly to have been disposed to make.

The blessings of the New Testament are nine in number; and we used to learn long ago in the multiplication table that  $9 \times 9 = 81$ . If the Presbytery of Perth meant to square the Beatitudes for their young friend, it was certainly very kind of them to do so; although the way they took to do it was rather round about, and gave him a good perspiration ere he reached the final blessing. Yet the final blessing he doubtless would rejoice in, as he sought his village manse at the end of the strife: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake."

The result of the prolonged deliberations was that the Presbytery, in a series of eleven findings, declared Mr. Walker unsound on the doctrines of election, atonement, human depravity, repentance, prayer—in a word, the whole catalogue of Mr. Morison's offences. They did not, however, suspend him from the office of the ministry. They only declared him "highly culpable and worthy of censure," and "referred the final decision of the matter to the meeting of Synod which was near at hand." Mr. Walker's case thus came up to the highest court wearing a much more favourable aspect

than Mr. Morison's had done. Besides, two highly esteemed ministers in the Presbytery, Mr. Pringle of Auchterarder and Mr. Newlands of Perth, protested against the decision of the Presbytery, as being harsh and severe, inasmuch as Mr. Walker's doctrine did not, in their opinion, involve any very serious departure from the standards of the church. Several lay elders belonging to Perth congregations adhered to their protest.

When the case came up for consideration in the Synod, Mr. Walker was first of all heard in his own defence. In a long and elaborate paper he tried to show that his doctrines were not out of harmony with the *Confession of Faith*. In order to do this he took rather a novel course. He maintained that when the redemption of Christ was spoken of in that venerable document its compilers were not thinking of the atonement, but of the consequences of the atonement, as experienced by the elect of God. He admitted that redemption so viewed was confined only to the elect; but he tried to show that the compilers of the *Confession* believed, like him, that Christ in his atonement proper had died for the sins of the whole world. This he endeavoured to prove by a learned array of quotations from the works of writers of the Reformation-period. As to the doctrines of election, of human ability, and of the work of the Holy Spirit, he advocated exactly the views of the late Dr. Wardlaw,—to whose works he made frequent reference,—with whom he was personally very intimate, and to whom, as was rumoured at the time, the manuscript of his speech had been submitted for revisal before it was delivered. We have already noticed that the views of Mr. Morison on the atonement of Christ and the grace of God, which he defended at the bar of the Synod, and for defending which he had been ejected, were exactly those of that highly respectable theologian.

Mr. Pringle of Auchterarder was heard in support of his protest, when Mr. Walker had ended his defence. We have already noticed that this clergyman (who lived to be a venerable octogenarian divine) had got his fingers burnt in a little Atonement controversy of his own as early as the year 1831. He had then been cautioned to be very careful as to the use of liberal and universal phrases when he spoke of Christ's death; but it would appear that a decade of years had not at all abated his love for a free Gospel. He entered at yet greater length than Mr. Walker had done into the

proof of the fact that the early fathers of the Secession Church had believed that, in a certain sense, Christ died for all men—quoting from documents issued in 1742, as well as from a Testimony given forth at a much later period.

When it came to the turn of the members of the Perth Presbytery to defend their own decision, Mr. Marshall of Coupar-Angus delivered a very caustic and characteristic reply to Mr. Pringle. He apparently proved, by quotations from the very documents which that gentleman had used, that the fathers of their church did not hold an atonement for all men—sentences, however, which Mr. Pringle, either intentionally or unintentionally, had failed to notice. “But,” said the speaker, every now and then, amid the laughter of the house, “Of course, Mr. Pringle knows the opinions of the fathers of our Church better than they knew their own.” For ourselves, in looking back from this distance of time at the ground taken by Mr. Pringle, Mr. Walker, and even Mr. Morison himself, we think that Mr. Marshall was right, and that they were wrong. The *Confession of Faith* does not contain a free Gospel. The men who compiled it did not believe that Christ died for all. The fathers of the Secession Church did not hold that doctrine, however liberal they might be in their invitations to sinners. And, moreover, when the *Larger Catechism* and the *Confession of Faith* speak of “offering Christ to sinners,” and “freely offering him,” the context seems to confine the offer to the elect sinners for whom he died. If men, therefore, wish to be thoroughly consistent, and have the glorious privilege of proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, their duty is either to agitate for the alteration of existing formularies, or leave denominations that are trammelled by such standards, and swell the ranks of those who have lifted up a world-wide banner because of the truth. We may also mention that the late Dr. Newlands of Perth made a speech on Mr. Walker’s case, which did him great credit. He had protested, he said, against the decision of the Perth Presbytery, not because he thought Mr. Walker right in all his doctrines, or that he deemed him altogether square with the *Confession*, but because he considered that differences on such minor and abstruse points should come within the scope of Christian forbearance.

When Professor Balmer rose to address the Synod he highly eulogised the spirit and tone of Mr. Newlands’s

address. This eminent and godly man did not enter at any great length into the doctrines in dispute. It was well known that he fully agreed with Dr. Brown in his liberal sentiments, and that, like him, he had been much concerned about Mr. Morison's ejection. His whole speech was an impassioned appeal to the Synod not to treat Mr. Walker in the same way. These views, he urged, had been the views of the late Robert Hall of Bristol; and would the Synod not be afraid to pass condemnation on such a man, and many more like minded?

The appeal was not without its effect; for a motion, proposed by Dr. Beattie of Glasgow, was carried—which, “while it regretted that many of Mr. Walker's expressions had the appearance of opposition to the standards of the Church, yet commended the explanations he had made, and the spirit he had displayed, appointed a Committee to deal with him, and report to the Synod.” Mr. Walker's Committee were much more successful with him than Mr. Morison's had been. They found him quite pliable in their hands. Whereas, at the bar, both of Presbytery and Synod, he had maintained that Christ's atonement had been made equally for all men, and that the limitation or speciality was to be found only in its application to the elect, the committee got him to admit that the atonement, *quâ* atonement, “has a special reference to Christ's own people, who have been given to him by the Father.” This was all that was needed. The Comrie earthquake was at an end. The mountain had laboured, and only a little mouse came out. The Synod rejoiced over the Committee's success, and broke up amid loud congratulations on “the comfortable termination of this case.”

We must now return to Mr. Morison, whom we left in our last article newly restored to his flock after the trying week of Synodical deliberation. He speedily forgot all the acrimony of ecclesiastical strife in the midst of the blessed revival of religion which was still making progress in Kilmarnock and its neighbourhood.

One incident, indeed, which happened exactly a fortnight after the memorable Sabbath described in last chapter, reminded him of the church of his fathers, and his enforced separation from it. On the 29th of June the Rev. Mr. Baird (late Dr. Baird of Paisley), who had been the Synod's Mod-

erator, appeared at Clerk's Lane Church to "preach it vacant," according to the antiquated phraseology of church courts. If Mr. Baird had literally been able to do so, some people would have thanked him very much who wished to get sittings in the crowded chapel, but could not. The plain truth was that the Moderator had been sent to read a formal document, to the effect that, owing to the ejection of its minister, the church was altogether without a pastor, in the eyes of presbyterial law. But, inasmuch as the worthy people, by an immense majority, had clung to their minister, and were, moreover, the proprietors of the chapel in terms of the title-deeds, they were determined not to allow Mr. Baird to gain admission to the building on the Sabbath morning for the purpose aforesaid. The elders and managers had sent the reverend gentleman a letter on the Saturday night announcing this their decided determination, that he might know what he had to expect. The hour fixed for the performance of this solemn comedy was ten A.M., and by that time an immense crowd had assembled in the lane leading up to the church. The multitude made way for the Moderator to pass when he appeared; but when he reached the gates leading into the quadrangle before the chapel, he found that a dense mass of people blocked up the entrances, and rendered all further progress impossible. The elders and managers were drawn up in front like faithful warriors, or rather like faithful shepherds, guarding not only the sheep, but the sheepfold that was behind them. Nothing remained for Mr. Baird but to read the document which he held in his hand, and to go away. It can be readily conceived that when the hour of eleven A.M. had arrived, the multitude within the building would be, if possible, denser and more excited than ever. Of a truth the "preaching vacant" had been a very vacant and ineffectual preaching; for there was the church, not vacant, but crammed; and there was the minister, not vacant, but full of spiritual wisdom, and overflowing with the truth of God. In an extract before us, from a letter which Mr. Morison wrote to a friend with an account of the day's proceedings, we find that he says, "We had a *stirring forenoon* and a *melting afternoon*. In the afternoon I expounded the parable of the prodigal son. It is one of the sweetest morsels of Zion's provision. I never made all day in prayer, or in preaching, the slightest allusion to what had taken place in the morning." Wonderful

reticence and self-restraint! Doubtless the people all expected him to say that "though he was cast off by man, he had not been cast off by God." But in truth he forgot all about himself, so anxious he was to persuade off-cast and out-cast prodigal children to return to the embrace of their Father. This little presbyterial pebble made only a very tiny ring of undulating excitement. The parted waters soon closed again in peace; and the displeasure of man was quickly forgotten in the all-absorbing claims of the work of God.

That was indeed a very remarkable work. We have heard of revivals at Kilsyth, Perth, and Dundee, which lasted for weeks and months; but this at Kilmarnock lasted for years. Not a week passed in which souls did not profess to be born of God. And the change for the better was so great, as to public walk and conversation, in some remarkable instances, that the opinion began to grow throughout the town, notwithstanding the blinding influence of prejudice, "that the doctrines could not be very far wrong by which such reformations were wrought."

For example, several of the vagrant men who used to hang about the public square called the "Cross," either besotted with drink or ready for all kinds of mischief, were reached by the power of the Spirit and the truth of God. One of these, well known by the *soubriquet* of *Drouthy Tam*, was quite a character in his way. He could say clever and memorable things, and was just the kind of man whom Burns or Scott would have introduced with happy effect into some of their humorous descriptions. Well, one of this poor man's neighbours was anxious that he should come to hear Mr. Morison preach, at one of his Monday night lectures. But there seemed at first to be an insuperable difficulty in the matter of clothes; for Tam was literally in rags, and was unfit to be seen in any decent assembly, even on a week night. But *true love* overcomes every difficulty, whether it be love for souls, or love of a less ethereal kind. The neighbour had a friend, who again had a second-rate suit of clothes that would fit Tam. But said friend, being of the *canny* Scotch type, would not grant the loan of the clothes, except on the condition that the neighbour would watch Tam all the way to and from the chapel, lest the garments should find their way to the pawnbroker's, and their artful wearer thereby should find his way to the publican's. The bargain being struck, Tam left for the meeting duly clad and

duly guarded. But, on the way back he was doubly clad and doubly guarded! The Holy Ghost had clothed him, and the Holy Ghost began to guard him! The poor man had felt, under the preaching of the word, the first stirrings of a new and heavenly life. He became "a new creature in Christ Jesus—old things passed away, and, behold, all things became new." All the town could soon see that the waif of the market-place was "clothed and in his right mind." He became a marked man in Clerk's Lane Church by his devotional demeanour and his radiant countenance under the preaching of the Word. At one of the first open-air meetings which we ever addressed in the middle ward of Lanarkshire, we had Tam for one of our hearers. He was then on a visit to relations of his own in the neighbourhood. Being introduced to us at the close of our discourse, he broke out with the following exclamation—"How happy would I be if I had you with me in Ayrshire! I would take you with me to Kilmarnock, and Galston, and Newmilns; and how delighted would I be if my friends there might only hear the Word of God at your lips!" Thus spake "Drouthy Tam," now "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," no longer "filled with wine, wherein is excess, but filled with the Spirit." Nor was he the only instance of the reformation of a notorious character by Mr. Morison's ministry. He was only one of a little company whose spiritual renewal made a great talk at the time. It is not wonderful, then, that a gentleman remarked to Mr. Morison of Bathgate, in the public reading-room in Kilmarnock, "No one can deny, sir, that your son has been a great blessing to the town; for many are altogether new men since they heard him preach."

The revival at Kilmarnock was accompanied, like other great awakenings, by some of those evils and afflictions which cause sceptics to scoff, and the enemies of all religious excitement together to put out the finger of scorn and indignant condemnation. In one or two instances reason reeled under the pressure of deep conviction of sin, and of desire for salvation. Mr. Morison was not to be blamed for this, nor the doctrines which he taught. On the other hand, he had suffered ecclesiastical censure rather than hold by a contradictory theology which had often driven men into a lunatic asylum. If a commercial crisis or some worldly disappointment beclouds god-like reason for a time, need we

wonder that the shadow of insanity should sometimes darken the spirit of one who has been aroused to feel himself a lost sinner, but "will not come unto Christ that he might have life?" The blame, in such a case, is to be laid at the door of sin, not at the door of the Saviour.

One of these cases of mental hallucination made a great talk throughout Ayrshire, on account of the peculiarity of its manifestations. A young man belonging to the village of Kilmaurs, about two miles from Kilmarnock, became one evening unsettled in mind, as he brooded over the great problems of eternity and salvation. About eleven o'clock at night, the idea flashed upon his unsettled and excited brain, that heaven was in Kilmarnock, and that if he could only get to Mr. Morison's manse, all would be well. No sooner thought than done. He started off at once for the abode of bliss. On the way, however, it seems to have occurred to his jaundiced judgment that he should fling off his old-world garments, if he wished to "enter into life." Regarding them then as at once a body of sin, of self-righteousness, and of corruption, he deliberately undressed himself, flung the most of his clothes proudly down on the highway and marched expectantly on. When he reached Portland Street he was arrested by the light in the George Hotel, and clapping his hands exclaimed jubilantly to himself, "This must be the Heavenly Palace; I will ring and ask to be taken in." Great was the astonishment of the waiter who answered the loud midnight summons, at the sight of an almost naked man; but his surprise became terror when the question was wildly put to him, "Is this heaven? Can you let me in?" Surprised in his turn when the door was unceremoniously slammed in his face, the poor man only sighed and said, "Ah! this cannot be heaven—I must seek it elsewhere." Then he remembered the manse, and made direct for it, wondering how he could have forgotten where heaven was to be found. We may imagine the consternation of the inmates of the manse, when they were aroused by the repeated attacks which the supernaturally excited man made upon the bolted gate. Indeed, it was found in the morning, that by sheer bodily force he had wrenched a strong stone pillar from its place. Help having been obtained, by a back way, from the police office, the poor sufferer was laid hold of, decently clothed, and brought into the house. Whenever he saw Mr. Morison he became quiet as a lamb; for he thought

that he had at length, after much difficulty and labour, reached the rest of heaven. In a few days he recovered his reason, and found also the peace of which he had been in quest. But when the rumour ran through Ayrshire of the awful midnight visit, with many exaggerations, people shook their heads and wondered whereunto these things would grow.

After the settlement of his case, Mr. Morison addressed himself more earnestly than ever to the consolidation of his large and flourishing church. At this period he was a model visitor; for he called upon a specified number of his flock every week, remaining only twenty minutes in each house. A good many district prayer meetings had been established by the elders of the church, throughout the town, on the Sabbath evening; but after his return from the Synod, these were all collected into one assembly, which met in Clerk's Lane Church at seven P.M., when the Sabbath-school closed. It was announced for years from the pulpit as "A meeting of the church to provoke one another to love and good works." Mr. Morison always occupied the chair as "Presiding Pastor." Any male member of the church might rise and give "a word of exhortation." Frequently the hearers were much refreshed by the remarks of the elder and more experienced brethren. If at any time some of the younger men were too flowery or tedious in their observations, the interest of the meeting was always brought up at the end by Mr. Morison's closing observations. Many timid orators first tried their "'prentice hand" at these meetings, who are now powerful preachers of the Gospel at home and abroad.

A large addition was made, about this time, to the eldership, by the votes of the church; for Mr. Morison proposed that while henceforth the Society should be independent, so far as the control of any superior court was concerned, its internal affairs should continue to be managed by a *session* or bench of elders in name of the church,—a form of independency which even the great Puritan, Dr. Owen, recommended. Only three remained of the "ancient men," who had been elders when Mr. Morison was called to Clerk's Lane, William Fleming, James Aird, and John Peden—a trio of spiritually minded saints long since gathered to their rest, whose excellence of character was alone sufficient to impart the stamp of religious worth to any congregation. It is

not too much to say that the large body of trustworthy men who were appointed, at this election, to be their associates, were in every way worthy of the holy nucleus whose co-assessors they were henceforth to be—that they tended much to strengthen Mr. Morison's hands, and build up a church of Christ which was henceforth to be regarded, in many respects, as the mother church of a rising denomination.

At this time Mr. Morison had great interest in his Bible Classes. These met on week-nights—that for young women, numbering upwards of a hundred, and that for young men, about half as large. All Dr. Morison's friends know that he has ever been singularly well qualified to teach a Bible Class. Indeed, he shines more there than anywhere else. And in these early days, he followed the very plan he follows still—namely, that of allowing any question to be put to him which any person present desired to be answered. Thus the minds of his young pupils were whetted, as well as his own. And Mr. Morison himself admitted that sundry of the intellectual sisters used to puzzle him even more than the brethren! One especially of these “elect ladies” has proved a credit to her acute preceptor; for, first as a student at Oberlin Institute in the United States, and then as a missionary's wife on the fever-haunted coast of Sierra Leone, she has fought a good and valiant fight. Though shattered in health, and called upon to bury her husband in that foreign land, she has again and again returned with the bravery of a heroine to the post which Providence had assigned her. That lion-like fortitude she seemed to imbibe, thirty years ago, from the lion-like Luther of Kilmarnock.

Mr. Morison began also, during this summer, to take preaching excursions into the surrounding districts of Ayrshire. So long as he was connected with the Secession Church he did not think it prudent to preach in the adjoining towns, without consulting his co-presbyters who were stationed there; but after being entirely loosed from that denomination, he was no longer deterred by any such scruples. Very often, then, he would commit the care of the prayer-meeting to one of the elders, and after having preached twice in his own church during the day, would start for Galston, Catrine, or Irvine, in the evening. Great multitudes assembled to hear him on these occasions, when he generally preached in the open air, and with so much power that the audiences carried away with them impressions and instructions which they

never either lost or forgot. The churches of the Evangelical Union, which to-day exist in several of the chief centres of population in Ayrshire, owe their existence, to no small extent, to these extra Sabbath evening services. One of our divinity students, now no more, who felt himself honoured in being allowed to accompany the preacher in his conveyance, told us that he never heard Mr. Morison speak so powerfully as in a barn or plain school-room at Kilmaurs, on the words, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The discourse was quite extemporaneous, the outline of it having been pencilled in the gig, on the way to the meeting. On another Sabbath evening he stood up on the stairs of the town hall of Irvine, and addressed an immense concourse of people from the jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?" Mr. Ferguson, the millionaire, who has since become so well known to Scottish churches as the founder of the "Ferguson Bequest Fund," was among the listeners, and invited Mr. Morison to be his guest for the night, at the close of the service. Perhaps the owner of a million and a half of money felt in the presence of such a man that he was poor indeed! At any rate he had evidently no fear of "the heresy." What a pity that he had not the forethought to state clearly in his will that among the "Independent" churches to be benefited by his munificent Bequest he included the Independent Churches of the Evangelical Union!

Mr. Morison also began this summer to preach in various parts of Scotland, chiefly in churches of the Independent or Congregational body, whose ministers were willing to have him in their pulpits. He preached with much acceptance in Dumfries; and we hear of him also labouring in Melrose, Kelso, Jedburgh, and Hawick, where the sermons of Mr. Wight and others had prepared the way for his earnest ministrations. On one occasion he exchanged with the Congregational minister of Airdrie. People flocked to hear the notorious heresiarch from distances including a radius of twelve miles round. Many hostile critics were present. They could find no fault with the beautiful sermon on the "Cities of Refuge," but only with the prayer. They insisted that Mr. Morison prayed to the angels! They were sure that heresy lurked in that application. He would turn a Catholic outright, and pray to the saints directly! Now, the fact was, that in the excitement of the hour, the same

thought had flashed into Mr. Morison's mind, of which Whitefield had once made such happy use—only the latter had employed it at the close of his sermon. Before ending his opening prayer, Mr. Morison had said,—“And oh, ye angels of heaven, leave not this house till some souls have decided to be the Lord's!” The utterance really produced a most salutary impression on all present, except on those who were hearing everything with a prejudiced ear.

The first time we ever saw Mr. Morison was on the occasion of his visit to Hamilton, to preach in the Congregational Church there (the Rev. John Kirk's), about this very period. We were as much benefited by his private intercourse as by his public ministrations. He preached to crowded houses in the morning from Rom. v. 1; and in the evening from John ix. 35, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”—the Saviour's question to the man who had been blind. The much respected Rev. Thomas Struthers of Hamilton, who two years afterwards was Moderator of the Associate Synod, was present, and heard the discourse. As he had been a member of the Synod which ejected Mr. Morison, he must have felt peculiarly the force of the remarks which the latter made on the clause, “And they cast him out.” During his sermon the preacher said concerning the nature of faith, “that the word ‘believe’ had the same meaning in the Bible that it had in a dictionary, and any person with the nineteenth part of an eye might see that.” A student of theology with whom we were acquainted, now a minister of the Free Church, was sitting in the pew before us. On asking him at the close of the service how he had liked the discourse, his reply was, “I am one of those who have only got the nineteenth part of an eye.” We hope that the excellent man's organ of vision, like his in the miracle, is now made whole, and by the self-same Healer too.

Notwithstanding his numerous engagements, Mr. Morison about this period also found time to deliver two lectures in Falkirk on the question, “Is the Bible the book of God?” The reputation of his debate with Leckie on the “Voluntary Controversy” still lingered in that town. The interest excited by the lectures was increased by the fact that Mr. Lloyd Jones, who then enjoyed no small celebrity as a follower of Robert Owen, attended, and proposed to discuss with Mr. Morison at the close of each lecture. The latter offered to answer any question which was naturally suggested

by the lecture, or to debate any point on which he had touched, but declined to be led by his challenger into the wide field which the programme of Socialism opened up. Finding that the lecturer had laid down his premises very impregnably, the captious caviller had but little to say in reply.

We may also notice here that in February, 1842, about eight months after his ejection by the Synod, Mr. Morison published the first edition of his tractate, entitled, *Saving Faith*. It was a pamphlet of fifty pages, and was well calculated to be a most useful sequel to his treatises on the *Nature and Extent of the Atonement*. In it the author shows, in a simple yet most convincing manner, that faith and belief have the same meaning in the Bible as they have in ordinary life—that indeed to *believe* the truth, is just, in one view of the matter, to *know* the truth—that a man cannot know the truth and not know that he knows it—that it is impossible really to believe the truth in a wrong way—and that the great matter with which the sinner should occupy his mind is not the act but the object of faith. We need not give further details of the work, or add specimens of the author's style; for a new and improved edition has recently been published, which the reader may procure for himself. Doubtless the pamphlet was well fitted, under God, to dispel the mists which had gathered around the act of faith, and had hidden the Sun of righteousness from benighted souls, and also to swell the tide of spiritual life which had begun to flow over Scotland, largely through the learned author's honoured instrumentality.

It was thus that Mr. Morison, upwards of thirty years ago, laid the foundations of the Evangelical Union. There were other most important labourers, to whom we shall endeavour to give their due meed of praise and acknowledgment in their proper place; but no one can be jealous because we have assigned to him the name and position of the father and founder of the movement. We must now leave him for a little, and show how these other fathers and brethren came forward, from time to time, to hold a corner of the standard which he had lifted up.

## CHAPTER X.

Birth and Youthful Days of the Rev. Robert Morison—His Student Career and Settlement at Bathgate—His Early Ministry There—His Daughter's Testimony to his Faithfulness—Comes to the full Knowledge of the Truth—The Question Proposed and Answered, Had he been Unconverted Before?—Writes his First Pamphlet, entitled, "Difficulties Connected with a Limited Atonement"—Extracts.

It not unfrequently happens that there is a remarkable contrast between a talented and celebrated father and a very ordinary, if not weak and pusillanimous, son. The disparity between the great Oliver Cromwell, and the commonplace Richard of the same name, has been so often repeated in military, political, and ecclesiastical walks, that those eminent men have sometimes been considered fortunate who had no sons to follow them, and almost tarnish the paternal honours by their inglorious careers. Now and then, however, there have been remarkable exceptions to this general rule. The two Argylls, who nobly resisted the tyranny of the house of Stuart, and bled alike upon the scaffold; the two Pitts, who shone as splendid stars in the reign of George the Third; the two Venns in the last century, and the two Bickersteths in this,—not to mention others that might easily be named,—present us with notable instances of a father and a son both so distinguished that it is difficult to say which one of the pair outshone the other.

In continuing, however, these historical notes, it is our privilege now to bring before the religious public a yet rarer and more exceptional phenomenon,—namely that of a father and son who became both distinguished in connection with a religious movement, but in whose case the natural order was reversed,—inasmuch as the father followed the son, both in the way of espousing the cause which the latter had originated, and in the way of willingly and gladly accepting a second place. Mr. Morison, Sen., had been for nearly thirty years a minister of the Secession Church of Scotland, when his son raised the banner of a free and world-wide Gospel in that communion. Embracing his son's views, and protesting against his expulsion, his case came up in the Church Courts the year after the great proceedings which we have already narrated, and, therefore, in due order, falls to be considered now.

We have already, when introducing the son to our readers, said a little about the father; but we must, in this chapter, be a little more particular as to his history. The Rev. Robert Morison was born near Dunning, in Perthshire, in 1782. His father being a farmer in that district, he was brought up originally to agricultural pursuits. He who eventually grasped the Gospel plough and did not "look back," and who drove the sharp share of conviction into many a sinner's heart, might have been seen in his youth holding the plough of the husbandman, and following it with tall and robust form, along the furrowed field. He was brought up in the Anti-burgher section of the church, and was upwards of twenty years of age before he began to "desire the good work" of the Christian ministry. He must, however, have used most diligently the limited educational advantages which that rural neighbourhood afforded him; for, when he went, a few years afterwards, to study at the University of Edinburgh, he was an excellent classical scholar, having made attainments in both Latin and Greek which he never subsequently lost, and with which he was able to embellish, yet without pedantry, the theological publications that flowed from his pen. The first year of his attendance at the Greek class was also the first year in which the chair was occupied by the late Professor Dunbar. The Professor had not then the eminent scholarship to which his admirable Lexicon now bears witness; and when any perplexing difficulty turned up in the class, he would appeal either for light or corroboration to the rustic student from Dunning. The latter was also able to supplement his income by writing out their theses, in the Latin tongue, for those young sons of Esculapius who were better acquainted with the bones and muscles of a robust man than with the inflections of the language of the robust Romans.

We can easily conceive, however, that Robert Morison's strong ratiocinative faculties would be fully awakened when he would come the length of the Logic, and especially of the Moral Philosophy class, then taught by the renowned Dugald Stewart. He was not what is generally known as a prize-taker. Perhaps he had too much love for the science of mind in general, and too little personal ambition, to gain numerous University distinctions; for he had more pleasure in reading on the subjects of lecture than in preparing elaborate class exercises. But his great eminence as a thinker

and debater in after life amply proved that he had been no dull student of metaphysics, and caused "his profiting" to appear unto all men. He used often to tell in his old age, how a young hopeful, of the same religious connection as himself, sat near him in all the philosophy classes, who paid no attention to the lectures of the professors, but was constantly reading, during the hours of enforced attendance, Milton's "Paradise Lost," and similar books, which he slyly hid below the book-board. Yet when the curriculum of study was finished, and they were all sent out as candidates for the vacant churches, Mr. Morison was wont to remark, with a humorous twinkle of the eye, "the scholars and philosophers were nowhere, and the admirer of the "Paradise Lost" got all the calls."

This lively reminiscence may appropriately pave the way for the remark that, when Mr. Morison himself had duly studied at the Anti-burghers' Theological Hall, and had been fully licensed to preach the Gospel, he did not turn out to be what is commonly called "a popular preacher." He was a man of a heavy build, and of a lymphatic temperament. When he was fairly roused by some very important event, or by some opponent in debate, he could always rise to the occasion, and come forth either as a master of address, or a perfect lion in crushing argumentative reply. But it took a good deal to rouse him, so that, in ordinary circumstances, he was quiet and slow in delivery, shining more by the weight and clearness of his logic, than by the arts or excellencies of oratory. As a licentiate, he travelled for a year or two within the bounds of the different Presbyteries of the church. When, in the evening of his life, he went north to Aberdeen, to assist at the ordination of the minister of the first Evangelical Union Church there, he remarked, as he walked up Belmont Street, "When I came here, as a young man, to preach in Belmont Street Anti-burgher Church, I had not the advantage of either steam or coach conveyance, but had to ride my horse with my saddle-bags, after the fashion of our forefathers."

Eventually, in the year 1812, he settled at Bathgate, in Linlithgowshire. The Anti-burgher Church there was small; and the town was by no means so rich or so populous as it has since become, through the discovery of its important mineral treasures. Moreover, the cause was yet further weakened by a rival Burgher interest, for which, at the

time, there was no need, but which was, nevertheless, kept up by the acrimonious party spirit of the day. To this quiet place, soon after his ordination, Mr. Morison brought, as already recorded, his young wife from Dundee; and in the manse, which the zeal of his congregation had reared, his son and his two daughters were born. But a cloud was early cast over his domestic happiness, and, indeed, over his whole life, by the death of his young wife. He never married again. He told the writer of this history, one afternoon, in the course of frank and friendly conversation, in his own house, that "so great a shock was given to his constitution by that bereavement, that he might be said to have subsequently drooped and declined every day." Although he lived, indeed, between thirty and forty years after that sad event, he never was the same man in spirit and vigour of body.

Yet he toiled on perseveringly in the zealous and conscientious discharge of his pastoral and congregational duties. It generally happened, moreover, that he was called upon on public occasions to represent the town, for the simple reason that no other minister was able to give anything like an extemporaneous and unpremeditated address. He took a decided stand in the temperance cause; and many years before the first temperance societies existed, he, of his own accord, and from witnessing the direful effects of strong drink in the town and neighbourhood, resolved that he would not touch or taste the intoxicating cup. He took an active part in the various steps which led to the amalgamation of the Burghers with the Anti-burghers, in 1820,—a connection afterwards called, as already mentioned, the United Secession or Associate Church. He was, all along, very intimate with the late Dr. Muter of Glasgow, whom he frequently assisted on Sacramental occasions. In the United Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh he became a very prominent member, and, on account of his excellent attainments, was often employed in examining students, particularly in logic and metaphysics. He took a prominent share in the Voluntary or Endowment Controversy, which rose in Scotland about the year 1836, and which eventually led to important results, especially in connection with the Established Church. We first saw and heard Mr. Robert Morison at a Voluntary meeting in the town of Hamilton about that very time. The ministers on the platform evidently regarded him with respect, on account

of his reasoning powers, and looked up to him as a leader in the cause.

But we must now come to the most momentous event of Mr. Morison's life, namely, his cordial sympathy with his son's doctrines and evangelistic course. We have already seen that Mr. James Morison held revival meetings at Bathgate, in his father's church, soon after the period of his own spiritual enlightenment. Many pious people in the town experienced a great increase of religious comfort; and the worthy parent of the youthful preacher received a blessing too. Up to this time he had preached Christ as a Saviour, and an all-sufficient Saviour, too; but now he was able to claim him and proclaim him as *his own* Saviour. He informed us, on the occasion of our first visit to his manse, in 1848, that one morning, after a night of sleepless anxiety, he entered upon the enjoyment of Gospel peace, while dressing himself, and when meditating on these words: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John v. 11). He gazed into two mirrors at once—the brittle glass made by man, and the Gospel glass made by God. He saw two faces at once—his own "natural face," which, indeed, he hardly perceived at all, on account of his rapt pre-occupation of mind, and the face which was "marred more than any man's," and on which he seemed to read in crimson lines, "A GIFT OF LIFE FOR THEE." He saw at a glance that salvation was not wages to be wrought for, but a gift to be accepted; that this gift, to re-quote the fine old phrase of the Erskines, was "made over to mankind-sinners as such;" that the great fact of propitiation for all was true, whether he believed it or not; and, seeing it to be true, he entered into rest.

An interesting and important question here comes up: Was Mr. Morison, prior to this time of spiritual enlightenment, a converted or unconverted man? He did not himself hesitate to say in public that he had been unconverted, and that for twenty-eight years he had been an ordained minister without knowing savingly the Gospel of Christ. No doubt this statement was very startling; but if, on the one hand, it was calculated to do good by awakening slumbering souls, perhaps, on the other, it may have sometimes raised prejudice unnecessarily against his own cause,—especially when the impression was left, that the majority of his co-presbyters

might still have remained, notwithstanding their ministerial position, unsaved and un sanctified. Before discussing this subject further, we will take the liberty of inserting here a letter from Mr. Morison's daughter, Mrs. Andrew Stewart of Kilmarnock (written in reply to certain questions which we had put), both because it throws important light on the entire life and career of this deceased father of our denomination, and also because it will materially aid us in solving this particular difficulty on which we have stumbled:—

“ July 16th, 1871.

“ I am sure that my father had long believed on Jesus as a Saviour, although he had not seen his own right to appropriate him as his, till he clearly perceived that he was a Saviour for *all*. In all my intercourse with my father, I thought him very thorough and persevering in what he considered to be *duty*. His ministerial duties were never neglected or slighted in the smallest degree, and if he thought a thing was *right* he would go through with it at all hazards. It was formerly the custom for ministers to visit all their members, at least twice a year, and to hold public examinations in various districts of their churches. These labours my father never neglected. The members were not only regularly visited, but the examinations were regularly held too. At such meetings the children were first catechized, and then the adults,—the *Confession of Faith* being the groundwork; but, instead of asking puzzling questions, he asked something easy and simple, which gave occasion for a profitable address. He was very happy in these off-hand addresses, and I believe they were useful in teaching the fear of God, if not the knowledge of Jesus. He was most regular in his attention to his Sabbath school and classes for young men and women. Even though few came, he did not pay the less notice to those who did come. He had a monthly prayer meeting in the large kitchen of the manse, at which he generally read *missionary* information, which was both interesting and instructive to those who attended. He was much appreciated as a visitor of the *sick* in all the different denominations in the town; and he had a comforting way of bringing out the promises of God to the elect, which he seemed desirous that *all* should appropriate, though, from his having limited views of the atonement, it was perhaps not very consistent of him to do so. At communion times he was always very deeply exercised. Rising early, he was always heard pacing his room; and if any one entered, he seemed absorbed in holy meditation. I had left the house before the change took place in his views, which he thought proper to call conversion; but in all that I saw of him afterwards, he was not any holier, to outward appearance, than before, though I believe he had a *rest* within which he had not formerly enjoyed. He was a very unselfish man, and seemed truly to believe the Scripture, that ‘it was more blessed to give than to receive.’ He was never so happy as when making others happy. His benevolence to the poor was also well known. He took into his house two poor orphan children, who had no claim upon him by relationship, and provided for them. My grandmother by and bye relieved him of one, and the other remained in the

family till her marriage. Although his income was small, he was always willing to share what he had with relatives who required assistance, or with those who desired to give themselves to the service of God. He helped a student, who is now a minister in the U.P. Church; and some in the E.U. Church remember, with gratitude, his kindness to them. He was one who remarked providences, and he had some remarkable ones to observe; but such I would not care to make public."

Dr. Chalmers did not hesitate to say that for several years he had officiated as parish minister in Kilmany, without God and without hope in the world. We would be inclined, however, with his excellent daughter, to place Mr. Morison of Bathgate under a different category; and we compare the two, not because we wish to put our departed friend on the same intellectual platform with the mighty founder of the Free Church, but that the spiritual history of the one may illustrate, by contrast, the spiritual history of the other. Evidently, previous to the year 1840, his life had not been selfish and ungodly, like that of him who could teach mathematics five days of the week in St. Andrews, and come home to his cheerless and prayerless manse on the Saturday, for the sake of shuffling over the work of the Sabbath-day, hardly with bare decency, and certainly, as he afterwards confessed himself, with heartless indifference. Mr. Morison evidently trusted in Christ up to the light that he had; and whenever his light was increased, his confidence was correspondingly increased. Instead of saying that he passed, at the time to which we are referring, from the darkness of irregeneracy to the light of salvation, we would rather say that, like Simeon, he emerged from the gloom of a dimmer, to the rays of a clearer dispensation; or that, like Peter on the house-top, he had learned by his mirror-vision "not to call that common or unclean which God had cleansed." Berridge of Everton, the friend and contemporary of Whitfield and the Wesleys, use to date his conversion from the day when he thought he heard a voice whispering into his ear in his own study, "Cease from thine own works, only believe." Without doubt his views of evangelical truth were greatly simplified by the light which was cast, by means of that simple reflection, athwart his thoughtful and formerly perplexed spirit; but his friends, who remembered the remarkable zeal which for years had characterised him in warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, were disposed to date his new life from the hour at which that spirit

of self-sacrificing zeal had commenced at Cambridge, and when he had ceased to be a semi-sceptical place-hunter, and had begun to be an earnest and devoted soul-seeker. As to John Wesley himself, we would be inclined to say that God smiled upon him complacently from the day when he first began to walk holily before him in Oxford, to meet "in class" with his pious associates, and visit the poor prisoners in the castle; but, without doubt, he received most important enlargement of soul after his first visit to America, through the instrumentality of Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians. In like manner, we would be disposed to place Mr. Morison's conversion at an earlier stage of his ministerial career than he was accustomed to place it himself. We would be inclined to say that the love of Christ had dwelt in his heart from the time when, as a young man in Perthshire, he had desired the work of the ministry, and had given himself to the Lord.

We have the authority of Dr. Morison also for saying that his father was pre-eminently a man of prayer. The walls and flooring of the rural manse at Bathgate were not well *deafened*, and he could be easily heard kneeling down to pray by those who occupied the room below his study. They could thus observe that his supplications were frequent and protracted. One day, as he walked through the town, he found a well known neighbour down on his knees, repairing the pavement of one of the principal streets. In his own kind and clever way, Mr. Morison remarked as he passed, "I have been trying to *mend the ways* of Bathgate for a great many years; but your progress is far more rapid than mine." Fully his match at repartee, the road-mender replied, "Try my plan, sir. *Go down on your knees to your work*;"—an exhortation, in truth, which many a prayerless minister needs, but which was not required by the subject of this sketch, as the facts we have adduced clearly prove. We repeat that we cannot regard Mr. Robert Morison's state before the year 1840 as that of an altogether unconverted man. So much earnest devotion to the cause and will of God appears to us to be incompatible with that supposition. We would rather say that, as in the case of the pious Cornelius (to use another scriptural illustration) "his prayers and alms came up as a memorial before God," and the great increase of enlightenment which he received was rather to be regarded as God's answer, through the instrumentality of

his honoured son, to the many fervent supplications which he had himself put up in his resounding manse. And we desire here to record our conviction that there are multitudes of godly people in the Calvinistic communions of the land who are really in Christ, although they do not believe as we believe. Yet we are persuaded that they will hold our views of free grace in heaven; and we would like them to agree with us on earth. If they did so, they would, in our opinion, be far happier Christians, and far more useful too.

For let it not be thought that, while led to adopt this line of argument in facing a practical difficulty, we undervalue or under-rate that spiritual change which the subject of our sketch experienced, when he came to what he was pleased to consider and call "the full knowledge of the truth." Daylight is better than twilight; and a hope sure and steadfast, better than that which is faint and feeble. To Mr. Morison old things seemed to have passed away, and "all things to have become new." He had never talked with one anxious inquirer before this crisis in his life, unless we might give that name to trembling, dying persons. But now many of his ordinary hearers were awakened to cry, "What must we do?" and appeared to find salvation both under his discourses and by means of his conversations. Formerly he had only preached *by heart*, when he wrote out a sermon and committed it to memory; but now he always preached *by heart*, in the sense of laying before his hearers the rich experience of his own happy, believing soul.

On one occasion, shortly after the important appropriation of the gift of eternal life, of which we have spoken, he had gone to assist at a sacrament in the village of Muckart, which lies near the foot of the Ochils, and near the border land between Clackmannanshire and Perthshire. His religious change had not been much noised abroad, and certainly no ecclesiastical proceedings had as yet been taken against him. One of the elders of the church, proud to recognise in the able preacher of the day an old Dunning schoolfellow, invited Mr. Morison to dinner at the close of the afternoon service. When the friendly repast was ended, Mr. Morison, anxious to "communicate of his spiritual things" in return for "the temporal things" of which he had partaken, looked his old schoolfellow earnestly in the face, and said, "John M——, have you peace with God?" "No, Mr. Morison,"

was the reply: "I have been an elder in this church for many years, but I cannot say that I have assurance, or peace with God." "Now, John," rejoined the faithful guest, "will you grant me a favour in consideration of the school days we spent together long ago?" "If it be at all in my power, Sir, I will grant your request." "Well, it is just this, that you will read, three times a day, the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John's Gospel, namely, when you are at breakfast, at dinner, and at supper; and that you will read it in this way: 'God so loved John M—— that he gave his only begotten Son, that on John M—— believing, John M—— might not perish but have everlasting life.' And at the same times of the day I wish you to turn up 1 John v. 11, and read it thus: 'And this is the record, that God hath given to John M—— eternal life, and this life is in his Son.'" The bargain was struck, and the earnest servant of God went his way. But the result showed that he was "wise to win souls;" for at the third reading of the prescribed passages, John M—— *accepted the gift* and "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

In these early days a favourite text with Mr. Robert Morison was, "How shall a man be just with God?" He was in the habit of showing first, negatively, that a man is not made just by prayer, or penance, or feelings, or sorrow for sin, or good works, or church membership; but, positively, by *the work of Jesus*, simply perceived by faith to be his hiding place. No one was more skilful than he in his own quiet argumentative way in shutting up the sinner unto the faith.

We may also insert here a letter with which we have been favoured from the Rev. Professor Hunter of Leith. Being aware that Mr. Hunter had lived with Mr. Morison for some months at the period referred to, and had assisted him in his ministerial work; we wrote him for corroboration of the account which we have given of the venerable man's spiritual change, and have received the following brief, but interesting, reply:—

"I do not think that Mr. Morison ever mentioned to me the particulars connected with his great religious experience. He often referred with joy to the text, 1 John v. 10, 11; and, curiously enough, I came to find peace from the same text, before ever I saw Mr. Morison. This gave a zest to his conversation on that portion of Scripture which might be wanting to those who had not got such benefit from it.

"He was an acute observer of human nature, and used often to

remark that when people began to grow cold, they soon learned to avoid the company of the earnest. Of a contented disposition, he sometimes quaintly reminded his hearers, 'That it was easier to bring their minds to their lots, than to get their lots to their minds.' As you know, he was long a widower, his wife having died when his children were yet young. A neighbouring minister once asked him why he did not marry again. All unwont as he was to show his feelings, they at once revealed the depth of his love for his long buried wife, in the declaration that 'he had never seen another woman who could be to him as she had been.' I forget almost every particular of our intercourse; but can never forget his kindness, his patience, and resolution. Take him all in all, he had few equals in the field of Christian manliness. To know him was to love him, and the memory of him will ever remain a sweet spot in the hearts of his friends."

We must now pass on to consider the public stand which Mr. Morison took for his son's doctrines, both by his published writings, and at the bar of the Synod. We have already seen that he attended, as a deeply interested spectator and auditor, the meetings of both Presbytery and Synod in 1841, at the latter of which he gave in reasons of dissent and protest against Mr. James Morison's suspension. Of course his own case now fell to be taken up, first by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to which he belonged, and afterwards by the Synod, which was to meet in that city in 1842; but it need not be matter of surprise that so able a man could not wait till these reverend bodies would take action against him, but that he should burn to put himself immediately into communication with the public by means of his pen, which he could wield so well in times of controversy and strife. Moreover, his heart was full, brimful, of love to the Gospel of Christ, whose fulness and freeness he had newly come to appreciate; the interests of a beloved and admired son were involved in the great questions in dispute; and, besides, the public were thirsting for the truth, and clamorous to be satisfied. All the pamphlets which were issued in connection with the Atonement Controversy were bought up in these days with amazing rapidity; and the character of the Scotch, as lovers of theological literature, was fully maintained. If anyone should have hinted to Mr. Morison, that by publishing on the disputed points, he was only making himself the more certain of suspension or expulsion when the Synod would meet in the following year, he would have replied that he did not care for himself, if only Christ's truth were defended; and further, if he had divulged the secret thoughts and preferences of his heart, he

would have added, that he did not wish to remain in a connection which had cast off his son. He would rather spend the evening of his days in struggling with the little "forlorn hope" which had gathered around the latter; and all the more readily that now "at evening time it was light."

Look in, then, at the window of the quiet Bathgate manse, in that summer of 1841. Mr. Robert Morison has come home from the meeting of Synod which has ejected his son. He is "cast down, but not destroyed." He is not moving much abroad; for his mind is filled with important thoughts. He is writing his first publication on the Atonement Controversy. Sheet after sheet is being rapidly thrown off; for his heart is in his subject, and he writes *con amore*. When his manuscript is completed, the title which he puts upon the first page is, "*Difficulties connected with the Doctrine of a Limited Atonement*. By Robert Morison, minister of the Gospel, Bathgate." Although only a pamphlet of 37 pages, it did most important service at the time. It was widely circulated, and was quoted with approbation both by Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow, and Dr. Payne of Exeter, in the controversial treatises which they issued soon after, on the same doctrine and affiliated topics.

This work was eminently characteristic of Mr. Morison's mind. He had not his son's learning, nor his originality of conception and grasp of thought; but he was fully his equal in the calm judicial consideration of any difficult subject which might be brought before him. If he possessed rather the qualifications of the eminent judge or law-expounder, than those of the eminent statesman or law-maker, it will at least be admitted that the former are by no means unimportant, and are even indispensable in their way. It will be found, we are persuaded, by those who read this pamphlet, that a fresh mind is at work on these great themes, and one which is able to reflect some of its own clearness of perception upon those blessed truths, which to know is "life eternal."

Thus, on the second page, we are arrested by the following luminous statement:—

"It does, therefore, become an awfully momentous question, and one in which all party strife and angry cavils should be devoutly hushed to rest, whether the atonement of Christ is limited to the elect, or is universal, and extending to the whole race. In thinking on this awfully important question, we perceive at once that no difference in principle exists in extending it to the whole race, or to only a single

individual beyond the elected number. Were it admitted that there was an atonement for the 'discreetly' answering scribe, who was 'not far from the kingdom of God,' then it must also be conceded that there was an atonement for all. Either Christ's blood was not shed for one beyond the elect number, or it was shed for all. Without at all entering on the proof of that which I firmly believe—the universality of the atonement—I propose to suggest a few things only that I have felt as difficulties connected with the limitation scheme, and which I have never been able to get over, since I have thought seriously on the subject."

After considering *seriatim* the passages of Scripture which were generally adduced in favour of a limited atonement, the author proceeds to demolish the doctrine of a limited atonement in a fashion that must have made his adversaries feel that truly "a Daniel had come to judgment:"

"While all the passages usually founded on thus melt away before inquiry, a fresh difficulty arises out of this—namely, that if limitation be not *clearly* and *irresistibly* proven, truth and justice require that it be disbelieved. The proof must be direct and complete, and the *onus probandi*, or burthen of proof, lies incontestably on the side of the limitarians. It is quite certain, if this principle be the correct one, and it be true that a propitiation was made by the death of Christ only for the elect, that the atonement, and election, and justification, are all exactly of the same extent. Let us see the aspect in which this brings the cause to the bar of judgment. When we read of the atonement under the most unlimited universal terms—'behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,'—'he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world,'—'who gave himself a ransom for all,'—'one died for all,'—'that he might taste death for every man,'—'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;'—where God's love, and the gift of his Son, extend to an indefinite number beyond the 'whosoever shall believe;'—if, after all, it be true that by such expressions as these, 'the world,' 'the whole world,' 'all men,' 'every man'—God means only the elect, how comes it to pass that equally universal terms are not employed in speaking of election and justification? If these two and the atonement be really co-extensive, how do we never read that God elected 'the world,' and 'the whole world,' and 'all men,' and 'every man,' and justified 'the world,' and 'the whole world,' and 'all men,' and 'every man'? Limitarians allow that the one might be said as well as the other; and how comes it to pass, then, that it is never said? Not only must this be accounted for, but on the face of the case there appears so plain and palpable a difference between the extent of the atonement and the extent of election and justification, and the sudden identification of these is so preposterous, that unless a solid and decisive demonstration be given of their co-extensiveness, the system of limitation falls to the ground by its own inherent rottenness, and the universal atonement comes to be received as a matter of course. There is so vast a difference between the language that describes atonement, and that which describes election

and justification, in point of extent; and the generally easy, unrestrained meaning of Scripture teaches so plainly the unlimited propitiation by Christ's blood, that it can never be displaced except by a solid and irrefragable proof of direct limitation. It is of no avail to detect flaws, and expose defects, in the argument of those who advocate universal atonement. It is wholly a different kind of work to which the honest limitarian must gird up his loins. His work is to *build up*, not to *cast down*. His work is to raise the fabric of truth on his own side, not to assail the fabric of his opponents. If he does not do this satisfactorily, his system must be wrong, be right what may. As I have never seen this done, of course I reject the doctrine of a limited atonement."

But perhaps the most powerful passage in the tractate is that in which he unanswerably exposes the untenable position of those who fancy that the death of Christ can be sufficient for all, although it was not really offered for all.

"But besides this lowering and distorting of Christ's representative character, the doctrine of limitation really nullifies the all-sufficiency of the atonement. It is very common for its advocates to declare that the atonement of Christ is *sufficient* for all, but not *efficient* for all. But let us pause and understand what this means; and let the mind come out from the haze of mere general words, into the clear light of precise thinking, and see what it is dealing with. This is far from unnecessary: and I just ask what is meant by this *sufficiency* for all men? Is it merely meant that there is so much *abstract worth* in the work of Christ, that it would suffice for all men, had it been so designed? If this be all that is meant, the next question is, Was it in no way designed for all men? And if it was designed in some way for all men, then what is that way? If it was designed for all men, but was designed to be less than a propitiation for their sins, what was it designed to be to them? If, on the other hand, it is affirmed, it was not designed for all men, but is in its nature a thing sufficient for all men, then I ask, can it, in any available sense, be sufficient for that for which it was never designed? Either it was designed for all men, as an expiation of their sins, or it can no more become available to those for whom it was not designed, than it can be available to fallen angels. If the atonement of Christ was only a work that *might have sufficed*, had it been so intended, that does not imply that it actually *does suffice*, or is *sufficient*, but merely that on certain supposable conditions it would have been so. Its intrinsic value is not the thing here. The *intention* is everything. This sufficiency must, in fact, be determined by its efficiency. In one view, the efficiency of the atonement (that is, its actual fruits) is measured by its application, or the purpose of application, and in this vague sense of efficiency it is of a restricted nature. But another and still more important view of its efficiency is its propitiatory character, as legally 'putting away sin.' This character it does possess antecedent to application, and it is in this that its proper efficiency consists. It is just sufficient accordingly for the removal of all the sins, and all the sins of all the sinners, for which it was efficient as a propitiation. It is sufficient for all this, but for no more. As a *bona fide* transaction in behalf of sinners, its *sufficiency* is bounded by its *efficiency*, and springs out of it; or, in other

words, it does not actually *suffice* for any except those for whose sins it was a propitiation. If it was an *efficient* propitiation for the sins of the whole world, then it suffices or is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world; but if it was not an *efficient* propitiation for the sins of the whole world, then it suffices not or is not sufficient, for the salvation of the whole world—and is not sufficient, just because it was not efficient. It is, therefore, a serious difficulty connected with the doctrine of a limited atonement, that by denying the unlimited efficiency of Christ's blood as a propitiation, it nullifies its universal sufficiency for the salvation of mankind sinners without exception. All men seem to hold in a loose, vague way that it is sufficient for all; but this is clearly either a meaningless or inconsistent use of words, unless it was designed to have a propitiatory efficiency for the sin of all."

In the same thorough manner Mr. Morison proceeds to show that, on the theory of a limited atonement, the Divine Being is represented to be insincere when he protests that he wills not the death of a sinner; while also no valid basis is provided for the condemnation of those who reject the sacrifice of the cross and perish.

These extracts are sufficient to prove that the Rev. Robert Morison was both an able and conscientious man, and one who "rightly divided the word of God."

## CHAPTER XI.

Narrative of Rev. Robert Morison's Case Continued—His Reply to the Synod's Statement of Principles—His own Account of his Treatment at the Synod of 1842—Blameworthy Precipitancy of that Court—The Questions proposed to Mr. Morison by the Committee, with his Answers—His Explanatory Remarks Refused—One Defect in his Replies—His final Letter to the Convener of the Synod's Committee—Mr. Morison's Labours in the Evening of his Life—His last Illness, and Speculations about Heaven—His Death.

THE pamphlet entitled, "Difficulties connected with a Limited Atonement," was not the only publication that issued from the pen of Rev. Robert Morison, of Bathgate, during the interval that elapsed between the meeting of the Synod of the Secession Church in 1841 and that of 1842, at which his own case came up for consideration. It would appear that the Synod of 1841 considered it to be their duty, before breaking up, to appoint an influential committee to prepare a "Statement of Principles in reference to certain Doctrines discussed at its recent meeting." This document, doubtless, was intended to meet the crisis to which matters

had come, and allay the tumult that was agitating the country, both within and without the bounds of their own communion. Like all other similar deliverances, it failed to give satisfaction to both parties,—those against whom it was aimed stoutly maintaining that it contained a gross misrepresentation and caricature of their opinions.

Mr. Robert Morison especially felt called upon to take up his pen in reply, both because his son's views had been avowedly assailed with all the influence of Synodical authority, and also because he still possessed the *status* of a minister of the Associate Church. The Synod's Committee seem to have issued their "Statement" in the autumn of 1841; but the "Review of the Statement of Principles," by Mr. Morison, sen., did not appear till the beginning of the year following. It is dated, "Bathgate, 26th January, 1842." The author in his preface says, "The following strictures were written about three months ago—almost immediately after I read the 'Statement;' but circumstances which need not be specified, have occasioned the delay of this publication." We have marked two brief passages for quotation, both for the sake of showing the author's style and powers of mind, and also of bringing before our readers important views of soul-saving truth.

At page 17 of his closely printed pamphlet, Mr. Morison turns aside the ridicule which the Synod's Committee had thrown upon the position that simple faith in the doctrine that "Jesus died for all, and therefore for me," brings assurance of salvation to the soul. He says:—

"Formerly, the man was like an Israelite whom we may suppose to have strayed from the camp, at the time when the brazen serpent was set up, and the proclamation made, that every stung Israelite should look to it and he would live; and who, on his way back, had got some general notions on the subject. When, in his half-informed state of mind, he surveyed the 'brazen serpent from some adjoining eminence, he would naturally thus philosophise:—'It is intended for all, they say, yet of itself it secures the healing of none,—it has "*general relations,*" but it "*sustains no special relation,*"—there must be something "illusory" here!—none can be saved by it, if it does not *of itself* secure the healing of those who are bitten.' This is a fair exponent of the meagre approach to the truth of the case, that the Committee have made. But let the supervising Israelite only come into the camp, and there feel that he is bitten of a serpent, and is in imminent danger, and then he comes to learn another lesson. He discovers that the message of God conveyed in the general proclamation was intended for himself, is addressed precisely to him, and that the serpent of brass was erected for him. In other words he appropriates the message as designed by

God to tell him, 'here is a salvation for you,'—and he looks and is healed. This latter and practical part of the matter the Committee most unaccountably overlook, and therefore they have failed to understand that the very sight of faith or belief in Jesus, against which they so anxiously struggle, is just the discerning that, 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him' (believeth that Christ was lifted for himself) 'might not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

Another paragraph is so important that we are tempted to give it also:—

"We may thank the limitarian scheme for so locking up the gift of Christ from the anxious inquirer, as to impede conversions till the agony of the soul becomes so strong that the individual bursts through his system at the broad side, and on his knees grasps desperately at a Gospel text, which, in his cool moments, his system persuaded him he had no right to. Not only is this the case, but his limitarian pastors would tell him, that though they see he has a right to the text *now*,—'he was made sin for me,'—yet they could not have said before that he had a right to it, making the man's right to believe that *Christ is his* to depend on the state of his mind, and not on the testimony of God!! Yes! when we closely inspect the subject, it becomes certain, there never was a believer whom the rigid limitarian scheme accurately applied would not divorce from the identical Gospel text in which his soul had discovered the blessed fact, 'the Saviour is my own.'"

The fearless publication of such unanswerable onslaughts could not but embitter his ministerial brethren against Mr. Morison, sen. Perhaps, therefore, we need not be surprised that, as the meeting of the Synod in Edinburgh drew near, a very general impression began to prevail that he would be flung overboard after his son, in a very speedy and summary manner. Yet that ejection was so very speedy and summary, that we wonder much, in the retrospect, that it could have been accomplished in a Court laying any claim to be governed by the principles of civil, not to speak of ecclesiastical, justice.

Mr. Morison's own account of the treatment which he received is given in his pamphlet entitled "Defence of Christ's Truth; or, the case of the Rev. Robert Morison, of Bathgate, before the United Associate Synod, May, 1842," pp. 63. At page 4 he writes as follows:—

"The circumstances in which my cause came to be taken up by the Synod in May, 1842, are the following:—When the Synod passed what appeared to me an unfounded and iniquitous sentence against the Rev. James Morison, of Kilmarnock, in June, 1841, I dissented from the decision, and gave in reasons of dissent. Previously, I had declared in the Court an entire agreement with him in sentiments, and now in my reasons of dissent I declared his opinions to be, in my judgment, 'both

sound and consistent, at once agreeable to Scripture, and unopposed to the Standards of the Church.' When these reasons of dissent were remitted to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, that I might be dealt with by them, they prepared brief answers to all the reasons except such as touched on doctrine, and, in reference to these, 'they respectfully declined farther travail in this case.' The Synod, in 1841, when these reasons were given in, never came to any finding against me,—never uttered a whisper to that effect,—and the Presbytery of Edinburgh came to no finding against me; and consequently I still stood as free of any judicial charge in any form, in life, or doctrine, as any man could do. There were abundance of floating out-door opinions, but no court had ever found one thing against me. This was my clear position when the Synod convened on the 2nd of May last. I went up to that meeting in the full belief that, however dissatisfied certain men might be individually with me, it would be impossible for the Court, in the observance of decent forms, to put me on my trial at that meeting. I did expect them to do something, and thought that most likely they would refer my case back to the Presbytery, but never supposed it possible that they could leap at once into a premature and irregular trial. However, on the forenoon of Wednesday the 4th, they did, without one thing *judicially known*, or *found*, or *alleged* against me in all my life and doctrine, appoint a Committee, not only to take my reasons of dissent into consideration, but also to proceed forthwith to examine myself, and extract my views from me. I met the Committee that same evening, and had seventeen questions on the most grave and intricate and profound doctrines of the Gospel put to me, all of which I answered, and the whole was taken down in writing. On the forenoon of Thursday the 5th, these were reported and read to the Synod. On the evening of the same day, another Committee was appointed to frame propositions out of the answers given by me the evening before, embodying my supposed errors, and to report to the Synod next day. On the forenoon of Friday the 6th, the Committee produced six propositions, which they said contained my views on the doctrine of the atonement; one proposition which they said contained my views on faith; and one which they said contained my views on original sin. The doctrines contained in all these propositions were of a nature both profound and intricate, but it was not so much reach of thought, as cool discriminating precision, that was called for in dealing with them, and to treat them fairly in this way did certainly require the most grave and deliberate consideration. But as the case must be got disposed of somehow that night (and this was the obvious feeling and intention, as well as result), the Court, that it might remedy as far as possible the want of time to deliberate, agreed to print the questions and answers and propositions deduced from them, in the interval of sederunts, and proceed to the decision of the case in the evening. The evening came, and the cause was taken up. It was resolved, first, to settle the question, do the propositions brought in by the Committee fairly represent Mr. Morison's views as contained in his answers? Taking up first the six propositions on the doctrine of atonement, they voted these to be a fair representation of my views; but from this finding Dr. Brown dissented, on the ground that the propositions did not fairly represent my views, and about twenty other ministers adhered to his dissent. The proposition on faith was voted as contain-

ing my views; then the proposition on original sin was so amended, as to embody the substance of my three answers to the questions on that subject, and it also was voted as containing my views on that doctrine. This being done, the Synod began to execute their previously avowed resolution to come to a solemn deliverance as to what they judged to be erroneous in these same propositions; but as the midnight hour was near approaching, and the settling of the question whether the propositions were erroneous or not, and how far they were so, would have required time, and threatened to elicit very conflicting judgments in the house, they suddenly stopped short and dropped that matter altogether, and never came to a judgment on *any one point*, whether my opinions were erroneous or not, but agreed to suspend me, without passing any sentence on *any one doctrine* of mine now before them. In truth, I am yet as clear of any charge of error *judicially found* by the United Associate Synod, as any one member of that court is. They never passed *one judgment on one doctrine*, but merely said, in the final decision against me—and that too in the most lame and insignificant style of judicial finding—that my views are ‘*apparently* opposed to Scripture and the Standards,’ but gave me no means of knowing where this ‘*appearance* of opposition’ is to be found. Against this decision I of course protested, and claimed my right to be held as acting not only not a blameable, but not even an irregular part, in contravening such a sentence. This most irregular and iniquitous decision was, with the exception of a vast number of dissents entered by members against it, the last deed of the United Associate Synod while I remained a member of the body. What they *may have done* since, can in no way affect the merits of the case in regard to me and my cause.”

It is quite plain that the majority of the members of the Synod of 1842 took up the position that Mr. Morison, sen., having fully homologated his son's views,—it was unnecessary to give him the benefit of all the processes of ecclesiastical law. He thus protests himself:—

“I will venture to say, the like has almost never been done in the annals of Protestant churches to any of their own members. To be sure, the time was when persecuting Prelatists thought it enough to put the question to their victims—‘Do you approve of the Sanquhar declaration?’—or, ‘do you account the slaying of Archbishop Sharp to have been murder?’—and to execute at once according to the answer given. Now, every candid mind will see that to take me up and to hurry on my ejection on account of homologating my son's opinions, were just exactly the revival of that principle of judgment; and that if it was not on this Claverhouse principle they were proceeding, to take me unwarned, and try me *instanter* without the usual forms, was a measure wholly irregular and cruelly unjust.”

One who was present has described the scenes that took place in connection with Mr. Robert Morison's trial as positively painful. Again and again the old man attempted to speak; but an agreement seemed to have been entered into beforehand to prevent his being heard. Indeed, he may be

said to have been howled down repeatedly by the members of the Court. He was so much agitated and perturbed by the treatment which he had received that, when seated at breakfast, on the morning after his suspension, in the hotel at which he was staying with some friends, he remarked, as he surveyed his own ponderous frame, "I can hardly realise that I am a piece of animated matter at all." And yet, as we saw in our last chapter he had rendered good service in his day to the church in various ways. But, in truth, the leading spirits of the Synod had come the length of allowing a sort of *hatred* of James Morison to be formed in their hearts on account of the ferment he had raised in the land and the trouble he had caused them; and by that peculiar inversion of the natural order of things, to which we have already referred, the *sins of the son were visited upon the father*. Mr. Morison, sen., himself says as much at page 16 of his "Defence," adding beside some pertinent and unanswerable questions:—

"From the whole spirit of the proceedings, the breathings in many speakers, and the not unfrequent direct statements, I was led irresistibly to the conclusion that the prosecution against me originated far more in something of a personal hatred of James Morison, of Kilmarnock, on account of his present position, than in a conscientious dislike of his general doctrines. If not, why dissatisfy so many respectable members by making strides of approach beyond the standards to the doctrines which he holds, if they have a real disapprobation of them? So remarkable a feature of matters was this to a discerning eye and ear in the Synod, that I feel quite confident that were any man who approves of our views, just to truckle a little, and say he in some particulars disapproved of James Morison's views, and disguise his phraseology on a few marked points, he would not only be cordially tolerated, but hailed with welcome to preach substantially the same doctrines in the pulpits of my most strenuous opposers. I feel as certain of this as of any conclusion from moral evidence which a thinking mind can glean up as a just inference from a multitude of combined circumstances. Of course, very many of those who were unjust to me will deny this; but let any man make the experiment (though I do not suppose a good man will ever make it), and it will be found to be true. If not, why tolerate Dr. Brown in the Synod after his speech of June, 1841? That speech throughout, in general, expressed most accurately the doctrinal views held by me and my son, and has been often acknowledged by us to do so, and was, indeed, felt by the whole Synod to do so. Not only is this true, but Dr. Brown himself knows that in the numerous friendly conversations I have enjoyed with him for a long time past, he has never expressed disagreement with any one of my doctrinal views; and that so coincident were mine with his that I said to him on 1st of March last, I had never yet been able to detect the least discrepance between his views and my own. Why then is *he* tolerated in the body?"

Our readers, we are certain, will now be happy to hear the answers which were given by Mr. Morison to the eighteen questions which were proposed to him by the afore-mentioned committee. Let it be remembered that he was led to the hall below Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, at an evening sederunt, and that his extemporaneous answers to these successive questions, of the character of which he had received no previous information, were taken down in writing,—let this be borne in mind, and we are persuaded that any candid critic will be surprised at the felicity, as well as the fluency, of the respondent's diction.

“He was asked, 1st, Whether Christ, in dying, had no other relation to the elect than to the non-elect ?

“He replied that, in the *mere article of propitiation*, Christ had no other relation to the elect than to the non-elect.

“2nd. Does Mr. Morison hold that the atonement of Christ procures no saving blessings; but merely removes obstacles to the salvation of all men ?

“*Ans.*—The love of God, operating through the atonement of Jesus Christ, secures saving blessings to his own people; but the atonement, while it has removed obstructions to their salvation, and is a work of love thus far for them, is not that which *of itself* secures saving blessings.

“3rd. Did the securing the personal salvation of the elect through the atonement enter into the original purpose of God in appointing the atonement ?

“*Ans.*—That while I do not conceive anything like separation in the purpose of God, yet, viewing it in its several parts, I hold that the original purpose was to glorify God by the satisfaction of his own Son for sin, and that the purpose of the application of the blessings of salvation to the elect proceeds upon the contemplation of this perfect work.

“4th. Did Christ Jesus, in dying, love all men equally ?

“*Ans.*—So far as his dying for them is concerned, he did.

“5th. Did the atonement of Christ exhibit any greater manifestation of the love of God towards those who are saved, than it did to those who perish ?

“*Ans.*—Only in so far as the purposes of application are concerned.

“6th. Does Mr. Morison mean that the atonement itself exhibited no higher manifestation of the love of God to the elect than to others ?

“*Ans.*—*YES.*

“7th. Is the object of saving faith to any person the statement that Christ made atonement for that person's sins, as he made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and that the seeing of this statement to be true is saving faith, and gives the assurance of salvation ?

“*Ans.*—The object of saving faith is Christ, as revealed to have died *for me*, as he died for all other men, and that the seeing of this to be true is saving faith, and from its nature gives the assurance of salvation.

“8th. Are all men naturally in a state of condemnation in consequence of Adam's first sin ?

“*Ans.*—That though all men are by nature in a fallen and depraved state, as the consequence of Adam’s first sin, yet no man is condemned merely on account of Adam’s first sin.

“9th. Do men, prior to conversion, sustain the relation to God of condemned creatures ?

“*Ans.*—Yes ; all who are come the length of being moral agents.

“10th. Does the sin of Adam enter at all into the *legal grounds* of the condemnation of any man ?

“*Ans.*—Though I do not presume to understand everything in the administrations of God in reference to this matter, so far as I understand the Word of God, I do not apprehend that it has any appreciable influence as a ground of the condemnation of the sinner.

“11th. Does Mr. Morison consider the views which he has stated in answer to the above questions as necessary to the formation of correct views of what he conceives to be the truth of God ?

“*Ans.*—He does.

“12th. Does Mr. Morison consider these views as accordant with the formularies of this Church ?

“*Ans.*—He considers them as not contradictory to the formularies of this Church.

“13th. Are these the views of divine truth and of our subordinate standards which Mr. Morison entertained when he undertook his ordination vows ?

“*Ans.*—On some points,—such as the extent of the atonement and the position of election, Mr. Morison’s mind has undergone an enlargement of view ; and his opinion of the import of the standards in some articles has undergone a modification.

“14th. Does Mr. Morison consider that view of the death of Christ which represents him as sustaining a special relation to his people, a view of the truth which can never give well-grounded peace to the soul of any sinner ?

“*Ans.*—He considers the view of this special relation as presenting a *barrier* to the soul entering into peace, though he does not suppose that, if the soul were possessed of the knowledge that it was in Christ, this would prevent a well founded peace.

“15th. Does Mr. Morison consider this view of the truth that Christ sustains a special relation to his people, as consistent with a pure exhibition of the Gospel of Christ ?

“*Ans.*—He considers that the proper exhibition of the Gospel of Christ is the presentation of him in the relation in which he stands to sinners without exception, and that this is the only relation in which the sinner can venture to lay hold of him, and that the exhibition of the special relation, in this stage of the person’s progress, is only fitted to embarrass him with a secret into which, as it regards himself, he cannot yet enter.

“16th. Does Mr. Morison, knowing that the view referred to is held avowedly by our Church, believe that the Gospel is preached purely in the Secession Church, or that it is preached at all ?

“*Ans.*—That when he obtained his present views of divine truth, he was not convinced that they were opposed to the principles of the body, or would be unacceptable in the eyes of his brethren, and that he has gone on honestly endeavouring to fulfil that vow which binds him not to shun to declare the whole counsel of God, and that he holds his

brethren as having nothing to do with what his secret opinion may be of other modes of preaching.

"17th. Does Mr. Morison believe that those who do not hold the doctrine of universal atonement could be said to be possessed of true faith ?

"*Ans.*—He doubts not but that many who never held the doctrine of universal atonement *theoretically*, have been possessed of true faith; though at the same time he believes that in the act of first receiving Christ, their soul proceeded *practically* on the principle of an unlimited atonement.

"18th. Has Mr. Morison ever publicly said that his brethren preached another Gospel ?

"*Ans.*—I have really no answer."

Mr. Morison felt very keenly the injustice that was done him as to the 18th question being inserted in the record. He mentions in his "Defence" that the brother who put it in committee, distinctly stated that he did not wish it to be written down. The respondent declared that he would not answer such a query, because they had no right to put it. Judge then of his surprise, next day, when, on borrowing the printed paper from the Synod Clerk to take a copy, he found that it had been "smuggled in." This was certainly very dishonourable conduct. Since Mr. Morison declined to reply, we cannot tell whether he had ever made use of the objectionable statement or not. It was evidently the part of his prosecutors to prove that he had done so, and not to adopt the flagrantly un-British course of trying to make an accused party inculcate and criminate himself. We stated in our last chapter that it was possible that Mr. Morison, sen., in the ardour of fresh evangelical joy, and in the overflow of his sympathy with a persecuted son, may have used expressions concerning his former brethren that were calculated to do harm rather than good. In all probability, we may all have erred in that direction. But we are certain that the rumours were much exaggerated which had reached the ears of members of the Synod's committee; and that any charges which he may have made were more by way of implication than in so many words. Thus we can suppose that in preaching from such a text as Gal. i. 8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed,"—he may have said that if ministers did not preach that "Christ tasted death for every man," they preached "another Gospel." That, in all likelihood, would be the head, and front, and sum of his offending.

We would call special attention to the answers given to the 7th, 10th, and 17th questions, as being, in our opinion, singularly well expressed. Of course, when the respondent held that faith in the Gospel "gives immediate assurance," he did not leave out of sight that Assurance of sense or hope which springs corroboratively, in the course of years, from the renewing work of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer. What Mr. Morison meant, in his reply to the 10th question, is yet more fully expressed in the explanatory remarks which he offered to the Synod on the evening of Friday, the 6th of May:

"In our conversation, I referred them to Dr. Dann's letter, quoted with approbation by Dr. Pye Smith, showing that eminent divines of the Church of Scotland have held the same principles, and told them that I did not hold that the *culpa*, or *blameworthiness* of Adam's first sin was imputed to his posterity, but that I held the *reatus* or "*answerability*" (as Dr. Pye Smith calls it), or exposedness to suffering consequences, was imputed to them, or descended on them. Some members said, that was just what they all held; but I added, I suspected we would differ a little on the extent to which this "*answerability*" or exposedness to suffering consequences, did go. I shall now explain what I meant, as the Committee seemed not to wish it. I believe that the penalty—death—threatened to our first parents, was just mortality, or the dissolution of soul and body. I believe that this same sin of Adam, which brought death upon him, being committed by him as our representing head, was imputed to all his posterity, and brought mortality and death upon the whole. . . .

"Through it they were exposed to the dissolution of death, and, of course, to that sickness and disease which are the incipient symptoms of death, and also to trouble, from the wickedness of men, and to the moral contamination of that depravity which it has introduced so largely. Still, notwithstanding this, I hold, that though all these evils come upon every man, and encompass him from his birth to his death, in consequence of the fall, yet it is not on account of *that sin* which has brought all these evils upon him—the first sin of Adam—that the unbelieving sinner is eternally damned, but on account of his own personal transgressions. This is what I hold, and what the Scriptures require me to hold, by teaching that every one shall be rewarded according to his works."

In the answer to the 17th question we think that Mr. Morison has stated, in a most memorable manner, what is the real truth of the case concerning the experience of many pious limitarians. Although they may restrict the death of Christ to the elect in theory, they extend it to all men practically when they come to Christ themselves; for they argue "He died for sinners; we are sinners; therefore he died for us." But, of course, the much debated little word *all* lurks in the first premiss, though it be not expressed; for unless *all sin-*

ners be meant, how could the individual, so reasoning, know himself or herself to be included in the crowd? If the answer should be, *by my evidences*, or, *by my experience*, is this not a shifting, insecure, and anti-evangelical foundation on which to build the soul's hopes for eternity?

We have referred to the fact that Mr. Morison offered to the Synod explanatory remarks on the answers which he had given to the committee. We used the word "offered" advisedly; for although the explanations were presented to the Court, they would not accept them. The fact was, that Mr. Morison, after his important interview with the Committee, conceived that on certain points his answers required to be guarded against misrepresentation on the part of those who might be inclined to misrepresent them, and misapprehension on the part of those who, from having thought sparingly on these subjects, might be likely to misapprehend them. Accordingly, borrowing some hours from the vigilant observance of his own case in the Court, as well as from sleep, he wrote out a carefully-worded explanatory paper which first himself, then Professor Balmer at his request, and afterwards several other members of Court of their own accord, begged the Synod next day to receive and read. But it was all to no purpose. His paper was summarily rejected; and even Dr. Balmer drew down upon himself the rebuke of several members for venturing to support such a proposal. No wonder that Mr. Morison transcribed the Latin quotation at the end of his "Defence," "*Pudet, hæc dici possint et non possunt refelli*,"—that is, "It is shameful that these things can be said, and that they cannot be refuted."

We must, however, be allowed to remark that these answers, and especially the explanatory papers with which they are followed in the "Defence," are marred by one great defect—namely, the doctrine of the restricted purpose of application of the benefits of Christ's death to the eternally and unconditionally elect. This was exactly what we have already called Baxterianism or moderate Calvinism, and really was not worth contending for so earnestly and self-sacrificingly, —unless, indeed, it was to be regarded as a stepping-stone to a more liberal and consistent creed. If Dr. Morison and his father had remained at the theological milestone which they had reached in 1842, we cannot see wherein their view of the saving grace of God was much to be preferred to that of such a man as Dr. Heugh, who led the liberal side of the

house against them. Any advantage which they had in a consistent basis for a world-wide call, was more than nullified by the disheartening limitation of the Holy Spirit's work of application,—a limitation that was rendered all the more disheartening and disappointing by the high hope of impartial unrestrictedness which the previously expressed doctrines of the system had excited in the critic's mind. We have Dr. Morison's authority, however, for stating that his father was one of the first to see that, like "the legs of the lame," these conflicting parts of their system were "not equal;" and that very soon after their respective causes were settled in the church courts, letters began to pass from Bathgate to Kilmarnock, calling attention to the fact, and containing the first etchings of that more harmonious theory, according to which the limitation is placed, not in the niche of God's sovereign withholding of grace, but in that of man's blameworthy refusal and resistance of grace bestowed. And it becomes not us, as we have already remarked, who enjoy the meridian blaze of Evangelical Union theology, to criticise too harshly the imperfect strugglings of its nascent dawn.

The Synod pronounced, in the first place, the same sentence on Mr. Morison as had been pronounced on his son the year before—namely, suspension from the ministry, with, of course, a prohibition appended against preaching on the following Sabbath day. This interdict they knew very well he would not regard; and they fully expected (what really happened) that thus suspension would very easily become complete separation. Mr. Morison's letter to the Convener of the Committee, announcing that he had disregarded their deed of suspension, is so characteristic of the man, and so interesting besides, that we venture to give it entire.

"BATHGATE, 9th May, 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I received your official note this morning. In the trying and solemn circumstances in which I am placed, you will excuse me for one word personal to myself. You know well that I never was a man of what is commonly called *craft* or *policy*, but was so much known to my brethren to be destitute of this, as to be reckoned by some of you to be deficient in practical wisdom. I state this merely to call up before your mind the fact of the case,—that I have no scheme by the end, but am following in the simplest manner possible what I believe to be the dictates of truth, and the demands of duty. All other things I cheerfully leave in the hand of Him who will perform all things most perfectly.

"I have then to inform you that, under my protest, I preached yesterday as usual. The suspension of the Synod appeared to me a

deed that I could not, and durst not obey. The Synod never put a charge *in any sense of the word* into my hands,—*never found one single charge* against me. There is not in the minutes of *any Court* to which I am subject, *one single finding* against me, as to error of doctrine, or immorality of conduct. *To the present hour this is true.* And for the Synod to suspend me without *finding* and *recording* one single item of *libel charge*, or call it what you will, against me, is such a hurry and amount of injustice, that no honest man could submit to it. You will easily see, and no candid mind can help seeing, that unless I had been secretly convinced that I was in error, *though the Synod had never said so*, and had been prepared to retract what I had advanced on the doctrines, I must have been *destitute of conscience* in the matter if I had submitted. It *could* not have been “submitting in the Lord.” I feel certain that if brethren would only divest their minds of the mere technicalities of rigid form, and of the strong feelings arising from a *supposed* urgency of expediency, and calm themselves down into the sober dictates of deliberate judgment, they will entirely *excuse*, if not *approve*, what I have done yesterday. If they do so, and waive for the time the merits of the practical contumacy that they find in me, I shall most cheerfully come in and confer with the Committee, and explain to the utmost of my power what may be supposed doubtful.

“You will allow me to add that, for some time past, I have been convinced that there have been *false positions* taken by the Courts in these trials. If you except the doctrine of the extent of the atonement, the position of election, original sin, and it may be some aspects of a point or two more, I *fear* it would require more consideration than has yet been given to it, to hold that the points in question are proper subjects of judicial decision. The reason of entertaining this doubt is, they are all *practical points*, involving the matters of individual faith and personal salvation. There is no doubt doctrine in them, but it is the doctrine of the soul’s exercise in personal conversion. I doubt much whether Synods should discuss *that*. Faith is just the act of the soul in closing with Christ, and no man *can know* it really till he is led to experience it. The repentance that goes before faith is just that view of truth and sin, and the feelings arising from that view, or more properly the change of mind that results from it, which induces him to close with Christ; and no man can *accurately* understand it without the experience of it. The perverse use of ability, and not the want of ability to believe the truth and obey the law, though more open to the apprehension of minds in all moral conditions, yet is never justly seen in its true light, nor the criminality of the enmity of the heart to God, till the love of God in Christ is apprehended by faith. Till then, the value of this truth as an instrument of conviction is not known. The real profaneness and selfish pride of prayer without saving faith, and its positive tendency to prevent Bible repentance and faith, are matters which, till a man enters into the faith and peace of the Gospel, he cannot understand. Even among the most experienced saints, there will be different shades of opinion on those sacred and vital points, while they agree in the main, and feel that these are vital to personal faith and hope, and usefulness to souls; and I humbly conceive that every good man should be left, in these matters, to his own judgment, and the private conference of Christian brethren; and that the vital elements of the believing state and the life of faith

ought not to be thrown in as a subject of discussion in Synodical meetings. Though a Synod were all of my mind on these points, yet I would shrink from sitting in authoritative judgment on a devout brother, otherwise sound in the faith, on account of his Christian experience and study causing him to arrange the aspects of the same truths in a somewhat different form. I think the Courts have taken a false position in *judicially* cognoscing the matters that are experienced between a soul and its God (for in fairness it just comes to this) in the hour of conversion and in the life of faith. From judging in these matters of practical religion, they should abstain. It is on soundness in the systematic principles, and not on the methods of practical application, that they are warranted to judge.

“I have little hope that these things will have weight with the Synod, but shall regret it, if they have not. *Even from me*, they might take a word of warning, not given in anger but in sorrow, alter they have rent me off from the friends of former years. I *warn* them that it is the false position alluded to above (and which I have spoken of, and written of to a number of brethren long before this) that is the cause of the whole evil in which they are now involved. I would warn them also to consider the solemnity of that which is the true origin of my now altered position. I was nearly twenty-eight years an ordained minister, and a member of the Courts, before I came to know Christ and find peace to my soul in his blood. I was as honest and conscientious a man *then* (*that* will be generally allowed) as the usual average of my brethren. I lived in peace and friendship *then*, and no quarrel was ever found with me. But almost as soon as I had come ‘to see the Lord,’ and to tell my fellow-sinners in the light of the Bible, now a little better understood from experience, how they might ‘find the Lord’ too, I became suspected and decried by brethren, and fell into troubles and persecutions before the Courts, and for this fault have at last been tried, in a way, and actually suspended,—while yet *unheard* and *uncharged*. Let the Synod take this warning in good part, for I conscientiously believe that in all this they have been verily fighting against God (though not intentionally) still more than against me. In a letter to yourself about a year and a half ago, you will see that I very nearly predicted what has come to pass, and I have no doubt that the other anticipations expressed in it will, from the natural course of events, be by and bye realised. But I shall cease; saying, ‘the will of the Lord be done.’ I have lived long in peace and quiet with the body of my late co-presbyters, and have loved them, and do love them still most sincerely. Yet I cannot but feel sorrow, that when God became *more* gracious to me, my brethren according to the flesh should have become *less* gracious to me, and that His *acceptance* should have been the prelude to their *rejection*! They have at last agreed to suspend me from the office of ‘praying men in Christ’s stead to be reconciled unto God,’ on account of what has resulted from God having ‘reconciled me to Himself by Jesus Christ.’ Still, with every brotherly feeling, and Christian desire and prayer for you, and the other members of Committee, and of Court, I remain, sincerely yours,  
“ROBT. MORISON.

“P.S.—If they agree to waive the practical contumacy, *write me immediately*, and I shall gladly come in and allow the matter to proceed.”

It is certainly by no means to the credit of the Convener of the Committee that he did not answer this letter till the proceedings of the Synod had wholly terminated ; nor is it to the credit of the Synod itself that it permitted a grave charge against Mr. Morison to go into the public prints, because he did not come into town and allow the case to proceed. In his absence, however, they declared him to be no longer a minister of the Secession Church.

As to the letter just given, it speaks for itself. We seem to hear in every line the beatings of a heart that could not but do the will of God. The writer was not really contumacious when he preached in opposition to the Synod's wish ; he was only saying with Peter, "I ought to obey God rather than men." He also raises a fresh and nice point, and one which ecclesiastical courts would do well to consider, when he asks, Should matters of soul-concern be made topics of judicial investigation? Should they not rather be left to the disposal of the Great Searcher of hearts? And as to the appeal concerning the trouble which came upon the writer after God had enlarged his soul, it must be confessed that it is touching in the extreme. How often in the history of the Church, has the sincere reformer been cast out as a heretic, while the cold formalist has lived and died among the honours and the uselessness of respectability! One additional instance of the suggestive contrast is to be found in yonder rural manse in Bathgate, Linlithgowshire, in the month of May, A.D., 1842.

After the final settlement of his case in the Church Courts, Mr. Morison, like his son, withdrew largely from controversial contentions, and devoted himself to the work of preaching the Gospel, first in the town of Bathgate, and throughout Scotland generally. Revival or "protracted meetings" as they were called, were very common in the country thirty years ago ; for the special services which the American Evangelists have recently rendered popular, are nothing new to us and our people. Our young denomination was cradled in them. Mr. Morison was in great demand for these services ; both on account of his intellectual ability, and the notoriety which he had acquired through his own unflinching stand in the church courts, as well as because he was the father of his celebrated son. He had a singularly happy way of meeting the difficulties and perplexities of anxious enquirers, who, on account of some exaggerated sense of their own unworthiness, had a difficulty in finding rest in the peace-speaking blood of

the Lamb. He would state the difficulty, produce his snuff-box, hold it in his hand while he demolished the refuge of lies, take his pinch of snuff (for he had acquired that habit in his youth, which he found it difficult to give up), and then survey the assembly with an expression of countenance, in which argumentative triumph and benevolent goodwill were happily interblended.

That our readers may be able to see how felicitous Mr. Morison, sen., could be in dealing with a sinner who was seeking the Saviour, we will insert a quotation from a practical pamphlet which he issued in 1843,—the year after his separation from the United Secession Church. It is entitled “Gospel-peace necessary to Christian Righteousness.” In it the polemic divine is unheard, and only the affectionate pastor speaks. All theological restrictions are now removed. We hear nothing of a partial application of grace to some, but only of a merciful father waiting on every erring child. We have always thought the following passage very beautiful and important, in which a comparison is drawn between Joseph’s brethren, as being afraid of him because they knew him not; and depraved man, as being afraid of God on account of “the ignorance that is in him.” We are certain that the illustration may suggest a profitable discourse to some of our ministerial brethren:—

“The case may be illustrated by the experience of Joseph’s brethren. When they went down to Egypt to buy corn, and Joseph spake roughly to them, and pronounced them spies, and seemed very austere, they saw that he was a very powerful man; they supposed him to be a hostile man; and they dreaded greatly the mind that was in him. His very presence made them tremble. But when the true character of Joseph was revealed to them afterwards, they came to know his heart of love, and then they had peace with Joseph. In this case you will see, so far as its parallelism to the spiritual case is concerned, after the disclosure of their brother’s true character to them, there was no change in Joseph; but there was a vast change in their knowledge of him. This change in their knowledge too produced a complete revolution in their feeling toward him. When they knew Joseph’s true character, they had immediate peace with him, they knew they had peace, and all the revolution in their feelings was the consequence of this sure peace with Joseph. *His* favour and love to them, when known, begat *their* peace and love to him. So it is, I apprehend, with every one who comes to understand the Gospel-message. It is only the truth—the truth that is embodied in this Gospel-message—that can give ‘peace with God.’ It is the truth of God’s hearty love, and the Holy Spirit’s hearty love to the sinner, as centring and manifested in the death of the cross, that really constitutes the Gospel-message to him; and the knowledge of this alone can bring him peace, and the knowledge of this cannot fail to bring

him peace. Dear reader, I hope you are convinced of this. Well, take a lesson from it. You know that every man, from the very constitution of our nature, believes certainly all truths of all kinds that he knows to be true. A foolish man may sometimes believe *more*, but no man can possibly believe *less*. Now, as all men are certainly and firmly believing all the truth that they know to be true, concerning the love of God and the work of Christ, and yet many of them have no 'peace with God,' nor good grounds for it, it is very plain that the reason of the want of 'peace' is that they are not knowing adequately the Gospel-message sent by God to them, to reveal him to their own souls. They are not knowing *this* as God meant it should be known. And the lesson you learn from this fact is, that it is not a better method of believing what you know that is needed, but a knowing more of what God has revealed to be believed.

One other passage in this tractate, we remember, helped us to understand, long ago, how faith is "the gift of God," or, at any rate, confirmed us in the view to which we had already groped our way:—

"In *that* believing, and in *all other* acts of believing within the whole range of human experience, it is the truth alone that elicits the faith to itself, and not the faith that educes the truth to the mind. It is the previously existing truth that (on discovery) produces the act of faith, and not the act of faith that brings out the truth. Faith never *has* and never *can have* a separate or distinct or antecedent existence, but is just the acquiescing response of the soul to the truth perceived by it. In all cases too a man believes all that he knows to be true, and knows that he believes it, whenever his attention is turned to it."

The Spirit of God gives man faith in the way of causing the truth to stand out boldly in its faith-educing power. We think that expression quite remarkable and memorable, —*the Gospel testimony* EDUCES *faith*.

We have heard the following account given by one who was present on the occasion, of the way in which Mr. Morison repelled a temptation of the adversary at a series of revival meetings which were held at Shotts Iron Works—a place about twelve miles distant from Bathgate. "I hear," said the fatherly man, "that many of you are troubled about your evil thoughts. Indeed, when conversing with the anxious night after night, I find that this is the great fear that haunts them—they think that they cannot be truly converted because they are tempted with evil thoughts. Suppose that a band of strolling actors were to come into your village, and were to begin to play their parts in the principal street. If you crowded round them, and looked on with eager interest, they would be encouraged

to continue; but if you paid no attention to them, they would soon give up. Treat your evil thoughts in the same way. Pay no attention to them, and they will soon make off. Temptation is not sin till man yields to it." Thus was the Father of our denomination wise to win and solace souls.

About this period (1842-1848), when the results of the wide spread doctrinal agitations were being crystallised and shaped in the formation of churches in important centres, Mr. Morison did good service in preaching, both on Sabbath-days and week-days, on these special occasions. His labours in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and many other places, will not soon be forgotten.

He was a great favourite with the students, licentiates, and young preachers of the connection. They would gather round his chair and listen to his instructions with filial reverence. He would often say to them, "Don't be in a hurry, when you become ministers, to leave the place you have been settled in. You may think that the new sphere you are tempted to seek will have no difficulties and perplexities, and that everything will be pleasant and sweet. You will soon find out your mistake. The trials may not be the same; but you will find troubles everywhere. In ordinary circumstances, do not leave the church to which Providence has first led you, unless you are absolutely driven from it."

As he grew old and infirm, and consequently unable to leave home much, he often took up his pen, and, from the quietude of his retreat, wrote a word of encouragement to the younger brethren as to their difficulties, or of eulogistic congratulation, if he observed that any of them had done or published something worthy of commendation. The author of this volume has frequently received from him such hortatory or laudatory epistles. In one of these he said: "You will often be in want of a text, and hesitating which one of two or three to take, when looking forward to your Sabbath ministrations. In these circumstances, falling down upon your knees, ask direction of God, and he will always make your way plain before you."

He was sinking in health for several years before he died. As far back as the year 1850, he said to us, "I do not think that I will get through the next winter." The last public duty he was able to discharge, of marked importance, was in

February, 1853, in connection with the opening services of the large and elegant chapel which had been built for his son, Rev. Dr. Morison, North Dundas Street, Glasgow, soon after the removal of the latter from Kilmarnock. On that memorable occasion the father preached in the forenoon, and the son in the afternoon and the evening.

Mr. Morison died at his manse in Bathgate, in the month of July, 1855, in the seventy-third year of his age. He had not the advantage of sympathetic communion with his son during the last months of his illness, inasmuch as Dr. Morison had been compelled to seek, in oriental travel, at that very time, the restoration of his own health, which had become much impaired soon after his removal to Glasgow. His daughter, however, Mrs. Stewart, of Kilmarnock, whose important communication enriched our last chapter, waited upon him with exemplary filial devotion.

As his end drew near. Mr. Morison manifested great patience, as well as thankfulness both to God and man for all that was done for him. He delighted also to talk of the glories of immortality; and as he became encompassed with infirmity, he longed to "depart and be with Christ." Yet oftentimes, in the midst of much suffering, he would say with Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come." For some days previous to his death, he was unable to speak, owing to paralysis of the throat and tongue; but he delighted to hear of that Saviour whom he had so frequently exhibited to others. His latter end was literally peace; for he died without a struggle, and with a smile upon his face.

We recollect that we spent a Sabbath with him in the summer of 1850. His chapel had undergone some repairs, and we were preaching on the occasion of its being re-opened. We were sitting with him in his study, between the afternoon and evening service. As he reclined in his easy chair, he entered into a beautiful meditation and descant on heaven. He remarked that he frequently wondered what it would be like. "I often sit in this chair," he continued, "in a kind of a half-waking dream about the celestial country. I fancy that I see it. Astronomy seems to intimate that our sun,—yea, our whole solar system,—is tending towards some great centre. What if that centre be an immense orb that keeps in balance all these orbs of our system? And what if that central orb be heaven, where the glory of God is specially

manifested, and where the Lamb is reigning and waiting till all things are put under his feet?"

He has now entered within the veil, where he sees "face to face." We are happy to think that his painful death-bed was cheered with the conviction that he had not lived in vain, inasmuch as he had left behind him a son whose name and influence shall endure for many generations, and because he had himself taken part in planting the goodly tree of the Evangelical Union of Scotland. May we who survive him so live and labour that we shall not be ashamed of our doings when we meet him in that heavenly world on whose characteristics he sometimes speculated, and report to him all that had been accomplished since he was called from the field of battle to the splendid palace-hall. And there may our curiosity, as well as his, be thoroughly satisfied, as the Lamb leads us, from age to age, to ever new and ever-renewing fountains of waters.

## CHAPTER XII.

Rev. A. C. Rutherford—His Settlement in Falkirk—Enters into controversy as to the extent of the Atonement with Rev. William Fraser, of Alloa—Dissents from doctrinal finding of the Synod of 1842—Is suspended and deposed by the Presbytery of Stirling—Publishes *New Views not New, but Old and Sound*—Is deposed by the Synod of 1843—New Chapel built for him in the town—Settles subsequently in Greenock and Dundee—Eventually returns to the U. P. Church.

ON looking narrowly into the ecclesiastical documents and records of the period, we find that we must give "the case of the Rev. A. C. Rutherford, of Falkirk," the precedence of "the case of the Rev. John Guthrie, of Kendal." Both of these gentlemen were suspended from the office of the ministry by the Synod of the United Secession Church, which met at Edinburgh in May, 1843, on account of their opinions concerning the extent of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; but, besides the fact that Mr. Rutherford's suspension took place a week before Mr. Guthrie's, it appears that Mr. Guthrie's case grew out of Mr. Rutherford's, since it was his protest against the excision of his Falkirk brother that brought the Kendal presbyter into collision with that supreme church court.

It cannot be doubted that, by his publications, as well as

by his pulpit and evangelistic labours, this third minister of the original quaternion did valiant, yeoman work at the time when the Evangelical Union was formed, and for many years afterwards.

The Rev. A. C. Rutherford was born and brought up in Edinburgh, in which city his father lived and died an honoured and respected merchant. Alexander was intended at first for the legal profession; and for some time, indeed, was employed in a lawyer's office. But, eventually preferring the ministerial profession, he completed his full arts curriculum at the University of Edinburgh, carrying off honours in some of the classes. He is a few years older than our esteemed fathers, Dr. Morison and Dr. Guthrie, and consequently left the Divinity Hall of the Secession Church some time before their course was concluded. We think we have heard it stated that his last year was their first, under the theological tuition of the eminent Drs. Brown and Balmer.

Mr. Rutherford proved to be a very popular preacher, and succeeded in obtaining, against a list of formidable competitors, what was considered to be the very best provincial or rural vacancy in the denomination at the time—namely, the pastorate of the first United Associate church of Falkirk, in the Presbytery of Stirling. The salary was comparatively large; the chapel was spacious and commodious; while there were upwards of a thousand members in actual fellowship, including some of the most influential people in the town. The church, moreover, stood high in the estimation of the general community and the whole people of the Secession, because distinguished men had preceded Mr. Rutherford in its pulpit. A hundred years before, the Rev. Henry Erskine, son of the good and great Ralph Erskine, of Dumfermline, had been its minister; and the gap which the young preacher was called to fill had been made by the death of the Rev. Henry Belfrage, D.D. This distinguished man had just concluded an unbroken ministry of forty-one years in Falkirk. His chastened eloquence made him an acceptable preacher wherever he was called upon to officiate; while his *Practical Catechism*, his volume of published Discourses, and other works, carried his reputation as a highly respectable divine far beyond the bounds of his own denomination.

Not long after Mr. Rutherford's settlement, James Morison came round to Falkirk, in the first flush of his young evangelistic zeal, and before any decided cry of heresy had

been raised against him. Mr. Rutherford attended his meetings, and was deeply impressed with the preacher's spirituality of mind, as well as with his simple and direct style of address. The evangelist seemed to have something which the pastor did not possess. The latter was not ashamed to say to the former, although his junior, "What must I do to be saved?" Thus was Mr. Rutherford prepared, by his own consciousness of personal benefit received, to sympathize with Mr. Morison's doctrinal position, when it became ultimately defined amid the storms of ecclesiastic warfare.

The storm, indeed, had not begun long to rage in the west when it was suddenly transferred to the east by a clerical neighbour of Mr. Rutherford—so that he felt in honour bound to enter the lists in defence of the doctrines which had already commended themselves to his judgment as scriptural and sound. Falkirk, as the majority of our readers know, lies about three miles from the southern shore of the Frith of Forth,—just where the winding river has unmistakeably begun to expand into an ample estuary. On a clear day, Alloa can be seen in the distance, on the other side of the Forth, with its prominent church spire, and the shipping in its little harbour. It was the minister of the second Associate church in Alloa who suddenly transferred the Kilmarnock controversy to the eastern part of the island, and first tempted Mr. Rutherford to publish on the atonement question.

The Rev. William Fraser was himself a descendant of the Erskines, and like his brother, Dr. Fraser of Kennoway, was esteemed both a respectable scholar and preacher of the Gospel. He was perhaps the first minister in the Secession Church, beyond the bounds of the Kilmarnock Presbytery, whom the stir raised by Mr. Morison induced to lift his pen for the defence of the limitarian theory. He says, indeed, in the appendix to his *Three Discourses on the Extent of the Atonement*, that, just as he was going to press, he had heard that Dr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch was buckling on his armour, and that if he had known that that great champion of the truth had been making ready for the conflict he would have put a curb upon his own impetuosity. But the *Glasgow Chronicle*, when reviewing Mr. Fraser's work, remarked that it could not have been wanted, because it gave a satisfactory view of the question, within little compass, to those who had

neither the time nor the inclination to peruse the more voluminous publications.

Mr. Fraser's sermons had been preached in his own church in Alloa on three successive Sunday evenings in April, 1841. In their printed form they fill a goodly pamphlet of seventy-eight pages. Their author took his stand as a decided limitarian. The following was the position within which he deliberately intrenched himself:—

“I begin with proving, by a few arguments, That Christ, by his death made atonement, not for the sins of all mankind, without exception; but, for all of those, and those alone, who shall ultimately obtain salvation.” (p. 16.)

And again—

“All mankind, however, are not actually saved; vast multitudes perish eternally; and therefore, these cannot be included among the persons for whom Jesus died, and for whom Jehovah sent his Son that they might obtain eternal life.” (p. 19.)

These assertions were supported by the adduction of the principal texts and modes of reasoning which we have already passed under review. But assuredly when Mr. Fraser penned the last sentence which we have quoted, he had forgotten the fact which we have already had occasion to point out, that the death of Christ will be for a condemnation to those who reject it, as well as for the justification of those who build their hopes upon it; and it never could have been for the condemnation of the former class if it had not been endured in their behalf.

And yet, with all his undiluted limitarianism, Mr Fraser could thus preach and publish concerning the world-wide call of the Gospel:

“There is no guilt for which his sacrifice cannot atone, for it possesses infinite value,—no stain which his Spirit cannot remove, for he can illumine the darkest understanding, subdue the most stubborn will, and purify the most unholy affections,—no enemy whom his power cannot vanquish, for he is omnipotent;—no evil from which he cannot deliver you, and no blessing of which he cannot put you in possession. And oh! rejoice, because he is as willing as he is able to save,—as gracious as he is mighty. He invites the weary and heavy laden to come to him; he complains because men will not come to him, that they may have life; he assures you that such as come to him, he will in no-wise cast out. You require not then, my fellow-sinners in perplexity to ask, Who shall ascend unto heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) For what saith the Scripture? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

It is not wonderful that this glaring contradiction moved

Mr. Rutherford, without regard to consequences, to rush into print and challenge the assertions of his decidedly self-confident co-presbyter. Accordingly we find that his reply is dated "Falkirk, 27th May, 1841," and is thus entitled: "*Universal Atonement proved from the nature of the Gospel Offer*, in four letters to Rev. William Fraser, Alloa. By Alexander C. Rutherford, Minister of the Gospel, Falkirk." A few sentences from the commencement of the four letters (which had been preceded by a pretty voluminous preface) will afford a specimen of our author's style, spirit, and doctrinal position:—

"REV. DEAR SIR,—The prefatory remarks, to which I respectfully solicit your attention, render it unnecessary to make further apology for thus addressing you. Did the step I now take appear at all inconsistent with the respect and affection which I have always entertained for you, and which, I trust, I shall never cease to cherish, I should, at the very least, hesitate before advancing. It is pleasant, however, to think that a difference of opinion may exist without any diminution of that affection and friendship which constitute the sweetest solace of life.

"You have taken up a position which, I am convinced, is not only untenable, but which, when carried out to its legitimate consequences, is directly fitted to frustrate the grace of God in the offer of the Gospel. The doctrine contained in your second sermon is the following:—'Christ by his death did not make atonement for the sins of all mankind without exception; but for the sins of all those, and those alone, who shall ultimately obtain salvation.' It is a sad truth, that many who hear the Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath shall not obtain salvation. This we know, not from any information possessed by us respecting the secret designs of the Almighty, but from the *fact* that they have confessedly lived and died without having obtained salvation. Every one who will have salvation hereafter, must have it here. Now, it is a mournful fact, that many live and die under the sound of the Gospel who love sin, and live under the dominion of sin, and go into eternity the willing captives of sin. The question to be discussed, then, is simply this, *Has no atonement been made for such?*

"You advocate a system which tells all such individuals that no atonement has been provided for them. In opposition to this, I am about to assign my reasons for maintaining that *for every hearer of the Gospel an ample atonement has been made*. I shrink not back from the conclusion that must inevitably follow. If the atonement extends to one of those who do not obtain salvation, then it extends to the whole human race. This is the necessary conclusion. I am prepared to give up this conclusion only when you have disproved the position from which it inevitably flows."

After the publication of his four letters to Mr. Fraser, Mr. Rutherford, according to his own statement, was a *marked man*. Yet no ecclesiastical action was taken against him till May, 1842—exactly a year after the date of his first

publication. He had voted with the liberal party both at the trial of James Morison in 1841, and of Robert Morison in 1842. But so many members of court gave similar votes, especially in the latter case, on mere points of order, that his ministerial standing would not have been, simply by that fact, seriously endangered. On the very day, however, after the case of Mr. Morison, sen., was settled—namely, 11th May, 1842,—he took a bold step, which materially affected his future career. A Committee had been appointed to draw up a statement of the precise doctrinal errors which the Synod condemned,—errors to which the attention of the church had been turned in connection with the recent discussions. The propositions on which the Committee had agreed were read over one by one, and a separate vote was taken on each. The first proposition ran thus:—"The Synod condemn the assertion, 'That although all men are, by nature, in a fallen and depraved condition, yet no man is, by nature, in a state of condemnation, merely in consequence of Adam's sin.'" To this no exception was taken. But when the second proposition (afterwards noted as the third) was read over—"The Synod condemns the assertion, 'That though the atonement of Christ has a general reference, and opens a door of mercy to all, yet it secures salvation to none'"—the records bear witness that "Mr. A. C. Rutherford entered his dissent, for reasons to be given in." The following extract from the minutes of the Synod shows what the reasons of dissent were which Mr. Rutherford gave in next day (May, 12th, 1842):—

"The subscriber dissents against this declaration, for the following reasons:—

"1. Because he *does not* hold it to be an error to declare that the atonement of Christ secures salvation to none. The subscriber firmly believes that every saving blessing is infallibly secured to believers by the special love of God operating through the channel of the atonement; and, in consistency with this truth, he would deem it erroneous to declare that the atonement of Christ, *viewed in connection with the sovereign purpose* of application, secures salvation to none. In this view, the subscriber is of opinion that it would involve no ambiguity to say that all saving blessings are infallibly secured by the sovereign purpose of God, in reference to the application of the atonement; while it is humbly conceived that, unless it be specially expressed that it is distinctly viewed in relation to the divine purpose of application, the statement that the atonement necessarily secures saving blessings is fitted to mislead.

"2. Because the subscriber conscientiously maintains the doctrine that Christ, by his death, made atonement for the sins of all men,

without exception ; and it appears to him that, in consistency with this doctrine, it cannot be granted that the atonement is necessarily, and in the case of every one for whom it was made, infallibly connected with salvation, without involving the dangerous error, that all men, without exception, shall be saved. To assert it as an error that the atonement secures salvation to none, seems to imply the admission that the atonement secures the salvation of all for whom it was made ; and if it involve the salvation of all for whom it was made, then Christ cannot be said, in an unqualified sense, to be 'the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.'

“ ‘ALEXANDER C. RUTHERFORD.’ ”

“In consequence of the above reasons of dissent, the Synod decided as follows :—‘That the Synod remit Mr. Rutherford’s reasons of dissent to the Presbytery of *Stirling and Falkirk*, that they may examine them, and deal with Mr. Rutherford respecting his sentiments expressed in them, according to the rules of the church.’”

Mr. Rutherford was now fully launched on the troubled sea of church-court agitation. Nor were his co-presbyters loath to do the work which he had demitted to them. On the other hand, they seem to have been waiting eagerly for the opportunity of letting him feel the smarting of their rod of discipline. At the first meeting of Presbytery at Stirling, after the deliberations of the Synod at Edinburgh—namely, that held on the 7th day of June, 1842,—a Committee was appointed to converse with Mr. Rutherford, with the view of getting a full and frank statement of his views—Rev. John Edmond of Dennyloanhead (now Dr. Edmond of London) con- vener. That Committee met, and through them Mr. Rutherford transmitted the following document to the Presbytery, as containing a deliberate and mature statement of his views:—

“1st, The purposes of God respecting the great and complex plan of salvation, as formed and contemplated by his infinite mind, are all equally eternal, and must ever have been present to his view. As contemplated by our finite understandings, however, these purposes embrace a prior and general reference to mankind-sinners as such,—and a posterior and special reference to certain of these sinners, ‘as chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world ;’ ‘through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.’

“2nd, The purposes of God which have a prior and general reference to mankind-sinners as such,—gave birth to the atonement, on the ground of which life and salvation have been brought near to all men, to be received by faith.

“This atonement, considered barely and simply by itself, apart from its application, secures nothing more, and was intended to secure nothing more, than such providing for and bringing near to all men life and salvation, to be received by faith ; and it is the atonement thus considered, barely and simply by itself, that is presented in the Gospel testimony as the object and ground of faith.

“3rd, The purposes of God which have a posterior and special reference pre-suppose the atonement as already made and presented to the sinner in the Gospel testimony, and thus secure those influences of the Holy Spirit by which some sinners of mankind are so inclined and disposed as to accept of that which, as formerly stated, has been provided equally for the acceptance of all.

“In a loose and general sense, I can see no objection to the statement that the atonement secures salvation to some, seeing that had there been no atonement made, we could not conceive of these some being saved. In an accurate and systematic statement of truth, however, I conceive that it is alone right to say, that it is the divine purpose, in its posterior and special reference, which secures salvation for such persons, through the medium of the atonement already presupposed.”

Will it be believed that at their next meeting, on the 5th of July, without any trial, and without having served any libel on him, the Presbytery proceeded summarily to suspend Mr. Rutherford from the office of the holy ministry, after hearing the above document read, as his latest and ripest deliverance? The following is the wording of their judgment:—

“The Presbytery find that Mr. Rutherford still adheres to the error that the atonement of Christ secured salvation to none; judge that he cannot be permitted to teach this error in connection with our church, and that he be therefore suspended from the exercise of the holy ministry; appoint a Committee to deal with him: and, as there are some complaints relating to other points against Mr. Rutherford, contained in papers before the Court, from some members of the first congregation of Falkirk, agree that the Presbytery proceed to consider the best method of investigating these complaints.”

We venture to assert that no candid or liberal member of the United Presbyterian Church can read now-a-days that account of what was so coolly done in 1842, without blushing for the narrow-mindedness of the Presbytery of Stirling, and of the whole Synod of the Church, which afterwards indorsed their action. Why, that Court, if consistent, would have silenced, without trial, Ralph Wardlaw, John Angell James, Gilbert, Hinton, and many others of the first theologians of the day, if they had been unfortunate enough to have been subjected to their presbyterial rule; for the doctrinal belief of the accused brother at their bar was exactly that of these divines. Nay, more, he did all that was in his power to make that particular modification of Calvinism on which they insisted his own; for he admitted that the salvation of the elect was secured, in a certain sense, by the atonement, inasmuch as the Spirit's influences, which made it sure, resulted from the work of Christ. But his

anxious attempt to make his views approximate towards those held by his judges was of no avail. And such a finding actually stands yet in the ecclesiastical books of the body unchallenged and uncondemned.

As was to be expected, Mr. Rutherford protested and appealed to the Synod of 1843; but his case had become otherwise so entangled and involved that, even although he was suspended, the Presbytery felt themselves called upon still to deal with him. The necessity for this anomalous procedure resulted from the fact that Mr. Rutherford, shortly after the meeting of the Synod, had a grave quarrel with the majority of the elders of his church—a quarrel, however, which seems to have originated solely in the doctrinal dispute. While the great mass of the large congregation approved of their minister's earnest preaching and theological positions, unhappily the majority of the elders were against him; for, out of a session of nine elders, seven sympathised with the Presbytery, and only two with Mr. Rutherford. These seven disaffected brethren, apparently afraid lest—as had been the issue of the strife at Kilmarnock—the valuable property in which the church met would be alienated from the denomination, got up a petition or memorial to the Presbytery, signed by themselves and one hundred and eight members of the church and congregation, begging counsel and aid as to that matter. Mr. Rutherford lost temper with the malcontents; accused the majority of the session of having acted unconstitutionally; declared himself and his two friends the real session, and expelled the seven hostile opponents. They, of course, appealed to the Presbytery, who, as might have been expected, took their part. The result was that, after intricate wranglings, which we need not minutely rehearse, Mr. Rutherford, who had been suspended for doctrinal error on the 5th of July, was deposed from the office of the ministry at Stirling, for practical contumacy, on the 22nd day of November. Of course, he protested and appealed to the Synod, and therefore still had the power to occupy the pulpit and act as pastor of the church.

Besides issuing two characteristic pamphlets—the one on his Suspension, and the other on his Deposition—Mr. Rutherford found time, during that same stormy summer of 1842, to publish a bulky tractate suited to the times, entitled, “The New Views not New, but Old and Sound,”

a second edition of which was immediately called for, a month or two after its issue. This work also was characteristically personal and polemical; but every here and there it contained rich statements of evangelical truth which not only were calculated to bless, but did bless weary souls.

We give the following extract to show our author's strong and powerful style, and also for the sake of the gem quoted by him from Ebenezer Erskine:—

“If it be A LIE that the Son of God loved ME and gave himself for ME—what though I know that he is a suitable and all-sufficient Saviour, saving to the uttermost those that come unto God by him?—what though he be raised from the dead in token of the acceptance of his propitiatory sacrifice, if I have no warrant to believe that he is the propitiation for my sins?—what though he be exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins, if by his death he has not rendered ample satisfaction for MY numerous and aggravated transgressions?—what though there be salvation only in him, and in him the amplest salvation, since the man who tells me this, at the same time assures me that I am believing A LIE, when I believe that this salvation has been wrought out FOR ME? I am told that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life, but I am assured that the men are ‘LIARS,’ who say that this life is for ME. The very truth which alone can yield relief to my weary and heavy-laden spirit is pronounced a falsehood, and nothing that can satisfy my conscience is substituted in its stead. ‘They have taken My Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.’

“‘Faith answers and corresponds unto the word of faith, as the seal and the wax answer unto one another. Zech. xiii. 9—‘I will say it is my people, and they shall say the Lord is MY God.’ Faith will not quit its MY’S, though all the world should say against it. The marrow of the Gospel (as Luther observes) is in these pronouns, MEUM NOSTRUM—MY and OUR. He bids us read these with great emphasis. *Tolle meum et tolle deum*, says another—‘Take away appropriation, and take away God, take away Christ.’ It is the common dialect of faith in Scripture to vent itself in words of appropriation. It has a peculiar pleasure and satisfaction in these words, MY and OUR, and rolls them in its mouth like a sweet morsel. See how sweetly David harps upon this string, Ps. xviii. 1, 2. No less than eight times in a breath does he repeat his APPROPRIATING MY—‘My strength—My rock—My deliverer—My God—My strength—My buckler—the horn of My salvation—and My high tower.’ Yea, so tenacious is faith in this matter, that it will maintain its MY’S in the face of a hiding and frowning God. Ps. xxii. 1—‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ ‘My is a word of faith,’ says Flavel on the text.—(Beauties of Ebenezer Erskine, p. 27.)”

Meanwhile great congregations continued to assemble on the Sabbath-day, and the powerful preacher, although he may sometimes (unlike the Morisons) have wandered out of his course to attack the rebel elders or the Presbytery,

generally dealt about him such weighty blows with the hammer of the Word that many hearts were wounded and afterwards made whole. The entire populous district was moved. If the Carron Iron Works nightly threw their fiery glare athwart the darkened sky, the spiritual horizon was also reddened by the glow of theological controversy, as well of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. Sometimes Mr. Rutherford would take the works of Ralph or Ebenezer Erskine into the pulpit with him, in which he greatly delighted, and prove from them that the founders of the Secession Church insisted on the love of God to the individual sinner, as well as on the assurance of the believer, as earnestly as he did himself.

When the Synod met on the 1st of May, 1843, Mr. Rutherford was accompanied to Edinburgh by several of his friends who were warmly interested in his defence. His case was called on the 3rd of May; and it seemed at first as if it would be decided on a point of alleged practical contumacy, apart from the doctrinal merits altogether. We here quote from the minutes of Synod:—

“*Mr. A. C. Rutherford.*—The Committee of Bills stated that the next case in order was a protest and appeal by Mr. Alexander C. Rutherford against a deed of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk. Before entering on this case, the Synod was informed that Mr. Rutherford had, in March last, on a Sabbath day, preached for Mr. Morison, and taken part with him in the ordination of elders; and had admitted to his own pulpit that day a licentiate of Mr. Morison’s. It was moved and seconded, ‘That the Synod, before entering upon the case of Mr. Rutherford, ascertain whether he is to be considered a member of this Court, and in subordination to its authority.’ It was also moved and seconded, ‘That the papers in Mr. Rutherford’s case be forthwith read in whole, and parties heard.’ A show of hands having been taken for each of these motions, the former was preferred by a decided majority, and the Synod proceeded to ascertain accordingly. Mr. Rutherford was heard. He fully admitted the truth of the facts as alleged. The Synod then proceeded to consider what effect this admission would have.

“At the hour of adjournment the Synod agreed to resume this case at next sederunt; but to proceed to the business of missions at 6 o’clock.

“Adjourned, to meet at half-past 4 p.m. Concluded with prayer.

“Same Place, Wednesday, 3rd May, 5 o’clock p.m.

“The Synod met, according to adjournment, and was constituted by the moderator, and the minutes of the last sederunt read.

“*Mr. Rutherford’s case resumed.*—Resumed the case interrupted by the adjournment.

“After further reasoning, the Synod agreed, that as Mr. Rutherford

fully admits that he had held ministerial intercourse with Mr. Morison in the manner alleged, and as he has done this in wilful contravention of the enactment of this Synod in 1841, and of the decided refusal of Synod in 1842 to rescind this enactment, he has been guilty of gross contempt of the authority of Synod, aggravated by the circumstances in which he stood as an appellant against the sentence of deposition pronounced upon him by the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk; and therefore that, unless Mr. Rutherford shall now, or at the commencement of next sederunt, acknowledge the irregularity of his conduct, and express his sorrow, and submit to a solemn rebuke for said offence, the Synod cannot proceed to consider any question in which he is a party, or acknowledge him as a minister or member of this church.

“Immediately after this decision, Mr. Rutherford made the following acknowledgment:—‘I bow to the authority of this Synod in the Lord; and while retaining my private opinion as to the nature of the regulation which I violated, I admit that, in violating it, I did act irregularly; and I deeply regret the irregularity, more especially because it appears to many that thereby I intentionally contemned the authority of this Synod—an idea which I entirely disclaim—and I do regret the trouble which this act of irregularity has occasioned to my venerated fathers and brethren of the Synod.’

“Mr. Rutherford was then solemnly rebuked by the moderator, and suitable admonitions addressed to him.”

A gentleman who was present has informed us that when Mr. Rutherford rose up to be rebuked in the Synod a peculiar but good old custom was observed—all the members of Court rose up along with him! Many years had elapsed since a thing of the kind had been done: and only some of the older ministers knew the use and wont in such cases. But the rule had evidently grown out of Christian love. It was the strong shielding the weak; the many sympathising with the one; one member suffering and all the members suffering with him! But only think of it! A minister rebuked because he preached for James Morison! What did heaven think of the rebuke? Did not the rebuke itself deserve to be rebuked?

Some idea of the network of perplexity in which Mr. Rutherford's whole case had become involved may be gathered from the number of papers which required to be read over when the appeal was really taken up on the 5th of May:—

“Proceeded to the next question in the case of Mr. Alexander C. Rutherford.

“Read the minutes of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, relating to the remit of Mr. Rutherford's case to them by the Synod. The deed of remit was read; also a petition of 485 members and 122 adherents of the first congregation, Falkirk, approving of Mr. Rutherford's dissent from third article of the Synod's ‘Condemnation of Errors;’ a letter of Mr. Rutherford, published in the *Stirling Observer*

newspaper, June 16th; a memorial from seven elders of said congregation, complaining of certain proceedings of a majority of the congregation; a petition from the moderator and two members of the first congregation, Falkirk, referring to the preceding paper, and controverting it; a memorial from 108 members of the congregation, complaining of the doctrines taught by Mr. Rutherford; minutes of Presbytery suspending Mr. Rutherford, with Mr. Rutherford's protest and appeal; reasons of protest by Mr. Rutherford; answers by the Presbytery to said reasons; a memorial by eighteen members of the first congregation, Alloa."

We are sorry that we have not been able to lay our hands on any newspaper reports of the trial. We are compelled to fall back on the somewhat meagre, although, of course, accurate minutes of the Synod's proceedings. It is plain that the Synod did not spend much time on the case. They seem to have regarded it as having been virtually settled by the decision of previous years:

"*Mr. Rutherford's case continued.*—Proceeded in hearing parties in the case interrupted by adjournment. The Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk were fully heard. Mr. Rutherford was heard in reply. Parties having been fully heard and removed, the Synod proceeded to give judgment. After reasoning, it was moved and seconded, 'That the Synod dismiss the protest and appeal of Mr. Rutherford as ill-founded, and affirm the deed of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk, suspending him from the exercise of the office of the ministry.'

"It was also moved and seconded, 'That, without giving any deliverance respecting the grounds of the Presbytery's decision, or of Mr. Rutherford's reasons for protesting, the Synod shall appoint a Committee to deal with Mr. Rutherford on the subject of the remit; which Committee shall report at the present meeting.'

"A third motion was made and seconded, 'That the Synod confirm the sentence of suspension, as warranted by the evidence before the Presbytery; but considering the better spirit which Mr. Rutherford has displayed, and the more favourable explanation he has given of his views, before the Synod, appoint a Committee to deal with him in order to obtain a more full explanation of his views, and report at this meeting of Synod.'

"*Decision.*—A vote was taken, prefer the first, second, or third of these motions?

"The roll having been called and votes marked, it was found that for the first motion there was a majority of all the voters. The Synod, therefore, adopted the first motion; dismissed Mr. Rutherford's appeal as ill-founded, and confirmed the deed of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk suspending him from the exercise of the office of the ministry,—and Mr. Rutherford's suspension is hereby confirmed accordingly.

"Messrs. Pollock, Guthrie, and Walker craved that their dissent be marked against this decision, for reasons to be given in if they see fit. Mr. John M'Nab, elder, also dissented.

"Mr. Rutherford craved that the following be marked in the minutes:—

“ I hereby enter my protest against the sentence of this Synod, by which they have suspended me, on grounds the most unjust (as I conceive) from the office of the holy ministry, for holding what I believe to be the truth of God; and I shall hold myself at liberty to continue to exercise the office of the holy ministry, notwithstanding the decision of the Court.’

“(Signed) ‘ALEX. C. RUTHERFORD.’

“ In consequence of the protest by Mr. Rutherford, declining the authority of the Synod, the Synod declared, That the said Mr. Alex. C. Rutherford is no longer a minister or member of this church, and that ministerial communion with him is prohibited.

“ Appointed Mr. Ronald to preach to the first congregation of Falkirk, on Sabbath first; to intimate this decision of Synod, and declare that church vacant.

“ Adjourned, to meet on Monday evening, at 6 o'clock, in Nicolson Street Church, Edinburgh. Concluded with prayer.

“ Nicolson Street Church, Monday, 8th May, 6 o'clock p.m.

“ The Synod met, and was constituted by the Moderator, and the minutes of the last sederunt read.

“ *Mr. Ronald's Report respecting first congregation, Falkirk.*—Mr. Ronald reported that he had gone to Falkirk, as appointed by the Synod, and that when he went to the gate of the church of the first congregation of Falkirk, yesterday, during the ringing of the bells, a few minutes before the usual hour of public worship, forenoon, he was met at the gate by a number of the managers; that he learned from one of them—the others assenting—that knowing the object for which he (Mr. Ronald) came, they refused him admission; on which he read an extract minute of the decision of the Synod, affirming the sentence of the Presbytery of Stirling and Falkirk suspending Mr. Rutherford from the exercise of the office of the ministry; and of the minute of Synod declaring Mr. A. C. Rutherford, in consequence of his declining the authority of the Synod, no longer a minister or member of this church, and appointing him (Mr. R.) to declare the church vacant: after which he retired.”

At a subsequent sederunt the Synod took up the various other appeals from elders and members, to which Mr. Rutherford's case had led, but resolved to pass summarily from them all on account of his separation from the Church.

Thus was the third minister disjoined from the communion of one of the large denominations of dissenting Presbyterians in Scotland. It was found after the settlement of the appeal that, in terms of the title deeds, the chapel belonged to “the majority of the members who at any time adhered to the majority of the Synod,” and that, therefore, the 108 friends of the Synod could claim the property. It has already appeared from the figures given in connection with the petitions laid on the table of the Synod, that the great majority of the large congregation adhered to Mr.

Rutherford. It must have put them to considerable inconvenience to be compelled to leave the house in which so many of them had been dedicated to God, and had worshipped since their childhood. But their hearts were on fire with love to the Saviour, the world-wide extent of whose ever-blessed atonement they counted it an honour to have been called upon to defend, in concert with their minister. For the same remarkable characteristic attached to the theological struggles of this large congregation in Falkirk, which we have already noticed in the case of Mr. Morison's church in Kilmarnock—namely, that even although the very atmosphere seemed to be surcharged with the elements of acrimonious controversy, a most blessed revival of religion was going on at the same time—a revival so powerful that it could not be arrested by even the undeniable imprudences into which the chief actors on the ecclesiastical arena had been led, through the violent collision of conflicting interests. Not a Sabbath passed without some “anxious inquirer” coming to “the knowledge of the truth.” On the Monday the news would spread that this one or that one had believed the Gospel yesterday, and had entered into the rest and peace of the children of God. What did these people care although Mr. Ronald of Saltcoats, the Synod's clerk, might advance to the church door “during the ringing of the bells,” to read his paper, which declared the church vacant? They heard other bells ringing in the upper temple. They heard the chiming of the bells of heaven. They heard the angels rejoicing over those who had been “dead, but were alive again; who had been lost, but were found.” Cheerfully they followed their minister out of the place “where prayer was wont to be made,” being assured that the Lord would be on their side, although the church of their fathers had cast them out.

Steps were immediately taken for the erection of a house capable of holding about a thousand hearers. It was of a peculiar construction. The year of Mr. Rutherford's separation from the United Secession Church was the very year of the Disruption in the Church of Scotland; so that there was quite a rage all over the country for erections at once commodious and cheap. The idea was to build them, as we would say concerning houses, “of a single storey,”—not very high in the roof, and without a “gallery.” Such was the plan adopted by the Falkirk

architect. The chapel cost only £1,800 ; but it was spacious and comfortable. It was seated for about eight hundred hearers ; although one thousand could be easily packed into it. And, the whole audience being on one floor—which rose up, moreover, after the amphitheatric fashion of the ancient *agoræ*—the effect on the spectator, and especially on the preacher, was very impressive. From the day on which it was opened, the building was crowded. The Rev. J. C. Bateman, Independent minister at Edinburgh, now of Jersey, preached, on that occasion, in the morning and evening. This gentleman is known all over the world as the compiler of one of the first hymn-books ever issued for the use of children, and set to appropriate tunes. By his public act, that day, he made it plain once more that the Scottish Congregationalists (or, at any rate, a section of them) were more liberal than the Presbyterians, and that they did not see any serious error in the theological *programme* which had then been agreed upon by Mr. Morison and his followers. For several years Mr. Rutherford continued to minister in this chapel to a large congregation. Among those who were led through the instrumentality of his labours, to study for the Christian ministry at this time, we may mention the Rev. Robert Anderson, who has long carried on an earnest pastorate in Glasgow ; and the Rev. Henry Melville, for several years attached to the Canadian branch of the Evangelical Union, and now pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Union Town, Western Pennsylvania.

It must doubtless have been a trial to Mr. Rutherford to see some of the wealthier and more influential members of his congregation leave his ministry, during the progress of his discussions with the Presbytery, and also at their close ; but if some “ of the better sort ” went, the Lord sent others to supply their place. Thus we read in a pamphlet entitled, “ The Question of Deposition,” such a paragraph as the following :—“ The Session agreed to invite Mr. Bryce, formerly a member of Session in Mr. Steele’s congregation, and now a member of this congregation, to officiate with them at the winter sacrament. Closed with prayer.” An excellent Christian lady, Miss Anne Muirhead, also felt it to be her duty to leave the same congregation and join Mr. Rutherford’s, because she sympathised with him in his doctrinal positions, and felt her heart blessed under his fervent ministrations. She was herself an authoress, having pub-

lished, during the heat of the voluntary controversy, "The Church in the Ephah," or an application of the book of Zechariah to the view of congregational support advocated by Nonconformists. She also read the Old Testament fluently in the original Hebrew, and had in her desk respectful replies from Professor Robinson of America to skilful speculations of her own as to sacred writ in connection with Palestinian topography. An impressive likeness hung in her elegant dining-room of Claudius Buchanan, the renowned missionary in India, and also her relative. Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford were accustomed frequently to remark in these early days that it was both consolation and compensation to them, for the loss of those who could not bear the frowns of the influential of the earth, "to see Miss Muirhead slip into the church in her own quiet way." Her adherence to any cause was a sufficient certificate to the general public of Falkirk that there could not be anything far wrong with it. She was of great use to Mr. Rutherford in these troublous times. She managed not a little of his abundant correspondence. She received preachers and students into her hospitable house. She gave liberally of her substance to the cause of God. By her beautiful letters she cheered and instructed the leading ministers of the Evangelical Union—to whom, moreover, she often suggested appropriate sermons and publications. She has long since been taken to the church above where divisions and differences shall be unknown: but she undoubtedly deserves a place in these memoirs of the early trials and triumphs of the cause.

When the Messrs. Morison saw their way, in 1843, to maintain the kindred articles of the Holy Spirit's world-wide, resistible work, and conditional election, Mr. Rutherford was nothing loath to follow; for he also had begun to feel that the doctrine of universal atonement required the doctrine of universal grace as its counterpart and complement. In 1845, he published a pamphlet on "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion," in which he laid down, with his customary force and clearness, this advanced position of himself and his brethren.

We may say of Mr. Rutherford what we said of Mr. Robert Morison, in our last article, that he did good service in the way of preaching and lecturing, when churches were formed in connection with the growing New View movement, in

the chief centres of population in Scotland, such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Greenock, &c.

Indeed, Mr. Rutherford's desire to see the doctrines of the Evangelical Union introduced into the principal cities of Scotland ultimately militated against the prosperity of his own flourishing church at Falkirk. His ministry had been much appreciated in the large town of Greenock; and the thought struck him that he might be able to take both Greenock and Falkirk under his wing. The Rev. Alexander Duncanson, Independent minister of Alloa, and belonging to the New View party, had commended himself favourably to the notice of some of the congregation at Falkirk; and it was thought that a collegiate charge and double ministry for the two towns might be advantageously entered upon. But, unhappily, the ministers did not agree; the Falkirk church was rent in twain; and Mr. Rutherford ultimately settled in Greenock as sole pastor of the church there.\*

For several years he ministered acceptably in Greenock, and, without doubt, laid the foundation of the Evangelical Union Church, which still flourishes under the able ministry of the Rev. Alexander Davidson. During his Greenock pastorate he delivered, by request, a course of lectures in Glasgow, on the doctrine of election, which were afterwards published in a neat volume, and were much admired for their clearness and force. He delivered two or three of the same course in Belfast, in one of the principal Wesleyan churches of the town, and received a valuable present of volumes, at the termination of his visit, from a committee of gentlemen connected with the Methodist denomination.

Removing to Dundee in the year 1851, he revived considerably the Evangelical Union Church, which had been founded there about three years previously. It was during his pastorate that the property was acquired in Reform Street, Dundee, which the first E. U. Church still occupies.

It was only to be expected that the ministers of a comparatively small and struggling cause like the Evangelical Union would have many difficulties and trials with which to contend. As years rolled on, Mr. Rutherford began to

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\* We are happy to mention that of late, the E. U. interest in Falkirk has been resuscitated, and prospers under the pastoral superintendence of the Rev. George Bell, M.A. The chapel, which was built for Mr. Rutherford, has, for many years, been in the hands of the Congregationalists.

feel this ; and instead of fighting patiently against them, he at length expressed a desire to be received back again into the church of his fathers. This step would not have been very surprising if Mr. Rutherford had not latterly advanced beyond his original position ; for the United Presbyterian Church have, to all intents and purposes, come up to the very doctrinal views for which the Morisons and Mr. Rutherford were ejected in these stirring times.

We wish him much happiness while spending, in comparative quiet and retirement, the evening of his life among his former brethren. Perhaps we should make an apology to him for dragging these old matters to light, and for refreshing the memory of his fellow-countrymen as to his theological antecedents. But the acts of public men become the property of the public ; and we found that we could not write the continuous history of the formation of the Evangelical Union without giving his proceedings the place which they undeniably hold in the history of the movement. The chain would not hang together without the link which the case of the Rev. A. C. Rutherford supplies.

Our readers would observe that “Messrs. Pollock, Guthrie, and Walker,” protested against the suspension of Mr. Rutherford on the 5th of May, 1843. The reasons of dissent afterwards given in by the two other gentlemen turned out to be comparatively harmless, being taken on mere points of order ; but those of Mr. Guthrie were on the merits of the case, and drew down upon him, on the very next week, the unrestrained vehemence of Synodical anathema.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Rev. John Guthrie—His early days at Milnathort—Becomes James Morison’s fellow Student at Edinburgh University—Licensed by the Dunfermline Presbytery in 1838—Settled in Kendal in 1839—The “Scotch Church” there—Becomes interested in Mr. Morison’s case—Protests against his excision—His reasons of Dissent given in too late—Indignant at the prohibition of ministerial intercourse with Mr. Morison—Presents a Memorial to the Synod of 1842, praying for its repeal.

WHETHER we compare the merits of political, scientific, military, or theological heroes, we are constantly reminded of the familiar words of sacred writ, “ One star differeth from

another star in glory." As we read the records that are extant concerning Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Daniel, Peter and John, Chrysostom and Augustine, Luther and Melancthon, Wesley and Whitefield, we cannot but compare the men with one another, reckon up their peculiar characteristics, and conclude as to which was the greater of the twain.

Nor can such comparisons be avoided on the less elevated platform of our Scottish denominations. The Rev. George Gilfillan, of Dundee, remarked in a literary *critique* that, "if James Morison was the Luther, John Guthrie was the Melancthon of the Evangelical Union." Now, with all deference to that eminent estimator of his fellow-men, we would submit that the parallel, while legitimate within certain limits, is not complete. Melancthon was confessedly more learned than Luther, although lacking in that energy and decision which made the miner's son the leader of the Reformers; but Mr. Guthrie will not claim to erudition superior, or even equal, to that of the friend of his youth, although it is generally admitted that his style of composition is more tasteful, and more classically complete. Yet, in so far as great amiability and great learning and mental power are concerned, he is well worthy of being styled a Scottish Melancthon.

We do not care about being flattered ourselves, and we shrink from flattering others unduly; yet, for the sake of those of our readers who may live far away from our sphere of action, and may not be personally acquainted with our principal ministers, we wish here to put it on record, that the Evangelical Union is indebted to Mr. Guthrie's personal character, and acknowledged abilities, as much as to any other single individual's, for that increasing measure of respect and good-will which is beginning to be extended towards us throughout the land. Others of our leaders may awe by their earnestness, and force a place for themselves, among eminent contemporaries, by their perseverance and their power; but the honoured brother, of whom we now write, woos and wins by his love and his catholicity of spirit. Too large-hearted for any sect, he has a greater number of clerical friends out of our communion than in it; while his fame, as a writer on church government and Nonconformity, and also as a Christian poet, has been widely spread abroad.

John Guthrie was born in the village of Milnathort, in Kinross-shire. Like so many other Scottish villages, Milna-

thort consists mainly, but by no means exclusively, of a single street, and stands on the highway between Kinross and Perth. Indeed it is only about two miles from the former ancient town, and, as its name imports, was situated *athort*, that is, beyond, the *mill*. Small though it be, it has produced celebrated and useful ministers of the gospel, among whom may be mentioned, besides the subject of this sketch, his brother-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Gardiner, of Stockbridge U.P. Church, Edinburgh. The waters of Loch Leven, and the island on which Queen Mary was imprisoned, can be seen from the village; and it was a great pleasure to young John Guthrie, when he began as a student to be busy with his books, to look out from his window upon the classic and storied scene. Much annoyed he was when a new house, on the opposite side of the street, enviously blotted out the soul-enlivening view.

Mr. Guthrie's father was a highly respected mercantile agent in Milnathort, and was one of those men of sterling piety of whom, according to our national bard, Caledonia has reason to be proud. The family sat in the Anti-burgher church, of which the Rev. Mr. Leslie was minister; and although the old building has been converted into a public hall, the people of the place still point with pleasure to the angle at which the pew was situated, in the front of the gallery, where the future author of *The Redeemer's Tears* used to sit when he was a boy.

It would appear that Mr. Guthrie's first religious impressions were due, under God, to the illness and death of a much-loved elder brother. This young man was at the head of all his companions for literary power and promise; but, alas! as not seldom happens, the tender sapling was transplanted, to be matured in paradise. How frequently is this concatenation of events noticeable in the spiritual world—that the death of one leads to the eternal life of another. Not long ago, when conversing with an applicant for fellowship with our church, we asked him how he had been brought to the Lord. His eyes filled with tears, and rising from his seat, he took from a drawer an eight-page tract, and placed it in our hands. "That was the production," he remarked, "of a beloved brother, who aspired to the work of the Christian ministry, and died at the early age of twenty-two. His blameless life, ardent piety, and patient resignation to the will of God, made an impression

on my mind which could never be effaced." John Guthrie could say the same concerning his brother James. He still treasures his literary productions and earliest exercises in connection with the Sabbath school. Thus, the lamp, which was long ago extinguished, lives to-day in the torch which it unconsciously kindled; for we might never have heard of John, who lives and labours so well, had it not been for the influence of James, who was early called away.

John Guthrie entered the University of Edinburgh in November, 1831. He had been introduced to James Morison during the preceding year at Milnathort, on the occasion of a visit paid by the latter to his cousin, Mr. James Ireland, also a native of that village. Mr. Ireland has long been the much respected U.P. minister of Ellon, Aberdeenshire.

The two boys—James Morison and John Guthrie—took to one another at first sight, and saw one another every day during their curriculum at Edinburgh University. Mr. Guthrie must have been well grounded at the Milnathort Grammar School; for he gained several honours at the University, chiefly in the Greek class taught by Professor Dunbar, and the Moral Philosophy Class of Professor Wilson. He has kindly informed us that he was singularly unfortunate as to prize-taking at college. If he had concentrated all his attention on one or two things, he might have succeeded better; but he attempted to overtake too much, and was therefore sometimes defeated by those who attempted less. In several instances his essays came second, losing the much-coveted honour as if by a hair's-breadth—the Professor expressing the regret that he could not award him an honour too. But his contemporaries at the University looked up to him as a distinguished student, who gave great promise of future excellence. He took his degree of Master of Arts in the spring of 1835.

He had joined the Divinity Hall of the United Secession Church in August, 1834; for students were then permitted to begin their theological course when they had been three years at the University. Although Mr. Morison had gone to College a year before Mr. Guthrie, they entered the Divinity Hall together. That year was an high year; for, Dr. Dick of Glasgow having recently died, the Theological Faculty had been reconstructed, and, instead of receiving instruction from only two Professors, the students sat at the

feet of four, viz., Drs. Mitchell, Brown, Duncan, and Balmer. Dr. John Brown delivered the inaugural lecture in 1834; and a remark which he made in the course of it produced a profound impression on the mind of his Milnathort pupil. The large church in Broughton Place was crowded with an appreciative audience; and the expressive eye of the speaker flashed fire, as, rising to the full height of his oratorical energy, he denounced the practice of "first making creeds and confessions ostensibly in defence of Bible truths and then of committing the shameless idolatry of falling down and worshipping them, to the disparagement of the Word of God."

In several other instances was Mr. Guthrie conscious, during his theological course, of receiving an impetus in the direction of unfettered liberality of sentiment, especially when listening to Dr. Brown's prelections on Faith, and when reading Dr. Balmer's *Reminiscences of Robert Hall*, as published in the memoirs of that distinguished nonconformist orator, whose views on the extent of Christ's atonement had been clear and unclouded.

The students, moreover, used frequently to debate at their own meetings on knotty and difficult points, one of which was, "How can a universal Gospel call be reconciled with a limited Atonement?" These discussions, as well as the perusal of *Theological Lectures* by Dr. Payne of Exeter, towards the close of his curriculum at the Hall, inclined Mr. Guthrie towards the liberal side of the house, when the Atonement controversy arose, as well as his warm and almost romantic attachment to Mr. Morison, the pilot, who both gathered and weathered that storm.

Mr. Guthrie was licensed by the Dunfermline Presbytery in the spring of 1838; and having been appointed to preach as a probationer within the bounds of the Presbytery of Lancashire, he was called to be the minister of the Secession Church in Kendal, Westmoreland, which was then vacant. In some respects, this sphere, although distant from the headquarters of his church, suited our young preacher well. He had time for study, as he was not frequently called away on denominational duty,—the churches of the connection being but rare in these border regions. Then the situation of the town suited well Mr. Guthrie's poetical temperament. Its valley led the way to the far-famed scenery of the North of England; while the historical asso-

ciations of the place were inspiring. Agricola had given the town its name; and Henry the Eighth had got one of his queens, Katherine Parr, from Kendal Castle, whose grey ruins still look down on the meanderings of the Kent, and the dwellings of the honest burghers of the Dale. Moreover, the leading people in this bustling town were intelligent as well as Christian. The Philosophical Society of Kendal found that the young minister of the "Scotch Church" could read as good an essay as any of them at their periodical literary meetings; and when they called upon him at his own house, they found that his library was already large enough to provoke their wonder. The scientific coterie of the place were much interested at the time in the study of astronomy; and Mr. Guthrie was ready to join them in their midnight star-gazing with genuine enthusiasm; but as months wore on another star began to absorb his attention so exclusively—and especially the anxious question—did it shine for all?—that his presence at their gatherings became less frequent than at first it had been. Need we add that this was "the star—the star of Bethlehem"?

The "Scotch church" of Kendal had been an institution in the town even before the days of the Pretender, who in 1745 rested there both on his way to his disastrous rout at Derby, and on his return from it. Towards the close of the last century, however, the church had declined; but about the beginning of this one it had been resuscitated, and had enjoyed the ministry of two rather remarkable men who had been Mr. Guthrie's predecessors—the Rev. Mr. Wilson, afterwards Dr. Wilson of Greenock, and the Rev. Henry Calderwood, a man of dignified presence and considerable powers of mind, who closed his days as the honoured Governor of the Victorian Province in Caffraria. Thus a favourable impression had been produced in Kendal of the abilities of the Scotch preachers,—an estimate which the subject of this sketch was destined not to belie. The church was not very large, consisting as it did of only about 100 members; but these were generally of sterling piety, and in some instances of a respectable position in society. The majority of the male communicants were originally Scotchmen who had settled in Kendal and had married English wives; but their families had grown up cherishing warm attachment to the Scotch communion, of whose ecclesiastical heroes their fathers were accustomed to speak with so much enthu-

siasm. The chapel occupied by these worthy Seceders stood in what was called Wool-pack Yard. Kendal owed its prosperity to the fact, that it was the central market for the sale of wool grown in the immense pastoral regions of Westmoreland. The motto on the town arms is *Pannus mihi panis*—"Wool is my bread." But here was a preacher who began to burn with a holy desire to be the means of leading every one of his fellow-townsmen to say *Panis vitæ mihi panis*—"The bread of life is my bread."

Mr. Guthrie was ordained in Kendal on the 25th of February, 1839, just about the time, as we have seen, when James Morison was licensed; for sickness had caused the latter to be a year behind his fast college friend in buckling on his ecclesiastical armour. When the excitement of his settlement was past, the young minister, as might be expected from his antecedents, not content with studying directly for his pulpit in the way of preparing discourses, carried on the theological investigations which he had commenced in his student days. He was so deeply interested in the able work of Dr. Jenkyn on the Atonement that he wrote out an abstract of it; while the masterly and philosophical treatise of the Rev. Joseph Gilbert of Nottingham on the same subject so completely satisfied his mind, that he ever afterwards confessed himself to be a debtor to that original as well as orthodox thinker.

Meanwhile Mr. Morison was ranging the North of Scotland, and had already passed through that remarkable religious experience which we have already detailed. It could not be supposed that, since their two souls were knit together like David's and Jonathan's, the one could keep secret from the other so all-important an experience as an enlargement of the soul's apprehension of Christ. Therefore, we need not wonder that frequent letters passed between Tain, Nairn, Lerwick, and eventually Kilmarnock, and the little commercial capital of Westmoreland. Mr. Guthrie, as we may readily suppose, was an eager recipient of all the exciting news that began to come week after week from Kilmarnock, as well as an eager reader of all the publications that bore upon his friend James Morison's case, whether these were to be found in the columns of the newspaper or the pages of the pamphlet. He has been kind enough to inform us that he personally received much benefit from the perusal, about this time, of Dr. Bonar's tract, entitled, "Believe and Live," but yet more from Dr.

Morison's "What must I do to be saved?"—followed up as it was by the important treatises on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement, to which we have already referred.

Thus matters stood when Mr. Morison's trial came on in June, 1841. That Synod, as the young appellant touchingly said in the beginning of his defence, was "his first Synod, and yet he stood accused at its bar." Our readers will easily understand how warmly his loving friend sympathised with him as he listened to the able, manly, and spiritually powerful address—of the power of which none of our readers can have any idea from the meagre reports of it that have been preserved. Mr. Guthrie felt keenly as that trial went on in Glasgow, that none of the friends who had gathered round Mr. Morison at first seemed willing to stand by him at the last. As we have already seen, only Mr. Robert Morison and Mr. Guthrie protested against the suspension of the appellant; and his Kendal friend deeply regretted that, owing to his ignorance of the forms of ecclesiastical procedure, his reasons of dissent were not given in in time—that is, as we have already seen, immediately after the minutes of the previous meeting were read, so that they might have been printed in the Notes of the Synod's proceedings, even although this would have rendered his own ecclesiastical case a necessary appendage of Mr. Morison's. As Mr. Guthrie has found these Reasons of Dissent among his papers, after an entombment of upwards of thirty years, we have much pleasure in bringing them to the light of day, and of giving them a place in our history:—

"REASON I. Because, in reference to the first head of charges, the subscriber, without pledging himself to Mr. Morison's modes of expression, is convinced that the opinions charged against him as erroneous and inconsistent, are agreeable to the Word of God, and not inconsistent with the main scope of the Standards of the Secession Church; that his explanations of Faith, Repentance, and Prayer, instead of tending as has been alleged, 'to unsettle and distract the minds of Gospel hearers,' are Scriptural distinctions most important to be known, and have a direct and most forcible bearing on the conversion of unbelievers; that how unimportant soever such distinctions might be in the adjustment of a theological system, they are of the utmost consequence in the work of converting sinners, and of 'rightly dividing the word of truth;' and that, moreover, the stamp of the divine approbation has been already affixed to the very views referred to, in the many cheering and signal and unquestioned instances of conversion of which Mr. Morison, in his recent labours, has been the honoured instrument.

"REASON II. Because, in reference to the second head of charges,

the subscriber, without questioning the blameworthiness of some of Mr. Morison's procedure in the suppression, and subsequent circulation, of the tract, is convinced that this element in the charge has been greatly exaggerated; that the circumstances adduced in corroboration by members of the Kilmarnock Presbytery have, in several instances at least, been confuted by Mr. Morison, or satisfactorily explained; that, as this circumstance indicates, the hue of the case must have been greatly darkened by mutual misapprehension; and, finally, that, as Mr. Morison expressed his regret before the Presbytery (for which expression, apparently, little allowance was made,) and has repeated the acknowledgment before the Supreme Court, the subscriber is of opinion that the sentence of suspension, sanctioned, as it was, and confirmed by the Synod, was a penalty too severe to be warranted by all that was substantiated against the appellant.

“GLASGOW, 12th June, 1841.”

“JOHN GUTHRIE.

But although Mr. Guthrie had been accidentally prevented from linking his own case publicly on to Mr. Morison's at the Synod of 1841, he was determined to let the Church know, and the world besides, that he was not content to remain a silent spectator of his friend's wrongs and sufferings. Besides suspending Mr. Morison from the office of the holy ministry, the Synod of 1841 adopted (by no means unanimously, to their credit be it said) a separate, though immediately subsequent motion, proposed by the Rev. Mr. M'Kerrow, “that all ministers and preachers of this church must consider themselves prohibited from preaching for Mr. Morison, or employing him in any of their pulpit ministrations.” Mr. Guthrie felt his whole soul rise up in righteous indignation against this interdict, which he thought, and still thinks, to be worthy of the meridian of Rome. Whenever he got home from the Synod, he drew up a memorial, to be presented to the Synod of 1842, calling attention to this unjust and tyrannical prohibition, and praying for its repeal. The Session of the Wool Pack Yard Church cordially joined their minister in this memorial, and it was sent up to the Synod, through the Presbytery, in the usual way. We gladly subjoin the memorial as a fine specimen of a protest against a spirit of exclusiveness which has not yet wholly departed from the land:—

“That your petitioners regard this prohibition as uncalled for and unjust, and therefore crave that it be rescinded, and full liberty allowed to any minister of this Church to hold such intercourse with Mr. Morison as is wont to be interchanged between the ministers of this and other evangelical denominations.

“In support of this prayer your petitioners humbly submit the following considerations:—

"1. A restriction so exclusive—involving, as it does, on the part of the whole religious community whom this Synod represents, the repudiation of the individual from whose fellowship it debars—can be justified only by reasons the most grave and clearly established, relating either to immorality or doctrinal error.

"2. In reference to moral character, Mr. Morison stands unimpeached; not a few of the members of last Synod, who resisted his appeal, having borne cheerful testimony to his piety and holy ardour, as well as to his talents and learning.

"3. In reference to doctrinal error, your petitioners see nothing in the charges preferred against Mr. Morison to warrant any such reprobation as is implied in the prohibition of which they complain—nothing but what will be found to be in substance maintained by the most distinguished writers in our own and other evangelical denominations.

"4. The Synod passed no distinct judgment on the several charges against Mr. Morison, Mr. Morison having voluntarily withdrawn from the Secession Church before the case was ripened to a final decision;\* and, in these circumstances, to prohibit all ministerial intercourse with Mr. Morison was, in the opinion of your petitioners, unnecessary as regards the interests of this Church, and as regards Mr. Morison, a publicly inflicted wrong.

"Your petitioners refer with deep feeling to the unquestioned and impressive fact that Mr. Morison, who is at present under the ban of the whole Secession Church, has been owned and honoured by our Divine Head in the conversion of many souls. As a preacher in the Secession Church he was laborious, faithful, and successful to a degree almost unexampled; and in his present sphere of labour, both while in connection with us and since, he has been equally devoted and equally blest. Your petitioners can easily conceive of cases in which ministers may cease to labour in the same section of the Church, and yet recognise each other as ministers still. But can it ever accord with Christian allegiance and Christian love to affix positively the brand of public disownment on a fellow-labourer beyond our pale whom Christ has owned?

"5. In addition to, and in corroboration of, the above reasons set forth to prove that nothing on the score either of immorality or doctrinal error can be alleged as furnishing any good ground for prohibiting all ministerial intercourse with Mr. Morison, your petitioners confidently appeal to the fact that since Mr. Morison withdrew from the Secession Church he has enjoyed free and abundant intercourse with ministers of other denominations equally zealous with ourselves for the purity of the faith, and equally zealous in the extension of the glorious Gospel—men some of whose names will be found identified with signal revivals of religion in our land.

"Your petitioners therefore pray that the judgment of last Synod, prohibiting all ministers and preachers in this Church from preaching for Mr. Morison, or employing him in any of their public ministrations, be rescinded; and in this and all other matters that may come before you, may the great Head of the Church guide to such decisions as shall tend most to the furtherance of the divine glory in the salvation of souls."

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\* This is not correctly put. Mr. Morison did not withdraw from the Secession; he only disregarded the act of suspension, and declined meeting more than once with the synodical committee that was appointed to deal with him. The Synod then deposed him.

Before proceeding to give our readers some idea of the way in which Mr. Guthrie supported this petition in the Supreme Court of his Church, let us pass for a little from the polemical to the personal, and take a look into the sanctuary of the heart, yet more sacred even than the sanctuary of the home. Mr. Guthrie has been kind enough to inform us that the last cloud of darkness or doubt concerning the Gospel and his own acceptance through faith therein was swept away as the summer of 1841 passed into the golden harvest time. He had come round by Kilmarnock at the close of the Synod, and had received a great spiritual blessing in communication with the excommunicated heresiarch. They had talked much of the phrase, the "righteousness of God," in which Mr. Morison had begun to be deeply interested in connection with his lectures on the Epistle to the Romans. After his return to Kendal, besides keeping up correspondence with the Kilmarnock pastor on the point, Mr. Guthrie read with much avidity in the life and writings of Luther; and, one day, he came to see distinctly the objective character of that justifying righteousness which is declared by Paul to be unto all, and upon all them that believe. Ever since his soul has been preserved in peace; and he has delighted to make that pregnant expression, or rather the doctrine which it presents to the soul of man, the darling theme of his truly evangelical ministry.

At the Synod of 1842, as we have already had occasion to narrate, the Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate was, during the first week of its session, first suspended, and then deposed from the office of the holy ministry. On the second week, but when there was still a full attendance of ministers, Mr. Guthrie's memorial anent the ministerial interdict came on for consideration. It required no little courage for a man to deliver a long address before a hostile and irresponsible house; but our Melancthon was equal to the occasion. He was listened to with more patience than he had expected. The manuscript which he has preserved shows that the address was a very elaborate one; and although he felt constrained to condense it during the time of its delivery, he must have been upwards of an hour on his feet speaking in behalf of his absent friend.

The main points to which Mr. Guthrie addressed himself in this lengthened speech were these:—That only on account of immorality or unsound doctrine was any brother to be

disowned. As to the question of immorality in connection with the paltry matter of the circulation of the tract, he would not condescend to reply to any man who would dare to apply to Mr. Morison's conduct such a term. Then, as to doctrine, even admitting all the charges (on which, indeed, the Synod itself had given no deliverance *seriatim*), as Dr. Heugh had said when discussing Mr. Morison's case, and especially Dr. Balmer when discussing Mr. Walker's, of Comrie, the abettor of such views assuredly had not wandered outside the orbit of Christian orthodoxy. We are tempted to give an extract from Mr. Guthrie's reference to the speech of the amiable and liberal Dr. Balmer of Berwick, with his own subsequent remarks:—

“I regard Mr. Morison's opinions on the main points as substantially what are held by the most distinguished of modern Calvinists. On the great leading charge of universal atonement, he is but one of a phalanx. Professor Balmer, at the same Synod, said: ‘Compute the number of evangelical ministers and missionaries in Britain, America, and the rest of the world—inquire into their sentiments, and you will find that the obnoxious tenet is held by the larger proportion of them, probably by not less than four or five thousand, by at least four-fifths of the whole.’ (*Report of Cases*, p. 138.) Mr. Morison's tenets will be found very nearly to accord with those of Gilbert, Payne, Jenkyn, and other leading English Independents, and of the evangelical party in the Church of England, associated with the venerated name of Thomas Scott, the commentator, who, throughout his remarks on Tomline's *Refutation*, wears the name of Calvinist, and yet hesitates not to avow that we can call on every sinner to come to Christ on the same principle on which we rouse the sleeping man to his labour after the sun is risen,—namely, that the atonement is a ‘general provision from which no one of the human race will be excluded, except through unbelief.’ This is substantially the truth which so many of the Synod have avowed; and woe, woe to the church, let that day of its history be darkness, which shall see that doctrine suppressed.”

Mr. Guthrie drew attention to the fact that the pulpits of the Congregationalists were thrown open to Dr. Morison, and that the respectable ministers in that connection preached for him without hesitation, although all the ministers of the Secession Church were commanded, at their peril, to shun him. He thus chivalrously referred to his absent friend:—

“Sir, who shall prescribe to any man forms of expression? Who shall dictate to me how I am to speak, if I take care that it is only God's truth that I speak? Who shall presume to regulate my language any more than to shape my gesture or looks when dealing with sinners on the awful realities of heaven or of hell? Who shall dam up the outlets of the soul, because they take a direction in one man which they do not take in another; thus applying a forced process to what nature declares free, and making no allowance for peculiarities of mind and

temperament? Sir, if I make these self-evident remarks, it is because I have often heard Mr. Morison's expressions condemned, where I looked, and looked in vain, for some generous admission, some mitigating word, as to the burning earnestness which leaves the impress of his glowing soul on every page he writes, on every word he speaks.

"Thus, on a careful consideration of Mr. Morison's alleged errors, we see nothing in them on which to ground the interdict of which we complain. If that interdict says or implies that Mr. Morison is a heretic (and what else is its language?), then, as an individual member of this court, I am bound in conscience to contradict it. I must declare, and will declare, that, speak for whom it may, in branding Mr. Morison as a heretic, it does not speak for me. It locks up Mr. Morison's pulpit against me, and mine against him. It stands between us. It keeps Mr. Morison at bay, and it brandishes over our head the bolt of ecclesiastical censure; but it cannot prevent me from feeling, nor shall it from avowing, that Mr. Morison is not the less a brother beloved; a herald of salvation, highly honoured and owned of God; a most uncompromising asserter, and able expounder, and fearless defender of the foundation-doctrine of the Gospel—the fulcrum of that lever which shook the papal throne, the charm, the spring, that moved every giant energy of Luther's soul, the article, as he affirmed, of a standing or a falling church—the doctrine that man is justified by faith without the works of the law. The unsearchable riches of Christ, the glory of divine grace, the freeness of the Gospel call—these are the themes that run like a golden thread throughout the whole texture of Mr. Morison's publications."

But the friendly effort was of no avail. A fair amount of discussion followed before the petition was negatived, in which it could be discerned pretty plainly that some of the more tender consciences were uneasy in the really illogical and unchristian position in which the Synod's interdict had placed them. Yet Mr. Guthrie was compelled to return to Kendal, conscious, indeed, that he had done his duty, but grieved to think that he dared not ask his dearest and most valued Christian friend to preach to his congregation, and that, although he visited at Kilmarnock, and bowed the knee at the family altar with the pastor of Clerk's Lane Church, he dared not enter his pulpit and preach to his crowded and appreciative congregation, without rendering himself liable to ecclesiastical discipline, and probable deposition from the work of the ministry. Evidently this was a state of matters which could not continue.

Before passing on to another chapter in our narrative, we pause to observe that the obnoxious interdict still remains in force. But there have of late been some hopeful signs that, like some of our national laws, this ecclesiastical law will soon become obsolete, and be killed by time-honoured

“use and wont.” It was well known in Glasgow that Dr. William Anderson, before he died, preached both for Dr. Morison and Dr. Guthrie, as well as for the author of this volume, at the canonical hours of worship. That grand-souled old man seemed to wish for an opportunity, ere going up higher, of trampling under his own formidable foot the bigotry which had put, and which kept, such an interdict on a Church’s statute-book. We doubt not that others, pleading his unchallenged example, or sheltered behind the broad ægis of his posthumous influence, will do the like. Or, better still, we hope that, ere many years have revolved, a motion will be made and passed in the United Presbyterian Synod by which the ministers of that influential Church will be left free to exchange pulpits with these ejected ministers, as well as with the ministers of the other evangelical churches in the land.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Guthrie Dissents from the Synodical Deliverance entitled “Doctrinal Errors Condemned”—His Weak Health—Preaches at Maryport with Mr. Morison—Is Complained against on that Account by the Presbytery of Annan and Carlisle—Troubles in his own Church—Encouragements there also—Publishes “New Views, True Views,” and “New Views: How Met”—Communication from Dr. Guthrie, in which he describes his Defence and Examination at the Synod—Sense of Loneliness when Ejected—Narrow Issue on which Separated—Progresses towards a more Consistent View of Election—Obtains it—Visits Mr. Morison at Kilmarnock—Preaches on “O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the word of the Lord.”

WHEN Mr. Guthrie returned to Kendal at the close of the Synod of 1842, he was under the necessity of reading a document to his congregation on an early Sabbath day, which it must have cost him an effort to read. This was an official paper entitled, “Doctrinal Errors Condemned by the United Associate Synod of 1842.” We have already referred to this deliverance in which, under eight heads, Mr. Morison’s views were very imperfectly stated (as generally happens in an opponent’s representation), and very emphatically denounced. Not content with demonstrating to his own congregation what he conceived to be the crudities of this composition, Mr. Guthrie transmitted to “his esteemed brethren of the Lancashire Presbytery,” to be read at their

meeting at Hallfold, near Rochdale, the reasons why he could not assent to the declaration, although he felt bound to read it from his pulpit in obedience to the Synod's orders. He sent these reasons for dissent in writing, because he was unable to be present on account of ill health.

The young minister had, in fact, been seized with grave pectoral symptoms, doubtless induced, in part, by his ecclesiastical troubles; and for about three years after this summer of 1842, his nearest friends feared that he was marked out for the grave—another of consumption's victims. Yet he clung bravely to his post till the Synod of 1843 was over, at which he defended himself for hours, feeling at the same time as if he were under the sentence of death. A residence for two months, however, at a hydropathic establishment which had recently been opened near Windermere in the summer of 1843, did him so much good that his own fears and those of his friends, began gradually to be dissipated.

But to return to our controversial narrative. His reply to "Doctrinal Errors Condemned" was not the only official intimation which the Clerk of the Lancashire Presbytery received between the meetings of the Synods of 1842 and 1843, to the effect that the Kendal pastor deeply sympathised with the Rev. James Morison. The second notification came in a way that must have been very annoying to Mr. Guthrie, especially considering the weak state of his health at the time.

We will have occasion at a subsequent part of our narrative to refer to the deep interest taken by the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart. (father of the distinguished Member of Parliament for Carlisle), in revival work, and the early labours of some of the founders of the Evangelical Union. We will only so far anticipate that statement as to say that having become intimate with the Rev. Henry Wight, of Carlisle (formerly of Edinburgh), Sir Wilfrid had arranged for a series of evangelistic services in the principal towns of Cumberland, which lay in the neighbourhood of his residence, Brayton Hall. Knowing that the labours of the Rev. James Morison, of Kilmarnock, had been much blessed to the salvation of souls, and having read some of his earnest publications, he had asked him to take part in the meetings, as well as the Rev. John Kirk, then of Hamilton, and Mr. Guthrie, of Kendal, and, of course, Mr. Wight himself, who was indeed the clerical conductor of the whole movement.

Special trains were run between Wigton, Maryport, and Workington; while omnibuses and coaches conveyed the farmers of Aspatria and Blennerhasset to listen to the earnest discourses. The whole country side was moved, and many hearts were turned to the Lord. Little did Sir Wilfrid Lawson think that, by making such arrangements, he was bringing any of his guests into difficulty. Although the Synod had disowned Mr. Morison, God had not disowned him; and therefore the worthy baronet completely disowned the disownment of the Synod, and received Mr. Morison to his house and his heart all the more readily on account of the ecclesiastical martyrdom which he had braved.

Mr. Guthrie did not suppose that, by consenting to allow his name to be advertised to preach along with Mr. Morison, he was contravening the Synod's prohibition of ministerial intercourse, because the meetings were unsectarian; nor were they held at "canonical hours" on the Lord's day, but, at least in so far as Mr. Guthrie's services were concerned, on a week-night. Judge, then, of his surprise when, after his return home to Kendal, and while the savour of the fellowship with the Christian brethren was yet fresh in his mind, he received the following missive from the Clerk of the Presbytery of Annan and Carlisle:—

"To the Rev. Mr. GUTHRIE, Kendal.

"DEAR SIR,—I am required by the Presbytery of Annan and Carlisle to lay before you the following communication.

"At Chapelknowe, 15th Nov., 1842, four o'clock p.m., the Presbytery of Annan and Carlisle met according to adjournment, and was constituted by the Rev. Hugh Douglas, moderator, &c. A letter from the Rev. Wm. Bookless, Maryport, was laid before the court, containing a complaint by the session there against the Rev. Mr. Guthrie of Kendal, for having preached in Maryport on the evening of the 12th October without the consent of their moderator; for having in so doing ministerially associated with Mr. Morison of Kilmarnock, who was there at that time, and preached on the 16th; who has been declared by the Synod no longer in connection with the United Secession Church, the Synod having also forbidden all ministerial fellowship with him; that Mr. Guthrie by such conduct acted contrary to the consuetudinary law of the church, which is that the consent of the minister of the place shall be obtained before a brother shall preach within his bounds; also, that in doing so he set at nought the authority of the Synod, and did what had a tendency to hinder the usefulness of their minister, and expose the authority of the Synod to contempt in Maryport; also, that Mr. Guthrie, according to report, preached the errors condemned in Mr. Morison.

"The Presbytery received the complaint, instructed the clerk to

inform Mr. Guthrie thereof, and to request of him satisfaction on the point complained of, in the hope that his reply will render further proceeding unnecessary.—Extracted from the minutes of Presbytery by  
 “JAMES DOBBIE, Presbytery-Clerk.”

Mr. Dobbie accompanied this formal notice with a private letter, in which he charged Mr Morison and Mr. Rutherford with “baseness” in having broken their ordination vows, and hinted that Mr. Guthrie was proceeding in the same direction. Feeling stung with the whole communication, Mr. Guthrie repelled with disdain the private charge made directly against his friends, and indirectly against himself; while, as to the public action of the Presbytery, he disclaimed their jurisdiction, alleging that he was amenable not to them, but to the Presbytery of Lancashire. He considered that he had done all that courtesy demanded when he called for Mr. Bookless when he was in Maryport; and he was glad afterwards, for the amenities of social intercourse, that he found that gentleman not at home.

Anxious to fortify himself with documentary evidence which would help him in the defence of his conduct if he ever required to answer for it before the Church Courts, he wrote to the Rev. T. W. Hinds, the Congregational minister of Maryport, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson himself, to ask what, in their opinion, the object of the meetings was, and whether his own preaching had been controversial or practical. Mr. Guthrie has preserved Sir Wilfrid Lawson’s reply, and we quote it mainly for this reason, that it may serve to show irate ecclesiastics what a pious layman thought of their narrow jealousies:—

“Brayton, 25th March, 1843.

“My dear Sir,—On my return home from Carlisle to-day, I found your letter, and lose no time in replying to the queries contained in it.

“1. Having been the original promoter of the meetings in Maryport, I can safely assert that not only had they no other object than the revival of religion, but that much care was taken to divest them, as far as possible, of everything of a sectarian character, and that every endeavour was made to secure the countenance and support of ministers of every denomination. Each minister in Maryport was applied to, and three, I think—the Baptist, Wesleyan, and Primitive Methodist—consented that the meetings should be held in their respective chapels alternately, along with Mr. Hinds’s, and handbills were issued accordingly. This arrangement was afterwards altered, because it was thought by the ministers who were to conduct the meetings that such changes would be a great hindrance to their success.

“2. Mr. Bookless, I was informed, was applied to; but he expressed himself unfavourable to the meetings.

“ 3. I never heard of anything said or done by you or Mr. Morison having in the least degree a tendency to expose the authority of the Secession Synod to contempt, or impede the usefulness of Mr. Bookless.

“ 4. I am most thankful to say that the meetings in each place where they were held were attended with very much success, and in no place, I believe, more so than in Maryport, and the results have been permanent in a remarkable degree.

“ I am grieved and astonished that your having taken part in these meetings should have exposed you to rebuke from any quarter. How lamentable it is that endeavours to promote the spiritual interests of our fellow-men should be met with opposition from any body of professing Christians.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

“ WILFRID LAWSON.”

The complaint of the Presbytery of Annan and Carlisle was duly sent on to the Clerk of the Presbytery of Lancashire ; but all action in the matter was delayed on account of Mr. Guthrie's continued absence from the meetings of Presbytery through indisposition.

But besides these trials through offended brethren and weak health, Mr. Guthrie was not without his troubles in his own church at Kendal. He had thought it to be his duty to expound to his stated congregation the new views which had caused such commotion in Scotland, not from a love of controversy, but simply because he could not exhibit the Gospel which he had lately found for his own soul in any other light than this—a Saviour for all, and therefore for thee—a Righteousness for all, and therefore for thee. The result was that, while the great mass of the people sympathised with him as to his doctrines and his Presbyterian strivings, a few influential members of the church opposed him, and gave him no little trouble. He debated with them in private, and found some of them to be as rank Antinomians as ever breathed and boasted. They galled him not a little by their misrepresentations of his doctrines, which they were not backward to publish both in his own church and throughout the town.

Yet even in the congregation in the Wool-pack Yard there were causes of encouragement which more than counterbalanced these internal annoyances. Mr. Guthrie had this advantage in an English town which could not generally be enjoyed in Scotland, that when he stood up for a Universal Atonement, the great mass of the inhabitants were prepared to sympathise with him. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are much more liberal

than the Westminster Confession of Faith. Wesleyanism had a good hold in Kendal, and Wesley's creed was even more liberal than Morison's was at this time. Besides, it so fell out that there was dissatisfaction in another Church in Kendal at the time. Some wealthy gentlemen belonging to it, hearing of Mr. Guthrie's troubles, sympathised with his doctrinal contendings; and being ill at ease where they were, they began to attend at Wool-pack Yard. Their presence served greatly to cheer the young minister then sore at heart, both on account of his bodily condition and ecclesiastical prospects. Ultimately several of these fresh hearers were able to render material aid when a new chapel required to be built.

We may perhaps also be allowed to state that Mr. Guthrie's own relatives in Kinross-shire, although always kind and sympathising, let him understand plainly enough that they thought it very foolish of him to link his fortunes indissolubly with those of his friend James Morison. But Jesus Christ was more to the Kendal hero than James Morison; and he determined for His sake and the Gospel's to "know no man after the flesh," not even the nearest and dearest.

Another source of pleasure remained for Mr. Guthrie during this winter and spring—namely, literary composition, and that on the darling theme of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. We refer to two elaborate pamphlets which were both issued before the meeting of the Synod in May; the preface to the first being dated "Kendal, 25th February, 1843." The second followed in a few weeks. The author had intended, originally, to issue only one publication; but, as frequently happens, his work had grown upon his hands in the performance; and, the cheap pamphlet form being thought the most suitable in these days, when the earnest authors had their eye on the salvation of souls by the press as well as the pulpit, two separate issues were made in close succession upon one another. Hitherto, although Dr. Morison's case had been before the public for two years, Mr. Guthrie had kept silence, in so far as authorship was concerned. But now God's Word was "as a fire in his bones," and he could refrain no longer. What immediately induced him to lift up his pen was the publication, by the Synod's Committee, of their *Declaration as to Errors Condemned*. He proposed to himself to take up the whole case Doc-

trinally, Systematically, and Ecclesiastically. By that three-fold division, he meant that he would first follow the Committee through all the eight articles of their *Condemnation*, doctrine by doctrine; secondly, that he would show how their theology conflicted with a consistent system of divinity; and, thirdly, that he would reply to the chief objections that had been made to the "new views," as they were called, during the previous ecclesiastical, synodical debates. The first pamphlet, of eighty-four closely printed pages, with notes, was entirely devoted to the discussion of the first topic; while the second pamphlet, of seventy-four pages, was occupied with the second and the third. We have already learned from Mr. Guthrie's own account of the matter how important and unexpected a part the two publications played in the settlement of his case.

These rich tractates fanned finely the controversial flame which had now been burning throughout the country for two years, and constituted a valuable addition to the early literature of the Evangelical Union. Here was a fresh and finely cultured mind occupying itself with the very themes which had already been handled by the powerful and practical pens of the Morisons and Mr. Rutherford of Falkirk. Although not quite so deeply learned as James Morison, John Guthrie could nevertheless render his pages formidable with apt quotations from the Fathers and the Reformers; while his residence across the border seems to have made him familiar with the works of the best English Congregational authors. Besides, his style was poetical, and, here and there, truly eloquent. Moreover, he had newly come to see the truth himself; and every now and then he forgets the Marshalls, and Robertsons, and Frasers, and takes delight in opening up the riches of divine grace to the inquiring or heedless soul. He seems, in these days, to have greatly delighted in the illustration of a rebel army and a pardoning king. When he comes to the Synod's article on Atonement, he represents the King's son as suffering for the rebels, even for them all. When he comes to faith, it is the rebel believing that the kind prince had suffered for him. And as to the rebel praying before he believed, he asks, Why should he do so, and put off his reconciliation, when the king is praying him to be reconciled through what the prince has suffered?—Ever and anon the earnest evangelist of Kendal grows oblivious to the Synod and deals with the sinner,—

thus showing that he was putting himself into antagonism with the Synod for the sinner's sake. We noticed an interesting footnote to the discussion on prayer, which puts in a clear light the errors which Mr. Guthrie and his brethren sought to combat in their arguings on this point—

“Hence, to the question—‘What must I do to be saved?’ the Apostles invariably replied, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ And who in Kendal, you ask, does anything else? I do not know; but surely it was not of their own accord that a band of Sabbath-school children, gathered from all parts of the town, persisted for weeks and months in meeting the question, ‘What must you do to be saved?’—with the erroneous reply, ‘We must pray.’ A little boy of great scriptural knowledge, on giving this answer, had the question put to him a second time, when he replied, ‘We must get a new heart.’ He made yet another attempt, and replied, ‘We must get the Holy Spirit within us,’ and then had to be told, what, amid all his scriptural attainments, seems never to have been taught—‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’”

The pamphlets were somewhat quaintly entitled *New Views*, *True Views*, and *New Views, How Met*. Mr. Rutherford, as we have already seen, had taken the lead at Falkirk, the year before, by entitling his pamphlet, *New Views not New, but Old and Sound*. In the second one, Mr. Guthrie struck upon a fine original vein of truth, which as yet had been little opened up in connection with the controversy. Dr. Marshall of Kirkintilloch had called attention, at the Synod of 1841, to the fact that God had all along restricted his grace, as he termed it, first to the patriarchs, then to the Hebrews, and latterly to favoured Gentile nations, and among these to a yet more favoured few. In reply, Mr. Guthrie sketched Jehovah's dealings with man, first from Adam to Noah, then from Noah to Moses, and finally from Moses to Christ, shedding a golden lustre of grace on what the Kirkintilloch divine had represented to be but gloomy hills of darkness. Especially did he show that Judaism was hedged round with a wall of restriction, not to keep out humanity, but to keep out corruption—a most important difference—for the stranger was always welcome within the gate of the covenant; and it was literally true of the Mosaic, as afterwards of the Christian dispensation, that “whosoever was willing might come.” Even grave and reverend seniors—men advanced in the Christian life—who read the striking exposition, concluded that the Goliath of Kirkintilloch had met his match in the stripling of Kendal, and that the stones gathered in the purling brook of the water

of life were more effective in the theologic encounter than the weighty weapons of Westminster and the pretentious and jingling accoutrements of Geneva.

But now the Synod of 1843 came ominously on; for Mr. Guthrie began to feel that his ecclesiastical destiny for life would be decided there. It was quite true that his intercourse with his own Presbytery of Lancashire had always been of the most agreeable and amicable kind. They had discussed all the knotty points of the atonement controversy at their successive meetings, but in quite a friendly spirit; and so much did his co-Presbyters respect and love Mr. Guthrie that they were literally afraid lest they might be compelled to take judicial action against him. That necessity was, happily for them, obviated by the fact that Mr. Guthrie's case was purely a synodical one, having been disposed of *simpliciter* during the Synod's meeting.

Mr. Guthrie knew very well that the miserable little reference from the Annan and Carlisle Presbytery about the Maryport Evangelistic service would have been tossed overboard almost without a hearing by the Lancashire Presbytery at their meeting in July; but he had a shrewd suspicion beforehand that the month of May would see him an excommunicated man. He knew that the case of Mr. Rutherford was to be brought up before the Synod at Edinburgh, and he had made up his mind to protest against Mr. Rutherford's excision if his appeal was decided on the merits of the atonement controversy. We have already seen that the case was so decided; and we have now to let our readers know how Mr. Guthrie's brave dissent brought about his own expulsion.

As but meagre notes were published of his trial, and not being ourselves thoroughly acquainted with all the particulars, we have proffered to Dr. Guthrie the request that he would furnish us with an account of the sadly interesting proceedings. We are certain that our readers will congratulate themselves on the fact that we have received the following graphic narrative of his valiant contendings for Christ's truth from Dr. Guthrie's fluent pen:—

“A few brethren of very liberal sentiments,—one of whom was very prominent in those atonement controversies, another of whom some time after left the body and is now a minister of the Established Church—occupied the same hotel with

myself during the sittings of the Synod in Edinburgh. We had much fraternal talk and consultation together; and in particular as to what shape to give our reasons for the dissent we had entered against the decision suspending Mr. Rutherford. We agreed to draw up reasons severally, and then compare notes, that we might see if we could not agree to adopt one set in common. I could not accept any of theirs on the ground, as I strongly represented to them, that they were so innocently vague and pointless as to involve no testimony whatever on the point of issue, and would be accepted by the Synod without causing a wrinkle on any brow. I then read my reasons, which in turn, none of them would accept, saying that they saw no reason for precipitating themselves point blank against the decision of the Synod. I then replied that I would hold by my own reasons, and leave them to take what course they chose. Whether they read their reasons or not, I forget; I think some of them did. But that was the end of it. They remained in the body without further molestation. I presented my own, and was, as I had too well anticipated would be the case, cast out.

“It was in the second week of Synod that my case came on. At the very commencement of it, a noteworthy incident occurred. The Rev. Dr. Andrew Marshall, who had with the utmost bitterness opposed Mr. Morison at the Synod of 1841, and propounded on that occasion the doctrine of Limited Atonement after the hardest type, and who had twice proved himself to be, on these high questions, as various as the rainbow, took the opportunity at this point of bringing his oscillations to an end. During the interval after Mr. Morison’s case till the next Synod of 1842, Dr. Marshall compiled a treatise on *The Death of Christ the Redemption of his People*, in which, having reconsidered his hard Limitarianism of 1841, he softens it down into the compromise, by this time prevailingly adopted—namely, that of the Double Reference scheme above explained. During that Synod of 1842, accordingly, Dr. Marshall walked a god, a sun amid lesser stars. The great champion of the Voluntary Controversy had now stepped in to reconcile and compose all differences on the Atonement and charm the perturbed Synod into a great calm by the magic of his name. It was not to be. Dr. Marshall had undertaken a task beyond his ability to perform, and he had stooped to methods little characteristic of him—those of compromise. Many of the members of Synod, of all shades

of opinion, were not a little amused by his contradictory utterances; it not being in his nature to avoid saying strong things under the head of both "References," or to avoid running a coach-and-six through every part of his attempted compromise. In the element of compromise it was too clear that he was a fish out of water; and to his honour, he soon discovered it. Here, accordingly, at the very point when my case began, and with the evident intention of taking part with clean hands in my approaching ecclesiastical execution, and do still sterner work against Drs. Brown and Balmer at a subsequent Synod, he stood up, and formally, in a carefully prepared speech, retracted his previous volume, declaring that he was not ashamed to do so,—that the great Augustine had not blushed to publish his *Retractiones*, and as little would he. He thus relapsed into old Limitarianism, and published in the following year a new volume of the same size as the former one, entirely superseding and in great part contradicting it, and falling foul of Dr. Wardlaw and kindred writers, under the arrogant title of *The Catholic Doctrine of Redemption Vindicated*. Having recovered himself, he kept to this old position with grim honesty and tenacity, and fought hard battles for it in the Synod, till events ripened into his own separation from the body a few years later.

"My case, of course, arose out of the reasons of dissent which I read. It was otherwise a perfectly clean and purely synodical case, unencumbered with presbyterial difficulties, personalities, subterranean committees, or other complications, beginning and ending as it did in that second week of Synod. It was very amusing to see the difficulty in which the Synod were placed by having to base their proceedings against me on my reasons of dissent. They were uncomfortably narrow and sharp-edged, and much too precarious as a basis on which to rear such a superstructure. But, first of all, it is time to cite my reasons of dissent. They were these:—

'*First*, Because the alleged error, on the ground of which Mr. Rutherford was suspended by this Synod, *is not an error*; for if the atonement, *as an atonement*, secures the salvation of one, it must, as an atonement for all, secure the salvation of *all*. But it does not secure the salvation of all, there being many for whom it was made who finally perish. Therefore the atonement, as an atonement, cannot strictly be said to secure salvation to any.

'*Second*, Because Mr. Rutherford distinctly admitted, in his reasons of dissent given in at last meeting of Synod, and subsequently in his statement of doctrine laid upon the table of his Presbytery, and further in his pleadings at the bar of Synod, at its present meeting, that,

*viewed in connexion with the divine purpose of application, the atonement does secure the salvation of all who shall ultimately be saved.'*

“When these reasons were read in the open Synod, the members looked at one another. Then one after another began to speak, in the way of thinking aloud. Most gladly would they have let them pass, and be done with; for they were tired of cases, and wished from their hearts that the whole controversy were now hushed up. But how, they asked, can we permit these reasons to find record in silence? They flatly contradict the Synod’s decision. They declare point blank that what the Synod had declared an error is not an error. If we let this pass we shall stultify ourselves. And yet these reasons alone constitute a basis uncomfortably sharp-edged and precarious. What, then, shall we do?

“At this point a happy thought struck one of the senior members of court—the Rev. Mr. Pringle, of Newcastle. Holding up in his hand my two pamphlets, recently published, he said that Mr. Guthrie had, it was supposed or presumed, vented in these heretical matter; and he accordingly moved the appointment of a Committee not only to sit on Mr. Guthrie’s reasons of dissent, but also to sit on his two pamphlets, and report to the Synod. The basis of procedure having been thus commodiously widened, the Committee sat with comparative comfort, and, after a brief and formal interview with myself, of which I remember nothing worthy of notice, they hatched the cockatrice report which sealed my ecclesiastical fate.

“I may here state, in a single sentence, that this expedient of tagging on to my reasons of dissent—which were all that the Synod at that stage had any business or concern with—a new ground of procedure, to eke out their scanty materials of indictment—and a ground composed entirely of assumed and supposititious matter, and vamped up at the instance of an individual member of Synod—was as gross an act of ecclesiastical tyranny as any church court could commit. It was worthy of the worst days of the Inquisition. I wish to put this solemnly on record, at the distance of thirty years, when all heat and resentment have long died away, as my deliberate judgment, were death to meet me next moment, of the character of this procedure at the instance of Mr. Pringle. There are those still living, not a few, who were present at that Synod, and I invite them to confute or contradict this my declaration, if they can see their way to do so.

That they meant anything inquisitorial, I do not affirm : some of them might ; but the bulk of them were much too liberal and honourable to mean any such thing. I believe that in this thing they knew not what they did. It was at the fag-end of a Synod. They were tired of the whole strife. They probably saw that I had become inflexible and unmanageable, and that only by amputation could I be properly disposed of. This mean supplementary expedient was suggested to them. It was unconstitutional, inquisitorial, and in the last degree abominable ; but they did not see it to be so, in the intense light in which they saw it to be so timely and handy, and therefore ignominiously adopted it. I use these strong terms advisedly, as my final testimony on the subject ; for they are true. Not a soul in that Synod had ever dealt with me in regard to my pamphlets. No preliminary action had ever been taken with me about them by my own session, or congregation, or Presbytery. No libel, or notice of libel, had ever been served upon me. Not the least intimation had ever been given me that any exception would be taken to these pamphlets till I heard it with my own ears in the open Synod. Even then, Mr. Pringle, I distinctly remember, did not specify one single point on which I had printed error ; but contented himself with saying that the pamphlets were presumed to contain erroneous matter. By whom, he did not say. The whole was uttered on the strength of his own *ipse dixit*. He might have been my bitterest personal enemy, which I am sure he was not ; or he might have been narrow and incapable, which I am sure he was. One thing is certain, his was the first and only voice uplifted against my pamphlets ; and that voice was vagueness itself—a mere presumption and insinuation, without one point adduced or reason alleged. And, on the strength of that vague, solitary, unauthoritative voice, the Synod there and then appointed a Committee, not only to deal with my reasons of dissent—which they had a perfect right to do—but to fish up errors out of my pamphlets—which at that stage and in that form they had no right whatever to do.

“The report of the Committee was duly handed in. I invite the reader, if he has patience, to compare that part of it which deals with my reasons of dissent, with these reasons themselves ; and if he does not see in my reasons (be it, if you will, that ‘I speak as a fool’) straightforward simplicity, clearness and self-consistency ; and in their answers to

my reasons, perplexity, sophistry, misrepresentation, and confusion worse confounded, I shall be very much surprised. Here is that part of their report which relates to my reasons of dissent; the rest need not trouble the reader:—

‘The Committee find that Mr. Guthrie, in his first reason of dissent, maintains that what the Synod has declared, in the case of Mr. Rutherford, to be an error, is not an error: and has thus placed himself in direct opposition to the deliberate and solemn finding of this Court.

‘The Committee find that Mr. Guthrie, in his second reason of dissent, admits that, “viewed in connexion with the divine purpose of application, the atonement does secure the salvation of all who shall ultimately be saved;” but the Committee, while looking upon this as a highly important admission, do not regard it as bringing the views of the Dissident on the subject of atonement, into unison with the Standards of our Church.

‘The Committee submit that the doctrine of the United Secession Church is, that the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ secures the salvation of a definite number, as certainly as it opens the door of mercy to all, and, consequently, that it is as much an error to affirm that it does not secure the salvation of any, as it would be to affirm that it does not open the door of mercy to all; and the Committee further submit that the error involved in the statement “that the atonement, viewed in connection with the divine purpose of application, does secure the salvation of all who shall ultimately be saved,” lies in this, that it represents the atonement as nothing more than a ground or channel on or through which God purposed to bestow, and therefore will certainly bestow in the case of many, the blessings of salvation. The statement involves no recognition of the atonement as being made by the Son, on the faith of a promise on the part of the Father, to give him a numerous spiritual seed, in consequence of which the atonement of the Son when made, and not merely the purpose of the Father to apply it, secured infallibly the salvation of all who shall ultimately be brought to glory.

‘The Committee submit that the doctrine of our Church on this point is, that the salvation of a fixed number entered into the purposes or designs of God in the appointment of a Redeemer—and further, that the atonement made by the Redeemer being fulfilment of covenant engagements between him and the Father, has infallibly secured, or rendered infallibly certain, the justification, sanctification, and glorification of the spiritual seed he was to see on his making his soul a propitiatory sacrifice.’

“I was allowed till next day (May 10th), when my case came on at the evening sederunt. Every part of Broughton Place Church, was thronged with spectators. After due preliminaries, I began my defence about five or six P.M. This was followed by several hours of interrogation in the open Synod. The bulk of the questions were on the order of the divine decrees. One member of Synod, in particular, dealt largely in such questions; to whom, at one point, I

said that, as his task was the comparatively easy one of putting such questions without limit, without being questioned in turn, I should be glad to meet him, time and place convenient, and have question about with him, and discuss these high points on equal terms. This drew down the galleries in a hearty cheer; which, in its turn, drew down a solemn and emphatic rebuke on the strangers present, and the threat on repetition to clear the house. I here pay the moderator, the Rev. Andrew Elliot, the grateful tribute of putting it on record, that, while the interrogation was going briskly on, he stopped it for a moment to say, that, as I was manifestly evincing the utmost candour in replying to the questions put to me, he deemed it due to me to state, for my guidance, that though all the members of Court were free to put to me what questions they chose, I ought, throughout, to consider myself quite as free to answer or not answer any question, as I might judge meet. One question by the Rev. James Gilfillan, of Stirling, came in like a jet of living water in a desert. It was this—'Would Mr. Guthrie be prepared to say to any individual man he met, Christ died for you?' I replied, that I hailed a question like this amid so many of a dreary and barren character, and rejoiced in the opportunity it afforded me of testifying in this crowded house, that I feel, not only free, but bound to say to any and every sinner, Christ died for you; and that if I could not tell them this without faltering, I should be keeping back from them the Gospel. This also elicited audible appreciation from the galleries.

"I may here state that, during the whole of these trying hours of interrogation, which rolled on till past midnight, I never felt more thoroughly at home in my life. I was braced up to the emergency. There was not the least flutter or excitement. I felt perfectly calm; an entire absence of confusion; and no further excitation than merely such as was required to bring up my mind to intense presence and workability. Interrogation, even on the abstruse metaphysics of theology, was no trial. Still less was point-blank opposition. Least of all was abuse. The one trial I felt throughout my case, and throughout all the unrecorded contendings at Synods and elsewhere, during that agonizing period from 1841 to 1843, arose from the kindness of brother ministers, and especially of venerated fathers of the church. One would intercept me at Broughton Place, before entering the Synod door, and,

putting his arm in mine, say, 'Come, let us have a stroll for five minutes.' He would then, in conscious and sincerest kindness, remonstrate with me, and ask if I was going to throw up my position and prospects, and all the fair fruits of my long novitiate, and make myself a victim for mere words; to which I replied, 'No; I was not leaving the body, or proposing to do so; but if the Synod were going to deal with me about words, it was they that were about to victimize me, and not myself, and they thereby showed that it was not for mere words, but for substantial things which these words were presumed to express.' Another—a venerated professor—dwelt much on the danger of my being carried away by generous instincts, and poured in fatherly remonstrances which, however wide of the true mark, I could not but respect as affectionate and sincere. But I had got too profoundly convinced, and too deeply interested in the vital points in dispute, to feel one moment's hesitation in regard to the path of duty.

"The interrogations ended, motions *pro* and *con* were made, and speeches delivered. Much personal kindness was expressed in many of these. Professor Harper expressed himself very much in this vein. So did Dr. Joseph Brown, then of Dalkeith, now of Glasgow; and also the late Rev. James Young, of Dunfermline, who made a motion in my favour. Most fervid and warm-hearted of all in my defence was my old co-presbyter and highly esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. Skinner, of Blackburn. These and other expressions of kind and brotherly interest on that occasion I never had almost any opportunity of acknowledging; but I profoundly felt them at the time, and will hold them in cherished remembrance to my dying day.

"The motion for my suspension, as a predetermined result, was the one that carried. To this I immediately responded by reading a declaration protesting against the decision, and expressing my determination to preach the Gospel as if no such decision had been come to. After tabling this declaration, I left the Synod at one of the short hours of the morning, and had not reached the door till I heard the sentence of final deposition pronounced upon me in consequence, accompanied with the usual interdict of pulpit intercourse with me. The sense of loneliness and desolation that crept over me as I wended my way home to my lodgings, at that dreary hour of the night, I make no attempt to describe.

“Next day I wrote to Kendal, acquainting the church with the issue, and resigning my pastorate into their hands; but intimating my readiness, if they felt so minded, to return to them in these altered circumstances, and labour among them in the Gospel. I did not return to Kendal that week end, but left them time and free scope to take what action they judged fit.

“In the course of a few days, my heart was cheered beyond measure by gladdening news from Kendal. One of the leading members of the church—a leading member still—thus commences a long and interesting letter:—‘I cannot tell you the pleasure I feel in being able to send you the enclosed memorials; quite as much as you can possibly have in receiving them. Your letter was read to a few of us at the prayer meeting on Saturday evening, and it was considered then advisable, that it should be read on the Sunday evening, together with a notice of a church meeting for last night (Monday, 15th May), at eight o’clock.’ At that meeting the opposition, who had left the church at different times, made a muster. Had we only dealt with each at the right time, or dropped them from the roll by default, there would not have been one to mar the unanimity. As it was, there was hardly more than one, the entire strength of the opposition lying in one man. Notwithstanding many plausible things he advanced, he got only one to vote with him, in a meeting where eighty or ninety members were present. A memorial, or new call, was thus all but unanimously adopted. ‘You would be gratified,’ says my correspondent, ‘if you saw the feeling that all whom I have conversed with have shown. I feel sure the Lord, who has directed you hitherto, will now be with us, and enable us to do all with a single eye to his glory.’ The following is the memorial, signed, in that brief period, by nearly all the members of the church, which reached me while yet in Kilmarnock, at the very genesis of the Evangelical Union:—

‘KENDAL, 15th May, 1843.

‘BELOVED PASTOR,—We, the undersigned members of the Scotch Secession Church in Kendal, desire to unite with you in acknowledging the grace of our Heavenly Father by which you were enabled to make so noble a stand in defence of the Gospel.

‘We heard with pleasure in your letter to us, through Mr. James Low, that you are willing still to continue our pastor; and we now beg to assure you we earnestly desire your returning, that you may continue to break the bread of life amongst us. We therefore invite you to come and continue your office of pastor over us.

‘We are aware that this step will virtually sever us from a church with which many of us have been long connected, and which we have been accustomed to esteem and respect; but as the interests of truth demand the sacrifice, we cheerfully submit to it. We thank God for what he has done by your instrumentality since you laboured among us; some of those whose names are attached have to look up to you under God as their spiritual father; others have been reclaimed from a state of lukewarmness and apathy; and all of God’s children amongst us will have reason to praise him throughout eternity for having placed you in the midst of us.

‘In conclusion, then, we beg to assure you, our dear pastor, that our prayers shall ascend to our Heavenly Father for you, that you may be increasingly blessed in your own soul, that you may be more and more blessed to the people of your charge, and that multitudes of sinners may be converted by your instrumentality; and for ourselves, that, as a church, we may be more and more united in the bonds of Christian love and unity, more radiant with all those gifts and graces that the Spirit can alone impart, and more entirely devoted to the service of our God and Saviour.

‘That the glorious expectation may ever animate you and us of spending eternity together in praising that God in whose praise we so imperfectly join here, is the desire, as it shall be the prayer, of your attached friends.’

“This was accompanied by a brief memorial, signed by a few of the seat-holders; and also by the following memorial from a considerable number of the members of another church in Kendal, to whom I have above alluded, who thus threw in their lot amongst us, and proved a valuable infusion of fresh blood to the church:—

‘KENDAL, 15th May, 1843.

‘DEAR SIR, —We have felt that, in the circumstances in which we are placed, it is not advisable that we should take part in the meeting of your church, to be held this evening; and we have therefore met together to deliberate, in order to fix upon a course of conduct, which we trust may be in unison with the decision to which your people may come this evening.

‘We beg to tender to you our united approval and esteem, and to state that we consider your conduct throughout your late trying position to have been such as ought to insure our continued and increased attachment and support.

‘Accept, dear Sir, our united expressions of interest in your temporal and spiritual welfare, of the high esteem in which we hold the privileges we have enjoyed under your ministry, and many of us in communion with your church, and of the hope we cherish that nothing may retard your return to Kendal, and establishment here as a faithful, devoted, and successful labourer in the vineyard of our Lord.

‘We look forward with anticipations of pleasure to your return to Kendal, and to your again labouring in word and doctrine among a flock over which, we feel assured, the Holy Ghost has made you overseer. And it will afford us much pleasure to form a part of that flock,

and by our prayers and exertions promote the cause of our beloved Redeemer in our own hearts, and in the world around.

‘Our own convictions of the proper form and mode of church government, we, of course, preserve; but we are anxious that such arrangements may be made as will secure the greatest unity of thought, feeling, and action. And, for this purpose, we are prepared to concede what it may be consistent with principle, on our parts, to give up.

‘We leave our cause in the hands of our Heavenly Father, feeling assured that if we commit ourselves unto him, and acknowledge him in all our ways, he will direct our paths. And may the blessing of God rest upon you; may he keep you from evil; may he strengthen and establish you; and may it appear in coming days that you have been a chosen vessel to bear his Gospel, and to proclaim it in its fulness and freeness among us.’

“The Sabbath school, with its teachers, came over to us bodily, as the church already had in reality done; for the few who made their stand against us when the crisis came long ceased to have actual connection with the church. Nor is it likely that they would have taken action at all, but for their hope that the whole movement under me would break down,—especially as my health had so seriously failed that they could, as some of them did, remonstrate not without effect with my friends on the absurdity of commencing a new church under Mr. Guthrie, who would, in all probability, within a few months be in his grave. It said much for the strong principle and loyal affection of the Kendal Church that they remained almost to a man proof against these influences. We left the old chapel to the miserable remnant; and considering that we had, only a few weeks before, put in a heating apparatus at a considerable expense, around which they could have all congregated without requiring any space further, and taking into account many other things beside, the sacrifice was a little trying to the patience. On my return, a comfortable hall was ready for me, where, for the next eighteen months, we worshipped, the place being generally full, and to which we attracted not a few passers-by, who stepped in, became interested, and in due time joined the church. Among these was one who is still alive, waiting for her release, at the age of well nigh a century.

“The Lancashire Presbytery met in Kendal on the 24th and 25th May, and sent me extracts from their minutes, which convey a fair and correct idea of the situation; the only exception I should take being as to the numbers respectively—‘about 100 out of the 130 members of the church’—leaving the impression of a much larger minority

than there really was. The following is worth inserting from the minutes of their second meeting :—

‘The Presbytery, having entered into lengthened consideration of the circumstances of the congregation, found—

‘1. That about 100 out of above 130 members of the church had, within three days after the Synod’s decision, drawn up and signed a memorial to Mr. Guthrie, requesting him to continue to be their pastor, and that with this request Mr. Guthrie had complied.

‘2. That these memorialists had peaceably withdrawn from the place of worship, and resolved to assemble in another apartment as a congregation; justly considering that, according to the provisions of the trust deed of the chapel, they had no legal right to its possession.

‘3. That there are still a few persons who are attached to the principles and discipline of the Secession Church, but that, from the smallness of their number and other circumstances, they are unable to support ordinances, except through the liberal aid of the Synod.

‘4. That there is a debt of £440 on the chapel, the interest and £20 of the principal of which must be paid yearly; and that the majority of the trustees, who have gone with the retiring party, offer to take the chapel with all its obligations, and, if the proposal be declined, they request to have their connection with the trusteeship dissolved.

‘That, in these circumstances, the Presbytery deem it their duty to remit the whole case to the consideration of the Synod’s committee on home missions, and to urge an immediate determination of the matter, so that due notice may be promptly given to all concerned.’

“The Presbytery acted honourably; but the remnants in the old place temporised with our just and honourable proposal, either to take the old chapel, and rid them of all its liabilities, or to quit it, and be on our part rid of responsibility—their hope evidently being that, by these embarrassments, our movement would likely collapse, and the future work in their favour. After some exasperating months, during which our patience was sorely tried, we at last took a resolute attitude and pressed them to decision; when they chose to retain the old chapel with all its burdens. We then set our face to the new chapel project—the best alternative that could have fallen to us. To add to these difficulties and perplexities, I had to leave for two months at that critical period on the score of health, and as before that I had preached, so had I to preach long after, in the condition of an enfeebled invalid. After a few months I laid the foundation of our new chapel, toward which by this time we had raised about £700. It was opened amid joyous gatherings and scenes, whose memory is to this day fresh in Kendal, on the 16th October, 1844, on which occasion we carried the amount of subscriptions up to about £1000,

within £250 of the entire cost of the chapel. This sum, it will be borne in mind, went much farther in those days than it would do now. In connection with the opening services, an interesting and most effective series of special religious services was held by Messrs. Morison, father and son, the fruits of which were gathered in during the following months.

“Delicate questions now and then occurred, considering the different ecclesiastical antecedents of those who had combined in the new movement; but these were all amicably adjusted in an element of free discussion and mutual consideration. Unbroken peace reigned during all the rest of my pastorate in Kendal—unless the natural difficulty at first felt about my accepting a professorship in the theological academy, considering the distance, and which was soon adjusted, be considered a temporary exception. At length I accepted an invitation to the pastorate of a church in Glasgow not yet formed, and which was shortly after formed with a membership of twenty-two, and has since grown into the North Dundas Street Church, of which Dr. Morison some time after, on my removal to Greenock, became pastor. This was in November, 1848. I left Kendal under emotions which I cannot attempt to describe. My sole reason for leaving it at all was to be nearer the centre, for my academic duties; and to secure this object, I accepted the new pastorate at one-third less of income.

“I may only add that, by a rare felicity, the church, shortly after I left it, chose the Rev. William Taylor, under whom it so prospered that first new galleries had to be put in, and next the chapel enlarged to double its size. I had been twice as long pastor as any of my predecessors in Kendal; but Professor Taylor has already been more than twice as long as I had been. I may only add that, during all our trials and critical vicissitudes as a church, we never dropped one of our extra missionary and other contributions; and that these were never larger than at the very time we were going deep into our pockets for the new chapel.”

We have inserted all this truly affecting and interesting narrative, even although Mr. Guthrie has carried the story of his life a few years beyond the date of which we are treating. Our readers, we are certain, will agree with us that the stand made by our honoured brother was truly heroic.

Although John Guthrie and the Morisons were not lodged in prisons, banished to the Bass Rock, or led out to the gallows at the Grassmarket, they were not the less made martyrs for the truth. They deserve to be honoured as much as the Covenanters who died during the seventeenth century by the pistol of the cavalier, or at the hands of the executioner. With the lapse of two centuries the mode of punishment had changed; but the sufferings of the confessors, all things being considered, were just about as great. No one can read Mr. Guthrie's touching reference, in the foregoing communication, to the chilling sense of loneliness that came over him when he reached the door of the church and went out into the darkness, feeling, at that midnight hour, that he had been separated for ever from the church of his fathers, without being filled with sympathy for the conscientious sufferer, and without admitting that he had manifested the very spirit which had thrown a halo of glory around the moor of Drumclog and the ancient arches of Bothwell Bridge.

Mr. Guthrie has not incorporated any of his Synod speeches into the account which he has given of his case. As we made a selection from the defences of his predecessors in excision, we add one extract from Mr. Guthrie's address at the bar of the Synod, delivered on the night of his separation. We must confess, however, that the newspaper report from which we quote is a meagre one:—

“Mr. Guthrie then came forward, and, after some introductory remarks, proceeded to examine the report of the Committee, which he maintained to be in many instances a most incorrect statement of his views. He expressed his surprise that the Committee had seized upon the title of his pamphlet, *The New Views, True Views*, as implying an admission that some of his views were new, and opposed to the Standards. He denied the inference. While he would not love the truth the less that it was new, he yet used the name ‘New views’ as Paul used the phrase, ‘The foolishness of preaching’—as a name thrust upon him, and not adopted by him—a name, moreover, which many in the Synod, and even in the Committee, had freely applied to these views. The report of the Committee embraced five points of doctrine. On the first, relating to original sin, Mr. Guthrie maintained that the Committee had mis-stated his views in reporting that he (Mr. Guthrie) held that temporal evils and death were the only consequences of Adam's sin, and that deliverance from these temporal consequences is all for which dying infants are indebted to the Saviour. Mr. Guthrie disclaimed both, and quoted from his pamphlet to the effect that dying infants owe all to Christ, being saved on the ground of his atonement, and confirmed in holiness to all eternity. . . . As to the special love of God, Mr. Guthrie said that, if this meant that the atonement

was a display of greater love, of deeper compassion, of more kindly feeling towards those who believe and are saved, than towards those who reject it and are lost; or if it meant that the atonement, as an atonement, was anything more to the elect than it was to the non-elect, then Mr. Guthrie denied all such speciality; and maintained that, to hold forth this in connection with the atonement, was to becloud God's love to the whole world, and to interpose between the sinner and God's message as to an atonement 'finished for him'—what would act, and did act, as a barrier to the sinner's entering into peace. In proof of this doctrine, Mr. Guthrie quoted largely from his pamphlet, *New Views True Views*. The third point related to the object of faith, on which Mr. Guthrie disclaimed certain inferences drawn by the Committee from isolated portions of his book. He held the express doctrine of Dr. Brown, which he quoted from the Doctor's speech in Mr. Morison's case; and proved, by an extract from Mr. Rutherford's *New Views not New*, that this sentiment was not, as the Committee affirmed, opposed to the Synod's *Declaration of Error*. Mr. Guthrie stated that errors were promulgated in the *Secession Magazine* on this point, which it now disclaimed, but which he (Mr. Guthrie) was the first to impugn. That error was the denial that the atonement was a proof of God's love to the world—an error which was held by not a few in the Synod, and which he (Mr. Guthrie) was prepared to prove, time and place convenient, to be taught in a work to which members of Synod looked as a great authority in this church. Mr. Guthrie held that the object of faith was the atonement clearly seen by the sinner—the atonement as exhibiting the character of God to the sinner. It was no bare abstract proposition, but the truth apprehended in the simple message that brought peace to the soul. The sinner's peace was thus wholly derived from the atonement without him, and not from any graces within him; and up to the moment when the sinner believed, or rather when he had peace with God, his prayers were lifeless, his heart was cold. Up to this stage of the sinner's experience, Mr. Guthrie maintained there was no religion—there might be formality; but he denied the existence of any religion. So far from the sinner's sense of safety being derived from holiness, holiness sprung from a sense of safety in Christ, grounded on God's Word as to Christ's finished work. That work was finished for the whole world—it was God's message of love to every sinner; and woe to that man who withheld that truth. Mr. Guthrie, on this point, also quoted largely from his *New Views*. The last point related to human inability, on which Mr. Guthrie contended that he held by the principles of Calvinism, while many in the Synod held the precise doctrine of the Arminian Methodists, as expounded by Richard Watson, and refuted by Dr. Payne. After further pleadings, Mr. Guthrie concluded by leaving his case in the hands of the Synod, in the hope that their decision would be so guided or over-ruled as best to promote God's glory in the salvation of souls."

It was after the delivery of this address, as the newspaper report bears out, that Mr. Guthrie was under cross-examination for upwards of two hours, as he has already described, and the debate on his case continued till half-past one in the morning.

Doubtless our readers, like ourselves, have been surprised once more, in perusing this narrative, in observing how narrow was the issue on which Mr. Guthrie, like the Morisons and Mr. Rutherford, had been expelled from the church of his fathers. They held that Christ had died for all, but a seed was secured to him through the effectual application of his sacrifice by the Holy Spirit; and they were expelled because they did not hold that, while Christ died for all in a certain sense, he had secured a seed by dying for them in a special sense. It is plain, we again allege, that Dr. John Brown and his friends should never have fraternised with men like Wardlaw and James of Birmingham, if they wished to be consistent in their prohibition of intercourse with Morison and Guthrie, for these eminent men held the very views for which the youths were ejected.

But we have already said that the great mass of the ministers, although they must have been convinced that the extruded brethren had much truth on their side, had come to regard them as earnest disturbers of the peace, of whom they wished to be quit. Perhaps they could foresee also what really did take place—that, loving as they did the universalities of their system much more than the inconsistent shred of limitarianism which they still retained, the young reformers would soon advance to that more consistent Arminian creed which they subsequently espoused. Indeed, it must have been manifest to Mr. Guthrie's Synodical interrogators that he had almost got that length already; for, in a foot-note to the second edition of *New Views True Views* which he issued after his return to Kendal, he thus refers to some of the admissions which he had made when subjected to the running fire of their close cross-questioning:

“ Only one point more I must refer to, and then I have done. It was the subject matter of not a little interrogation in the Synod. It is the question whether God equally and infinitely desires the salvation of all. I avowed my belief that he did; admitting, of course, that more was done, and eternally purposed to be done, for one man or nation, than for another man or nation, and that thus far accordingly there was special kindness on the part of God, and special gratitude due for that grace which makes us to differ. But I at the same time maintained, that while God is free as a Sovereign to dispense his favours as he will, yet, as a God of infinite love, he is regulated in dispensing these favours by a regard to the highest good of his moral empire as a whole; and that, therefore, whatever be the reasons why God has done more for one man or nation than for another man or nation (and we do not enter into these: enough for us to know that

they are infinitely wise and benevolent), it cannot be because God has less love for one than for another—that is, less desire for their happiness, less aversion from their ruin. It cannot be; for ‘God is love,’ and therefore *infinite* in love. Hence, when a man perishes, it is not because God loves him with a love less than infinite; it is not because he has less desire for his happiness than for that of others; but because infinite love—love guided by wisdom and rectitude, otherwise it would not be infinite—love on the largest scale, that takes everything into account, and consults for the highest good of the universe as a whole—it is because *such* love cannot do more for his salvation than it has done.

“To Drs. Marshall and Ritchie, especially the latter, the above sentiments, if I may judge from their questions in the Synod, seemed peculiarly obnoxious. I would therefore ask them, and those who think with them, Does God love all his creatures? If he does, seeing he is infinite in all his perfections, can his love, or desire for their happiness, be less than infinite? If they admit that he has love to all, and that from the necessity of his nature that love must be infinite, and yet insist that there is some superior desire for the salvation of some, then I would respectfully hand over to Dr. M. his own question to answer—the question which he somewhat tauntingly put to me in the Synod as to ‘what name I would give a love that was more than infinite.’ If they deny that God is infinite in love towards all, and has an infinite desire for the happiness of all, and maintain, in accordance with this, that God has not done all that in the circumstances he might have done to save sinners—then, will they please to explain the words, ‘As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live?’ Will they explain the Saviour’s tears over Jerusalem, and the accompanying words, ‘I would: but ye would not’? If these words mean less than this, ‘*I would*, and therefore did what in the circumstances I *could*; but ye *would not*,’ pray, what do they mean, and how are we to interpret our blessed Saviour’s tears? Will they explain the text, ‘God will have *all men to be saved*, and to come to the knowledge of the truth’? or, should they cavil on the word *all*, will they explain another which leaves no room for cavil—‘God willeth not that *ANY* should perish’?

“The Committee say, that I refer salvation to ‘God’s mere general benevolence;’ I glory in the charge. My Bible tells me (John iii. 16) that it was love to the world, love to all—that very love which they toss aside as ‘mere general benevolence’—that gave me Christ as the propitiation for my sins. That love was not the less *for me* that it was a ‘*general* benevolence.’ Yea, it is because it is general, because it is *universal*, that I, as a vile hell-deserving rebel, can see that it is *for me*. Welcome then, thrice welcome, ‘*mere* general benevolence,’ as expressed in the sufferings and death of God’s own Son, ‘giving his flesh for the life of the world!’ If I cannot adventure my soul on thee, let me be ETERNALLY ACCURSED! The only stay of my soul, thou shalt henceforth be the grand theme of my preaching! I will tell any and every sinner, God loves thee, for God loves all; Christ died for thee, for ‘he died for all;’ and the Holy Spirit is now exerting all the influence that infinite wisdom and love can bestow, to bring the sinner to ‘believe and live.’ Oh when will men seriously contem-

plate a propitiated God? Not to know him is perdition; to 'know him' is 'eternal life.' (John xvii. 3.)"

Dr. Guthrie has been kind to inform us that it was about three months after the settlement of his case—namely, in August, 1843—that the consistent view of election which he has ever since held flashed upon his mind when studying these words;—"But ye are a chosen generation; a royal priesthood; an holy nation; a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9). He then saw that men were chosen in Christ, not out of him—that the Divine Spirit was drawing all men to God, and notably all gospel-hearers; that they who yielded to the drawing were God's chosen ones; and that thus it was the duty of every man to become one of the elect of God.

Dr. Guthrie mentions in the foregoing communication that he did not go straight home to Kendal, but tarried for a week in Scotland. We have now to inform our readers that when his harassing Synodical struggle was over, he proceeded to Kilmarnock, and enjoyed much hallowed intercourse with the pastor of Clerk's Lane congregation, who would welcome him doubtless with greater cordiality than ever as a fellow-exile, or rather as a fellow-freeman, whom the trial in Edinburgh as well as the truth of the Gospel had made free. Mr. Guthrie preached with much acceptance in his friend's pulpit on the succeeding Sabbath; and one of the discourses which he delivered on the occasion is remembered to this day. He took for his text the words of the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord" (Jer. xxii, 29). He seemed literally to revel in the liberty which he now enjoyed, to proclaim a world-wide Gospel, in his Heavenly Master's name, to all mankind. Mr. Morison entered the pulpit when the discourse was ended, and made a few observations, by way of following up the discourse, which were so striking that they also are still remembered. He said, "It is not, O heaven, heaven, heaven, hear the word of the Lord, for heaven has heard it already. Nor is it, O hell, hell, hell, hear the word of the Lord, for hell's opportunity is past. But the proclamation is addressed to the inhabitants of the earth, and they are three times urged with eager earnestness, because they stand between heaven and hell, and

shall dwell in either the one or the other, according as they receive or reject the call."

But Mr. Guthrie had gone to Kilmarnock to do yet more interesting work than to pay a friendly visit or occupy a brother's pulpit. He was to take part in the formation of the Evangelical Union during the following week. We must, however, reserve our account of these important proceedings to another and separate chapter.

## CHAPTER XV.

Formation of the Evangelical Union—The Original Statement of Principles—Its Liberality as to the Work of the Spirit—Names of the Founders—Public Meeting in Kilmarnock—Ordination of Rev. David Drummond at Kilmarnock—First Session of Theological Academy at Kilmarnock—Brief Notices of Professor Hunter and the other first Students—Alexander Forsyth—Mr. Morison, Sole Professor.

WE have now come to a very interesting point in our denominational history. Hitherto we have been occupied with the origin of the Evangelical Union. We must now speak of its formation.

It had been clearly foreseen that both Mr. Rutherford of Falkirk, and Mr. Guthrie of Kendal, would be ejected by the Synod of 1843; and arrangements had been made for the formal organisation of a new religious connection, which would have for its basis the Scriptural principles for which the four ministers had contended, the particulars of whose successive depositions from the ministry we have, in the foregoing chapters, detailed in their order. The numbers of the little band were now complete. No other appeals remained to be taken up. The Synod had cast forth all the recalcitrant members. Only a quaternion came forth at that time from that Egypt.

Let not the founders of the Evangelical Union be thought divisive and schismatic in their adoption of this measure. It was forced upon them. No other resort was left. They wished to remain in the church of their fathers, preaching the truth as God had revealed it to them; but that privilege was denied them. And, now, what can they do but draw closely together to one another, and form a new association of their own?—few, but fervent; lonely, but loving; frowned on by

man, but smiled on by God; poor, but destined to make many rich.

It was on Tuesday, the 16th of May, 1843, that these ejected brethren met together in Kilmarnock. The worthy pastor of the Bathgate church, Mr. Morison, sen., brought two of his elders as delegates to the conference; while Mr. Rutherford brought one of his from Falkirk. Mr. Guthrie, owing to the great distance from his Westmoreland fold, had no representative from his congregation present,—so that all the other members of this first, or rather this embryo Conference, consisted of a selection from the elders of the Clerk's Lane church, with representatives from one or two little branch churches which had been already formed from the parent stem in neighbouring towns in Ayrshire.

The vestry in which the brethren met was on the ground floor, and communicated with Mr. Morison's manse. It would not contain more than thirty people when crowded. Mr. Andrew Stewart, and Mr. Nichol Cameron, respected laymen in the town of Kilmarnock, yet survive of those who were present as deeply interested sympathisers and friends.

The little company sat round the room, Mr. Guthrie occupying a seat near the window, and officiating as secretary. It is from the minutes which were signed by him that we know what was done on this interesting occasion. Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate occupied the chair, as being the senior minister present; and the meeting having been constituted by devotional exercises, Mr. James Morison produced and read the draft of a doctrinal basis or statement of principles, which he had prepared in prospect of the meeting. As this summary has been superseded by a longer and more elaborate instrument, it may interest many of our readers who have never seen it before if we should insert it here:—

“We, the undersigned Christian Brethren, representatives of Christian Churches, and others, having met together at Kilmarnock, May 16th, 17th, and 18th, 1843, for the purpose of praying and conferring together about the best means of being useful in the service of our dear Redeemer, have agreed to form ourselves into an association under the designation of the ‘EVANGELICAL UNION.’

“The objects of our Union are mutual countenance, counsel, and co-operation in supporting and spreading the glorious, simple, soul-saving and heart-sanctifying ‘Gospel of the grace of God.’

“The nature of our Union is strictly voluntary.

“The members of our Union comprise all brethren who choose to be associated with us, who have ‘peace with God,’ and give decided evidence of being ‘new creatures in Christ Jesus,’ and who can concur

with us in the following great principles, which great principles constitute the basis of our Union.

“[N. B.—We wish it to be distinctly understood that the following statement of great principles is not to any degree, or in any sense to be regarded as a permanent or present STANDARD BOOK in the churches with which we are connected; neither is it to be a test or term of communion in any of these churches. The BIBLE is the only standard book which we recognise, and to no other standard book whatsoever can we subscribe.]

“We hold that the Bible is the Book of God, and that, amongst other important truths, it reveals to us,

“1st, God’s character as our Sovereign Governor.

“2nd, Our duty as the subjects of his government.

“3rd, Our state and character as rebels against the authority of his government. And,

“4th, The way of salvation by which we and all our fellow-rebels may be delivered from the penal and demoralising consequences of our rebellion.

“I. God’s character is made known to us in that definition of God—‘God is love’ (1 John iv. 8-16). Love or benevolence then is the moral character of God; and as God is necessarily an infinite being—infinite in all his perfections, his character is accurately expressed in these words, ‘Infinite Benevolence.’ Since this is the moral character of God, it follows that all God’s moral attributes are but particular manifestations of infinite benevolence. His grace or favour is his benevolence toward the undeserving. His mercy is his benevolence toward the hell-deserving. His anger is his benevolence wounded. His justice is his benevolence toward his whole empire, displaying itself in the securing of the interests of the great whole, at the expense of the interests of those parties who have made themselves pests in the universe. His wisdom, too, is just his infinite benevolence directing his infinite power, and directed by his infinite knowledge. His holiness, also, is summed up, like ours, in one word, LOVE; and, consequently, when it is said, ‘God is light’ (1 John i. 5), or ‘God is purity,’ or ‘God is holiness,’ there is but a different sound for the same sense that is brought out in the proposition, ‘God is love.’

“II. Our duty as the subjects of God’s government is summed up in that word, ‘love’ (Rom. xiii. 8-10; Gal. v. 14). It consists of that benevolence, which assimilates our character to the character of God, and which is enjoined upon us in the ten commandments (Exod. xx. 1-17), or more summarily still in those two commandments of the Saviour, on which ‘hang all the law and the prophets,’—supreme love to God, and love to every one of our neighbours, enemies, and others, such as we bear to ourselves (Matt. xxii. 37-40). Obedience to this moral law constitutes our holiness (1 John iii, 14), and if that obedience were perfect, it would be a complete fulfilment of our duty. To such complete holiness it is our anxious wish, and it shall be our constant endeavour, to attain; desiring, as we do, to seek supremely the promotion of God’s interests and glory, and, subordinately, the interests of the souls and of the bodies of all our fellow-men.

“III. As to our state and character as rebels against the authority of God, we and all our fellow-men are totally guilty, and totally depraved. We are so guilty as to be hell-deserving (Eph. ii. 3). We

are so depraved as to be hopelessly so, until brought under the influence of 'the truth as it is in Jesus' (Rom. iii. 9-20).

"IV. As to the way of salvation by which we and all our fellow-rebels may be delivered from the penal and demoralising consequences of our rebellion, we learn from the Book of God that it originated in God's infinite benevolence. 'God so loved the world,' of course *the whole world*, 'that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John iii. 16). God, then, because of his infinite benevolence toward the whole world; and no doubt also for the purpose of benefiting the whole universe (Eph. iii. 10), by displaying the exceeding evil of sin, the immovable stability of his government, and 'the breadth and length, and depth and height of his love,' sent his Son Jesus into our world 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' 'to condemn sin'—all sin—'in the flesh' (Rom. viii. 3), and to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world,' without distinction and without exception (1 John ii. 2). This propitiation being effected by 'God manifested in our flesh,' has shown God's infinite detestation of sin, as being in its nature ruinous to the well-being of the universe; his determination to put a stop to it, in order that the holy happiness and happy holiness of the universe may be secured; his infinite compassion for our race; and his infinite desire for our complete recovery from the effects of our transgressions. It has, moreover, so completely exhibited God's mind in reference to the desert of sin and the necessity of holiness, that it has more than counterbalanced the evil which our race, by its rebellion, must have inflicted on the great moral empire of God. This being the case, and the propitiation being made for every sin of every sinner in the world (1 Tim. ii. 1-6; John i. 9-29), God is now ready to pardon every sinner, who, by believing his record regarding this propitiation, is brought into a state in which his happy holiness and his holy happiness are secured (Acts xvi. 31; Rom. i. 16).

"This simple belief of God's record regarding the propitiation, in the true sense of that record, immediately and in every case produces 'peace with God' (*i.e.*, peace in the prospect of meeting God), which peace is invariably followed by 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God' (Rom. v. 1, 2). This 'peace with God' arises from the nature of the truth recorded by God and believed by the sinner, and is prior to any reflection upon the act of the mind in believing, or upon the morally transforming effects of the truths believed. The same truth, however, that thus immediately produces 'peace with God' is of such a nature that it necessarily produces a revolution in the heart of the believer—a change from the love of sin to the love of holiness—a 'a new creation after the image of God,' a transformation into that love to God and that love to man which is our duty, and constitutes our holiness (John xvii. 17; Gal. v. 6). It is because the truth believed necessarily has this effect, that God has at once made the belief of it essential to our pardon (for pardon without *purity secured* would be no blessing), and has also made the simple belief of it the *only* thing on our part essential to the *immediate* enjoyment of pardon.

"In order that all sinners may derive peace and purity from the knowledge of this propitiation, the Holy Spirit, a third divine subsistence in the Godhead, has in infinite love and condescension, given a record of it, and of other truths reflecting light upon it, in that Book

called the Bible, and which we thus hold to be the Book of God. Through means of this book; and through means of institutions which he has appointed in it; and through means of the holy men who, by this book, have been led to throw their influence in the world into the scale of the religion of Jesus; and also, through means of innumerable diversified circumstances in creation and providence—all tending to lead the sinner to the knowledge of *God propitiated*—the Holy Spirit is using all the influence that our circumstances will admit of to bring sinners to believe, and to bring all believers into closer contact with that truth, or rather system of truths, that sanctifies as well as saves.\* In using this influence he is no 'respector of persons;' and, although circumstances permit much more to be done for one nation than for another, and for one man than for another, yet he equally desires the salvation and sanctification of all (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Isa. v. 4; Acts vii. 51), and does for each all that in the circumstances he can. Were he doing less good than in the circumstances he could, he would not be infinitely benevolent; and to suppose this would be to contradict the great definition of Godhead, 'God is love.'

"It is manifest from all that has been said, that it is entirely in consequence of the Holy Spirit's influences that any sinners do believe, and that all believers do grow into conformity to the image of Jesus. Faith is 'the gift of God,' in every instance (Eph. ii. 8). It is 'by grace'—pure, free, infinite grace—that 'believers are what they are' (1 Cor. xv. 10). It is that grace that makes them to differ (1 Cor. iv. 7; and thus unto God alone we attribute the whole glory of every sinner's conversion, and every believer's sanctification.

"As it is obvious, moreover, that whatever God does in time he from eternity purposed to do, it is manifest that the glorious results of the entire influence employed by the Spirit were present to the mind of God from all eternity."

This document is most interesting and important, since it shows both the philosophy and the theology of the men who subscribed it thirty years ago. Our readers will all observe that, for the first time, a distinct and consistent deliverance is here given forth on the universality of the influences of the Holy Spirit. When the controversy commenced, Mr. Morison and his brethren, as we have repeatedly observed in the course of these historical notices, avowed themselves moderate Calvinists—that is, while they maintained that the sacrifice of Calvary had been offered up for all men, they conceived that every case of conversion was brought

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\* The influence which the Holy Spirit employs, both with believers and unbelievers, we conceive to be entirely moral in its nature. It appears to us as incongruous that moral agents should be morally affected by physical, mechanical, or abstractly direct influence, as that mere material substances should be physically affected by moral power—that is, the power of motives. We hold that the Spirit draws only by truth (John vi. 44, 45), and that he is doing all that the circumstances will admit of to draw all men (John xii. 32).

about by a conferment of irresistible or invincible grace, bestowed on the individual thus changed and withheld from the unconverted. Now, however, we see that they have advanced to the much more consistent and defensible position of universal and resistible grace—one, too, which is harmonious with the entire spirit and aim of their three years' struggle with the church courts of the land.

We need not quote the succeeding pages of the Statement in which the brethren gave forth their views of Church government. Suffice it to say, that they advocated purity of communion, the appointment in each community of elders and deacons, and the "breaking of bread" as "frequently as possible." We give the closing paragraph, with the signatures attached—

"Being united together by the bond of the great leading doctrines of the Christian revelation regarding the character of God; the duty, natural state, and character of man; and the way of salvation; as already explained; and being also entirely of one mind as to the minor and subordinate principles, regarding the organisation of churches, just referred to; we deem it important to constitute ourselves into a Union for the purpose of countenancing, counselling, and otherwise aiding one another; and also, for the purpose of training up spiritual and devoted young men to carry on and to carry forward the work and 'pleasure of the Lord.' We hail as 'true yoke-fellows' all of every name and denomination who wish that work and pleasure to prosper, and who have 'peace with God,' and evidence their possession of this peace by the purity and spirituality of their lives. That they and we may enjoy for ever, and in all our ways, the counsel and the smile of our heavenly 'Abba Father,' is the heart's desire, and shall be the continual prayer of the following 'UNIONISTS:'

"(Signed)

- "ROBERT MORISON, Presiding Pastor of the Church in Bathgate.
- "ALEX. C. RUTHERFORD, Presiding Pastor of the Church in Falkirk.
- "JOHN GUTHRIE, Presiding Pastor of the Church in Kendal.
- "JAMES MORISON, Presiding Pastor of the Church in Kilmarnock.
- "ALEX. FORSYTH, Evangelist.
- "WILLIAM WALKER, Delegate from Falkirk.
- "ROBERT HUNTER, Delegate from Bathgate.
- "ANDREW MUNGAL, Delegate from Bathgate.
- "HUGH PEDEN, Delegate from Galston.
- "WILLIAM PATON, Delegate from Galston.
- "JAMES RICHMOND, Delegate from Darvel.
- "THOMAS ADAM, Elder, Kilmarnock.
- "JOHN PEDEN, Elder, Kilmarnock, &c., &c., &c."

The brethren had been employed in the prayerful study of this first statement of principles, sentence by sentence

and clause by clause, during the whole of their diets on Tuesday and Wednesday; and it was only on Thursday forenoon that the work of conference was ended. In the afternoon they partook of the Lord's Supper in Clerk's Lane Chapel, along with a great company of Christian people belonging to Kilmarnock and its neighbourhood. The Lord himself seemed to be in their midst, and to breathe over them his "Peace be unto you!" In the evening the chapel was filled to overflowing. Rev. James Morison occupied the chair, and addresses befitting the occasion were delivered by Mr. Morison, sen., Mr. Guthrie, and Mr. Rutherford of Falkirk. The people in the town, as an intelligent correspondent informs us, forget all that the other speakers said, but have a very distinct recollection of the address given by Rev. A. C. Rutherford. His subject was the extent of the Atonement, and he introduced with immense power into his speech the pathetic lamentation of Mary in the garden of the Arimathean—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." He argued that, according to the limited system, he could not find his Saviour. His Saviour had been taken away. He had been robbed of his Lord. But, on the principle of a universal atonement, that Saviour drew near to him, named him by his name, and drew forth the adoring response, "Rabboni, which is to say, Master."

It deserves to be noticed that in adopting the name "Evangelical Union," the founders of our little denomination did not act under the influence of an arrogant or self-important spirit. They did not mean to say that they alone were "evangelical," as that word is conventionally understood, and that all others were anti-evangelical. The Greek scholar knows that the word *evangel* means *the Gospel*; and all that was intended was this, that the union formed was a *Gospel union*, as distinguished from other important associations, the bond of whose fellowship might be some tenet of ecclesiastical polity or some ordinantial distinction. The fact was that the brethren did not like the name "Morisonian," which their enemies had fastened on them as a nick-name, and therefore they sought out a prominent and characteristic substitute. We remember distinctly hearing the late Mr. Morison of Bathgate say in private that not only was this the case, but, fearing lest the name "Evangelical Unionists" might be too long and inconvenient for

ordinary usage, they introduced the appellative "Unionist" into the closing sentence of their Declaration; and in the crowded public meeting in Kilmarnock with which this conference closed, again and again they, of design, called themselves "Unionists," hoping that they might be able to float that euphonious, but, it must be confessed, too little distinctive name into general acceptance.

Such were the Origin and Formation of the Evangelical Union of Scotland. We may call this lower room of Kilmarnock ("upper" would be incorrect) the cradle in which the ecclesiastic child was first rocked, or the tiny fountain-head whence issued the goodly stream in whose refreshing waters many weary souls do now rejoice. And as travellers go to see the house in which a great man like Burns was born, or the spring in the hill-side where a river like the Clyde takes its rise, so the plain and unadorned session-house in Kirmarnock is worthy both of a historian's description, and of a devotee's reverent visitation.

But although we have now described the *bona fide* formation of the Evangelical Union, our narrative is not yet complete even of those initial contendings which laid the foundation of the religious body known as the Evangelical Union. Any physical geographer, professing to give a full account of the Mississippi's course, would need to include the Missouri in his description; because, while the latter stream is content to let its name be lost in that of the other, which may either be called its rival or its sister, it really contributes fully one-half of the volume of water to the united flood. In like manner, just about a year after the formation of the Evangelical Union, events transpired among the Scottish Independents which resulted in about as large a tide of influence being poured into the infant river of the Union as it had originally consisted of. It will be our duty now to narrate these incidents in detail, but in that kindly spirit which those amicable relations should engender which have recently sprung up between us and some of the respected gentlemen who took part in these proceedings.

Before advancing, however, to these events of 1844, it will be necessary to say a little about two interesting circumstances which transpired as the summer of 1843 advanced—namely, the first ordination of a minister in connection with the Evangelical Union, and the first session of the Kilmarnock Theological Academy.

We have already seen that as many as fifty people would travel, either by waggon or on foot, on a Sabbath day, from the comparatively populous town of Galston, to hear Rev. James Morison preach in Kilmarnock. As months rolled on, the distance of five miles was felt to be burdensome; and seeing that several scores of the people sympathised with the new doctrines in the town, it was ultimately agreed to form a separate church there. The edifice in which the little society assembled at first was a very humble one, and much surpassed by the respectable chapel in which they now worship—being, in fact, only two weavers' shops converted into one. The Lord, however, who blessed the company in Pentecost's upper room, blessed the little band, and what was more, sent them a teacher after his own heart.

It might have been thought almost impossible to provide such a boon as a minister of the Gospel for a church among a people who had just been disowned by one of the large denominations of the land; but the Lord does not always cast off when his people do. It so happened that the Rev. David Drummond was officiating as the minister of the Wesleyan Association Church, meeting in Croft Hall, Kilmarnock, about the time when matters came to a crisis with Mr. Morison in that town. Mr. Drummond had been brought to the knowledge of the truth in his native place, the town of Leith, by the perusal of James Hervey's work, entitled "Theron and Aspasia." He had been led to join this branch of the Wesleyan body through two brothers who were useful and acceptable labourers in its fellowship. When Mr. Drummond went to Kilmarnock to preach his trial sermon in the town, he carried with him a letter of introduction to Mr. Morison from a gentleman in Leith, who had read his works and sympathised with his doctrines. The interview was the beginning of a friendship which, till Mr. Drummond's lamented death, remained unbroken. If Mr. Drummond could not get to hear Mr. Morison on the Sabbath day, he was sure to be present at his lecture on the Monday night. He has often described to us how he used to stand wedged in at the top of the gallery stair among the crowd that was wont to press, like the multitude at Gennesaret, to hear the Word of God.

Well, one Communion Sabbath, when many people were standing outside of Clerk's Lane Chapel unable to gain admission, Mr. Morison announced from the pulpit that

Rev. Mr. Drummond preached the very doctrines that he preached in the Wesleyan Association Church in Croft Hall, and that those who were standing without would hear a good sermon if they would cross over to that meeting-place. Several availed themselves of the opportunity, and were much pleased with what they heard. The attention of the Galston people was thus directed towards Mr. Drummond; he was called to be their minister; and, seeing it to be his duty to accept the invitation, his ordination thus became an interesting event in the early history of the Evangelical Union, in the summer of 1843.

The day appointed happened fortunately to be a beautiful summer day; for the little place of meeting could not hold the great multitude which assembled from all parts of the surrounding country. Mr. Drummond may be said to have deserved the name of a *field preacher* in a somewhat unusual sense; for his ordination took place in a field at the top of Orchard Street, Galston, where a platform had been erected for the occasion. The Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate presided; and, besides the other ministers of the Evangelical Union, Rev. Mr. Young of the Secession Church, Catrine, and Rev. Mr. Weir of the Independent Church, Kilmarnock, were present to show their sympathy with the proceedings. We are happy to say that the Galston Church still flourishes under the masculine ministry of the Rev. R. T. Gray; but Mr. Drummond was suddenly called to his rest and reward towards the close of the year 1874. He did good service both by lip and pen to our cause; and the readers of our various publications have often been edified and delighted by his articles, distinguished by the signature "D. D."—letters which may either stand for the initials of his name, or for the cabalistic capitals of a theological diploma, which many have worn who were not so fully entitled to wear it as he.

In the month of August, 1843, the first session of the Evangelical Union Theological Academy was opened—Rev. James Morison acting as sole professor. In deciding to hold a short session for divinity students, of eight weeks, in the season of autumn, Mr. Morison copied the practice of the Secession Church in which he had been reared. The plan had been found convenient in more ways than one. The young men who studied divinity for two months in autumn could also attend the Arts' classes at the University during the winter—thus materially shortening the period of study

without lessening materially the advantages of the student. Teachers of schools, also, could attend the theological lectures, while their classes were enjoying the annual vacation.

Mr. Morison had only four public students during this, his first session. It was with him, comparatively speaking, the day of small things ; but this he did not despise, being assured that the Lord would cause the tiny streamlet to swell into a river. The names of this interesting quaternion were Robert Hunter, Alexander M. Wilson, Henry Melville, and James M'Millan. Our readers will recognise in the first of the four the much loved pastor of the church in Leith, who is also at the same time now the useful and accomplished Professor of Hebrew to the Evangelical Union. Mr. Hunter had enjoyed a very thorough course of training at Watson's Hospital, Edinburgh, extending over a period of seven years and a half. He had there acquired quite a scholarly knowledge of Latin and Greek ; but he had no expectation, till he was made the subject of a remarkable spiritual change, of pursuing any other vocation than the certainly honourable, if onerous, one of a teacher of youth. He was engaged in the instruction of a prosperous school in the parish of Slamannan, near Bathgate, when he was enlightened from on high. First of all, he showed his strict conscientiousness by becoming a total abstainer, without having heard any lecture or read any book on the subject, but simply as the result of seeing the piteous figure which an aged schoolmaster cut when he had made himself, through intemperance, the sport of children. But, while considering himself a Christian, he was nevertheless bitterly opposed to what was called "Morisonianism" in his neighbourhood. So much was this the case that he went to remonstrate with a man of whom he heard that he had imbibed the doctrines. Although the plain man was no match for "the master" in argument, he had happened to say when defending himself that "he did not love God before, but he loved him now." This statement started the question in Mr. Hunter's mind on his way home, "Do I love God?" "Could I say that I love God?" So great did his distress become on discovering that he did not possess that all-important experience (1 Cor. xvi. 22) that he went the very next night to hear the preachers whom he had been warning others against. There, under an address by the late Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate, on 1 John v. 11, he saw that "the gift of eternal life"

had been made over to mankind-sinners as such, and that he "made God a liar" if he did not believe it. When the meeting was over he flew home to consult his Greek Testament, to see if the preacher's representations were confirmed by the original text. He rejoiced that night in the truth, as they do who have found great spoil, and straightway began to desire to spend and be spent for the Saviour whom he had found.

We have already had occasion to narrate the way by which Mr. Wilson's mind was enlightened during conversation with Mr. Morison in Kilmarnock. Like his fellow-students, Mr. W. preached every Sabbath day while this first session of the Academy lasted, his labours being specially prized in the town of Ayr. Indeed he may be said to have founded the Evangelical Union Church in that town. He also employed the press in these early days as a means of doing good more largely than any of his brethren. His tracts on "The Opening of Lydia's Heart," and "The Elect—who are they?" would, we are certain, be much appreciated should they be re-published now, after the lapse of thirty years.

Mr. Henry Melville was a very effective speaker, and also published a powerful tract entitled, "For what are you waiting?" He removed to Canada several years ago, and is now, we are glad to say, labouring usefully among our brethren of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, as we have already had occasion to notice, in Union Town, Western Pennsylvania. Mr. James M'Millan died in the year 1849, and was thus the first of our preachers who was called to his rest and reward.

Besides these four public students, several earnest and intelligent laymen made such arrangements that they were able to attend business and also be present at Mr. Morison's prelections and examinations. These gentlemen rendered important service to the cause by supplying pulpits in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock during the infancy of the Union. We take pleasure in mentioning, as belonging to this list in these early days, Thos. Brown, Esq., now on the staff of the *Birmingham Morning News*, and James M'Whirter, Esq., now in business in Manchester. Rev. Mr. Drummond also attended as a private student. So did Mr. Alexander Forsyth, who, it would be observed, signed the first "Statement of Principles" as an "Evangelist." This gentleman had been a theological student in the Divinity Hall of the Secession Church, but had been called in question by the Stran-

raer Presbytery on account of his sympathy with Mr. Morison. He published an account of the proceedings in a pamphlet entitled "Secession Oppression: By the Sufferer." Mr. Forsyth was engaged by the large congregation in Clerk's Lane as missionary or evangelist. He sometimes preached for Mr. Morison when the latter required aid. He had a singularly clear mode of stating the Gospel; and also published a tract, entitled "The Ransom Found," which was made instrumental in bringing light to many dark minds. Mr. Forsyth was likewise the means of largely reinforcing the E. U. Church at Catrine, through a series of very successful revival meetings which he held in that village. Falling into delicate health, however, he retired into private life, and doubtless has continued to serve and glorify his God as a Christian merchant.

Such was the first band of students that sat at Dr. Morison's feet in the autumn of 1843. It must have been no easy task for him to teach them every day of the week, and his large congregation on the Lord's day too; for he took no help in these early days. But his constitution was vigorous and elastic, and his Heavenly Father "supplied all his need." His students, too, must have sometimes tried his temper; for some of them were but raw hands at Greek and Hebrew. *Tupto*, I strike, presented such difficulties that they thought of *striking* for relief; and the verb with its suffix, *ketalani* (he killed me), very nearly represented the truth of the case. But at length the session came to a close, and the year wore to its end, amid earnest pastoral and evangelistic work on the part of both teacher and taught.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Progress of Congregationalism in Scotland—The Rev. John Kirk—His youth at Bannockburn—Joins the Congregationalists—Preaches at Alexandria—Is ordained at Hamilton—Indebted to James Morison for Clearer Views as to the Ground of a Sinner's Peace with God—Is the First to take Advanced Ground as to the Extent of the Holy Spirit's Work—Publishes the "Way of Life"—Specimen Extracts—His Views objected to—Defence of them—Light out of Darkness—Action taken by the Congregationalists.

HAVING now fully, and as some may think too minutely, detailed the origin of the Evangelical Union on the Presby-

terian side of the house, we must now address ourselves to the task of tracing the rise and progress in the Independent or Congregational churches of Scotland of sentiments and sympathies favourable to the Evangelical Union, and which eventually sent over to her little army a considerable contingent of ministers, students, and congregations.

It is well known that Independency in Scotland is of much later growth than Independency in England. The latter began to assert itself as a power in the time of Cromwell, and, owing to the political troubles of the time, assumed a somewhat national shape, and has always carried with it the sympathies of a large body of the people. In Scotland, however, the Congregational form of church government acquired a footing only towards the close of last century, and arose in the land mainly as a protest against the alleged corruption of the Church of Scotland. Its first preachers and propagators, Rev. Greville Ewing and the Messrs. Haldane (two pious laymen whose hearts God had touched), gained for themselves the name of "missionaries," for they perambulated the country, as we have already remarked, crying mightily to men everywhere "Ye must be born again." This cry was at once the burden of their teaching and the grand distinctive standard which they raised in Scotland. They did not find fault with the theology of the *Confession of Faith*. On the other hand, they accepted it as Scriptural. Their mission was more religious and experimental than theological and controversial. They found fault with prevailing laxity of communion rather than with prevailing errors in doctrine. We repeat it, they simply sought to awaken the country with the call of Whitefield and Rowland Hill, "Ye must be born again," without disturbing its theology; and they founded churches from the Orkneys to the Tweed, having this as their distinguishing characteristic, that all their members professed to have experienced a spiritual change, and to have passed from death to life.

Still, it could not but be expected that this earnest expostulation with men would produce, at least in many minds, a sympathy with world-wide theology, and send those who burned with love to all the souls around them beyond the fatalistic fetters of Genevan formularies. Especially did this become apparent in the doctrines ultimately held and taught by the eminent Dr. Wardlaw, who became one of the tutors or professors of the Congregational Theological

Academy in the third decade of the present century. He went the length of preaching and publishing that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world. Even when Rev. John M'Leod Campbell was expelled from the Church of Scotland for maintaining Universal Atonement in 1831, Dr. Wardlaw boldly published his "Essays on Assurance and Pardon," in which, although properly disapproving of Mr. Campbell's expression, that "all men were already pardoned through the death of Christ," he virtually accepted his main position that Jesus died for all, and that all who believed had assurance of salvation, although he associated the latter blessing with the witness of the Spirit in the soul, and the good works that accompany faith. In fact, Dr. Wardlaw, as we have already stated, was a moderate Calvinist, just what James Morison was when he was cited to the bar of the Associate Synod; only he was what would be called much more *respectable* in his maintenance of his views, and did not approve of what many deemed the extravagant revivalism of the Kilmarnock Presbyter. Several of the Congregational ministers of the older school, especially in the north of Scotland, held, that Christ died only for the elect; but we think we are safe in saying that the majority of the ministers in the Lowlands maintained Dr. Wardlaw's view, at the time of Mr. Morison's trial, that Jesus had literally tasted death for every man.

But we must now turn the attention of our readers to the career of one who rose in the bosom of the Independent Church, and who was honoured to call the attention of his fellow-countrymen to the world-wide work of the Spirit, if not as learnedly, yet as fervently, as James Morison had called their attention to the world-wide work of the Son of God. We refer to the Rev. John Kirk, afterwards Professor of Pastoral Theology to the Evangelical Union.

Mr. Kirk was born near the village of Bannockburn, in Stirlingshire, and possibly may have unconsciously acquired a little of that heroic daring which the associations of the place would be likely to implant and foster in a susceptible mind. When he was a young man of nineteen years of age he had been made serious by the death of a friend; and at that very time a movement was set on foot by some earnest people to get a dissenting chapel built in the village of Bannockburn, the parish church of St. Ninians being at some distance. It was at the debates which were held in the village, as to whether the new chapel should be in the Presbyterian

or Independent interest, that Mr. Kirk first heard about such a body of people as Independents or Congregationalists, as well as of the Scriptural arguments which they adduced in behalf of their peculiar opinions. The result of these deliberations was that, although the majority of the villagers decided that the new church should be a Presbyterian one, Mr. Kirk became acquainted with some pious Congregationalists, and began to accompany them on the Sabbath day to the church of the Rev. Mr. Marshall, Congregational minister in Stirling. Eventually he joined the church, and found its minister to be a true friend. Mr. Kirk's first desire was to become a missionary, and specially in the island of Jamaica, as to which some interest had been excited at the time in connection with the emancipation of the negroes. Mr. Marshall, however, had his eye upon him for home service, and dissuaded him from his West Indian scheme.

Having been reared in honest but humble life, Mr. Kirk's educational advantages had not been great. But here a distinguished family struck in with Catholic and unsectarian kindness. We refer to the Robertsons of Plean, who were Mr. Kirk's near neighbours. Although they were Presbyterians, and had voted with the majority as to the denomination of the Bannockburn meeting-house, they did not think the less of their young opponent that he voted with the minority, and walked to Stirling to the Congregational church. Indeed, their sympathies at the time were almost as much with the Congregationalists as with the Presbyterians. The parents were eminent Christians, and three of the sons were studying to be ministers in the Secession Church. It is somewhat remarkable that we found that the Rev. James Robertson of Newington, Edinburgh, was James Morison's fast friend; and now, going back a few years and taking up the case of John Kirk, we find that this very James Robertson gave the Bannockburn student gratuitous lessons in the evening, when at home from College. He was not alone, however, in these labours of love; for his other two brothers shared in them—the Rev. George Robertson of Busby, who met with an early death, and the now highly distinguished Rev. Dr. Robertson of Irvine. Indeed, the latter did more than any other single individual in the matter of Mr. Kirk's tuition; and it was mainly through his aid that our friend was able to enter the Senior Latin class in Glasgow University, without needing to begin with the Junior.

It could not be expected that Mr. Kirk would shine at the University as a prize-taker in the language classes when we remember that his early advantages had been meagre, and also that his theological course was coincident with his Arts curriculum—including the work of preaching as well as studying. Yet his mental power came out in the philosophical classes to his own surprise more than that of his friends. Professor Buchanan of the Logic chair was always in the habit of prescribing the subject of a prize essay to be written during the Christmas holidays. In Mr. Kirk's year the topic given out was "On the Faculty of Imagination." This honour the Bannockburn student carried away from the whole class.

Mr. Kirk was eminently serious when he commenced the study of theology under Mr. Ewing and Dr. Wardlaw; but that seriousness deepened into a more thorough devotion during the second year of his academical curriculum. Nor was he singular in that increase of consecration to the work; for the majority of his fellow-students shared in it. Again it was a sudden death that had thrilled them all; and at a Christmas meeting, in the house of one of their number, the question was put, "Could nothing be done by us as students to bring more of the outlying masses to the Saviour?" The idea that seemed most feasible to them that night was, that they should go out to the villages round Glasgow, when their first holiday came, two by two, like the Lord's first evangelists. When the holiday arrived, however, the zeal of the rest had somewhat broken down; but six remained true to their resolution, and these all concentrated their efforts on one village, in which there seemed to be a providential opening, and to which indeed they had been specially invited. This was the village of Alexandria, in Dumbartonshire. And to show the spirit in which they went to their work, it may be mentioned that one of the six, as they walked from Dumbarton three miles up the Vale of Leven, thinking that they should not indulge in secular conversation, retired to the other side of the road, praying for a blessing all the way.

A remarkable blessing was poured out; and it is worthy of being borne in mind that this awakening in Dumbartonshire preceded that at Kilsyth, and was quite independent of it. The Lord seemed to be touching divers hearts at the same time, and to be making them pant after usefulness. These young men had heard, however, of the protracted

meetings in America, and they kept preaching every night till the Sunday came round. On Sunday night they thought they might be bold enough to ask anxious enquirers to remain, and when sixteen individuals did remain, they did not know what to say to them! Their first thought was to try to make their escape from the scene, but the Lord gave them courage, and gave them souls for their hire too; and with experience greater wisdom came.

It is not too much to say that Mr. Kirk, both at the beginning of the Alexandria meetings, and at the subsequent services which led to the formation of a church there, took the lead, and was the corypheus among the young revivalists. However, he did not settle at Alexandria, although many wished him to do so, but accepted a call to the Congregational Church in Hamilton, where he was settled in December, 1839.

The same zeal characterised his ministrations at Hamilton as had made them memorable in the Vale of Leven. The little chapel filled, and many inquirers sought the way to Zion. Still, Professor Kirk has not complete satisfaction in reviewing this the earlier portion of his ministerial career. He was groping after a full knowledge of the truth, both for himself as a sinner that he might know what to believe, and for himself as a minister that he might know what to preach. He entered the Theological Academy as a decided Limitarian; and, at the time of his ordination in Hamilton, a Limitarian he still remained. But his own mind was both confused and agitated. He often felt that there was a terrible contradiction between his creed and his preaching. When he besought men to be reconciled to God, the perplexing question would rise up before him, "But does God really wish them to be reconciled, and are they really able to come where they are and as they are?" He tried to get out of the difficulty by maintaining this position in debates, more or less formal, with his fellow-students—that whenever God's people were earnest for a blessing, and prepared for it, a blessing—that is, a special blessing—would come. He got some, yet not complete or permanent, relief from this consideration; for it seemed almost to make the salvability of sinners depend entirely upon the holiness and unitedness of the Church of God.

His first true enlightenment of mind came from Mr. Morison's trial before the Presbytery of Kilmarnock and Synod

of the Secession Church, or rather from the view of the Atonement which Mr. Morison advocated in his books, speeches, and private conversations. It may seem strange to our readers that this should be the case, since Dr. Wardlaw, at whose feet Mr. Kirk had sat, held the very view of the Atonement which Mr. Morison advocated at the bar of the Synod. But Mr. Kirk informs us (in the private interview with which he has favoured us, that we might be enabled to write this chapter of our history) that in as far as he was concerned, at any rate, the influence produced upon his mind by the teaching of the two divines was very diverse. Dr. Wardlaw never taught that because Jesus died on the cross any sinner, seeing the completeness of that propitiation, might have immediate peace in his mind and peace with God. All that he taught was this, that because Jesus died, governmental difficulties were removed, and the Spirit so poured out that a gracious work might be wrought in the heart of him to whom the Spirit came. Thus Mr. Kirk had been sent into his own evidences for peace to his mind, instead of being sent out to Jesus as an all-perfect sacrifice. It was like a new revelation to him when he learned from Mr. Morison that the Father was so well pleased with Calvary's sacrifice that he, a poor trembling sinner, believing that fact, might immediately rejoice. He saw that his preaching in the Vale of Leven, as well as in Hamilton, had been aimless and unsuccessful, comparatively speaking, because he had sent sinners in upon their own hearts, and had not sent them out to the heart and the Lamb of God, as the bitten Israelites had been commanded to look out to the brazen serpent.

Let us pause here for a moment, and ask if the Bible really bears out this position which Mr. Kirk is disposed to take, in reviewing his experience? He speaks with the highest admiration of the Congregationalists of that day with whom he was accustomed to associate. They were "the excellent of the earth." He never can forget the obligation under which he lies to the body for his education, both at the University and the Divinity Hall. But he is disposed to call his own religious experience of that time "dark," as compared with what it afterwards became, and as compared with what it might have been. Moreover, he thinks he is not uncharitable in concluding that the spiritual experience of not a few in that religious denomination was much the same as his own. They lived, comparatively

speaking, in darkness, or at any rate in cloudiness of mind. They were sent in upon their own hearts for the evidence of their acceptance. They drew their comfort not from the work of Christ without them, but from the work of the Spirit within them. All these preachers, at that time, being in much the same state of mind, did not bless or enlighten their fellow-men so abundantly as they might have done.

Is it true that the source of the sinner's peace with God is objective and not subjective, as Mr. Morison taught Mr. Kirk to believe, according to his own confession? We think that the Bible bears out such a representation. The first converts rejoiced whenever they believed the Gospel, and before they had any time to look introspectively into their own hearts. Moreover, the good news of salvation is so transporting that when it is heard it is calculated to fill the believing sinner with joy. A pardon! A pardon for me! A pardon through the precious blood of Christ! "Being justified by faith; we have peace with God," before we have time to think about the process of sanctification, which, however (so perfect and perfectly dovetailed, part to part, is the scheme of Grace), has already commenced at the happy hour of believing. No doubt there is a corroborative assurance that springs up from the witness of the Spirit in the heart, and the fruits of faith in the life; but the *steam engine that moves all the machinery* to the last is the cross of Christ, so that we may say that the source of the believer's peace will be eternally *without* and not *within* the soul.

Having got this "new view," Mr. Kirk set to work with redoubled zeal; and soon the whole country-side felt the force of his well-aimed blows, as well as the felicity which they imparted. Just as Kilmarnock became a centre of revival effort as the result of Mr. Morison's preaching, so did the Word of God sound out from Hamilton to all the region round about. A new chapel was built for the congregation, which had already become too large for the old place of worship; and, besides, new churches were formed in Strathaven, Wishaw, and Carluke, as the direct result of Mr. Kirk's unwearied ministrations on Sabbath day and week day alike.

Still there was yet one great drawback to his happiness in preaching the Gospel, as well as to his usefulness as a minister of Christ. We refer to the limitation which, as we have already repeatedly seen, the Messrs. Morison,

Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Guthrie, and at first Mr. Kirk also, conceived to exist in the influence of that Holy Spirit who applies the Gospel to the sinner's heart. Christ was for all; but the indispensable and effectual Holy Ghost was only for some, namely, the unconditionally elect. That was the great difficulty.

Mr. Morison felt it too; but for more than a year, that is, during part of 1842 and 1843, he said nothing about it. He had thought that certain passages of the Bible taught special grace for the unconditionally elect; but he was beginning to doubt his old exegesis of these passages, and to subject them afresh and more thoroughly to the searching analysis of his crucible of criticism. And, therefore, till he had his mind fully made up, with his customary caution and reticence, he said nothing about the subject. It was said that this fit of silence had come over him ever after being accosted on the streets of Kilmarnock, one Monday, by a shrewd and thoughtful member of his church, who addressed him after the following fashion:—"You told us yesterday that God did not spare his Son, but gave him up for us all. It is very strange that he did not spare his Son, and yet spared his Spirit, especially when the apostle says, 'How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'"

We have already seen that the Rev. Robert Morison, as early as the summer of 1842, was writing to his son in Kilmarnock, that their theology halted just there; but although father and son, and Mr. Guthrie too, had that feeling of dissatisfaction, neither of them had as yet proposed publicly any satisfactory solution of the difficulty. We do not mean to say that Mr. Kirk was the first to solve the problem. In all probability it was as when, in astronomical discoveries, there is a coincidence of observation on the part of independent astronomers, whose telescopes are nightly sweeping the heavens from observatories far apart. In like manner, the beautiful and consistent truth, that not only did Jesus die for every man, but that God's Spirit strives with every man—that *they who yield are the saved, and that they who resist are the unsaved*—we say, in all probability this blessed truth dawned upon the minds of these Scottish investigators independently, much about the same time. But what we have now to state is, that Mr. Kirk has the honour of having been the first publicly to proclaim this truth to his fellow-countrymen from the pulpit and through the press.

It is said that he had been lecturing through the epistle to the Romans, in Hamilton on the Sabbath forenoons. Coming to the 11th verse of the 2nd chapter, "For there is no respect of persons with God," he could not preach upon it. The view which he had hitherto held on election and the work of the Spirit in conversion would not square with the text. He made a pause for some weeks in his exposition. Meanwhile, by the diligent comparison of Scripture with Scripture, he saw that the election of grace was not *to* faith but *through* faith, and that the Divine Spirit knocked for admission at the door of every human heart. Having come to this conclusion, he could now face the text fearlessly—"There is no respect of persons with God." About this time he used to preach a powerful sermon on the words, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," in which he represented the Spirit of God as knocking outside; but he added, "The bar is in the inside; God will not *break the door open*; you, O sinner, must open it!"

Hitherto Mr. Kirk had used the pen sparingly. He had indeed delivered one discourse in Clerk's Lane Church, Kilmarnock, which had been published by request. It was an attempt to reconcile Calvinistic election with the unlimited call of the Gospel and universal responsibility. He now confesses that he then only "saw men as trees walking," and admits that the discourse was a failure.

But whenever he saw the precious truth just enunciated—that with the blessed Spirit, no less than with the Father and the Son, there is no respect of persons—he rushed to the press, and after a very peculiar fashion indeed. He had been reading about that time the account, in D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, of Luther nailing the celebrated theses to the church door of Wittemberg, which he was prepared to defend against all comers. John Kirk had not a little of Martin Luther's heroism, and therefore, intentionally imitating that "solitary monk," he published immense placards in the streets of Hamilton, in the autumn of 1842, if we remember aright, announcing twelve lectures on twelve topics; and these topics or theses he was prepared to uphold against all opponents. He, moreover, caused the printer to throw off a good many more copies than were absolutely required for the town of Hamilton, and saw that they were pretty freely circulated over the country, so that they might be read by friend and foe alike. This important

step was taken, it will be observed, the year before the issue of a *Statement of Principles* by the Evangelical Union in Kilmarnock. By that time Mr. Morison and his brethren were prepared to accept the same doctrinal platform as that which Mr. Kirk had thus been the first to proclaim. The exhibited propositions were as follows:—

“The Doctrine that Christ did not die for all men is opposed to the Gospel.

“The Doctrine that man is unable to believe the Gospel when he hears it, is incorrect, and proves a stumbling-block to the unbeliever.

“The Doctrine that Saving Faith is something more than knowing God's Testimony concerning his Son to be true is fitted to prevent the salvation of souls.

“The Doctrine that man may have peace with God and not know it, is contrary to Scripture, and is fitted to prove a lying refuge.

“Jesus Christ is, in the same sense, and to the same extent, the propitiation for the sins of the whole of mankind.

“Hearers of the Gospel, who are finally lost, are condemned for discrediting that which they need no help to believe.

“The belief of the Gospel necessarily gives a sense of pardon.

“The Holy Spirit alone overcomes man's enmity to the truth of God.

“The will of the Holy Spirit is that all men should be saved.

“To tell a man to pray for the Holy Spirit, or for anything else, before he believes the Gospel, is to lead him away from salvation.

“‘Do this and live,’ expresses the principle of soul-ruining self-righteousness; ‘Believe and live,’ the principle on which alone man can really be saved.

“Christians have the same reason to expect the sanctification of their children that they have to expect their own.”

As the lectures were delivered they were published, one by one, in a very humble form, and sold at a very small charge. There was a great demand for them over the country, as well as for the volume which they composed when completed. It was entitled, *The Way of Life Made Plain*. The work has had an immense circulation since these days, for the copy from which we have quoted these headings is marked “forty-first thousand.” The handbills and the lectures created a great stir all over Scotland. Many of Mr. Kirk's former friends, especially in the Congregational body, were much displeased by these publications; and ultimately ecclesiastical steps were taken in consequence, which it will be our duty now to narrate.

We pause to observe, however, that we always thought the title of the sixth lecture too strongly expressed:—“Hearers of the Gospel who are finally lost are condemned for discrediting that which they need no help

to believe." In the body of the lecture, indeed, the author explains himself. He admits that man is unwilling to believe the Gospel, and that the Holy Spirit, in every case of conversion, removes that unwillingness by his awakening, convincing grace; but he maintains that, in so far as natural ability is concerned, every sane man is physically able to believe the Gospel, and therefore needs no help to believe. That is perfectly true; but inasmuch as help is needed *in a certain sense* for the removal of this unwillingness, we thought at the time, and still think, that the heading was calculated to raise unnecessary prejudice against the new doctrines, which, in truth, were sufficiently misunderstood and misrepresented at any rate. But no doubt Mr. Kirk thought he was right; and we must not call too much attention to what was but a very small fly in an alabaster box of very precious truth.

It cannot be denied that Mr. Kirk advanced views in the publication referred to which were somewhat new to the Scottish Congregationalists. Even Dr. Wardlaw, as we have repeatedly seen, although proclaiming fearlessly that the Lord Jesus Christ had "tasted death for every man," had invariably qualified that world-wide exhibition of love by adding that the application of the atonement by irresistible grace was restricted to the unconditionally elect. Yet Mr. Kirk wrote as follows in the introduction to his ninth lecture:—

"My dear reader, are you waiting for 'special, effectual influence'? Have you embraced the idea that the Holy Spirit has no wish to save any but those who really are, or shall be, actually saved? Will you look into the Spirit's own Word, and examine whether you have not embraced an idea that is thoroughly false? Are you *willing* to be convinced that it is only when the last possible effort has been put forth and resisted, that the Holy Spirit leaves a man to sink into eternal woe?"

He also advanced interpretations of passages of Scripture which were thought rash and daring, especially by the clergymen of the body, but which many perplexed souls hailed with irrepressible delight:—

"Let us calmly and honestly separate ideas in our minds that essentially differ from that which is declared incorrect.

"1. *It is a truth that God alone draws men to Christ.* Jesus himself says (John vi. 44), 'No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him.' Most cheerfully and most decidedly do I subscribe to this sentiment. It is an absolute impossibility for any man to come to Jesus if God do not draw him. Well, what is meant by *this drawing*? A misunderstanding, in regard to the Saviour's

meaning when he uses the word '*draw*,' lies at the foundation of a vast deal of error regarding this precious passage of Scripture. Read carefully from the beginning of the chapter. Endeavour thus clearly to ascertain what was the object of the Great Teacher in the whole of this address. That object is clearly stated in the 27th verse—'Labour not,' he says, 'for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you.' His desire most clearly was that they should enjoy everlasting life. He had wrought the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes; and when the multitude followed him he perceived that it was 'not because they saw the miracle,'—not, that is, because they listened to God *teaching* by that miracle about Jesus, and thus *drawing* them to him. They followed him for food only. Jesus therefore urged them to 'labour . . . for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.' This life, he showed them, they could possess only by *believing* on him whom God had sent—or by being taught of God: for what is believing on Jesus, but just *learning* what God teaches about him? This, however, the Jews refused to do. Instead of yielding to the *drawing* of the Father, or consenting to be given, by learning of the Father, to Jesus, *they murmured among themselves. They sought each other's opinions*, and refused the teaching of God. This, Jesus showed them, was a certainly ruinous course, for they could never become his disciples by any other drawing or teaching but that of God. This momentous truth he proved from the Scriptures. 'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore,' said Jesus, 'that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' The drawing and the teaching are seen thus to be one.

"If it seem to you to be a 'truism' and unworthy of Jesus to show at such length that no man can come to him unless he leave the teaching of man, and learn of God, only remember that millions of souls are perishing simply because they are allowing men to teach them, and are refusing to be taught of God. Surely you cannot consider it unworthy of him who came to seek and to save that which was lost, to expose that deadly error by which above all others their salvation is prevented. O my reader, remember that it is by the neglect of self-evident truths that men perish; and do not throw aside the teaching of Jesus, because something more mysterious may appear to you to be more probably his meaning. No man *can* come to him unless he is taught of God. The best inference you can draw from this is, 'then let us learn what God teaches.' This is the way to be saved.

"2. *It is true that 'Faith is the gift of God.'* (Eph. ii. 8)—'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Although there are various views taken of this passage, let us take that most generally adopted, viz., 'that it shows faith to be the gift of God.'\* This cannot mean that God believes *instead* of

• "Although this is a common view of this passage, I am now fully persuaded it is not the right one. The passage teaches that SALVATION BY FAITH (and not Faith itself) is the gift of God. It shows that such a DELIVERANCE has been given us in the atonement of Jesus, as needs only to be BELIEVED to be enjoyed (1 John v. 11). I have used the view given above, in order to meet the objection founded on it."

the man who is saved. You must know that in whatever sense God gives faith or belief, after all the believer himself believes. Nor can it mean that God *is disposed* to believe instead of the sinner who credits his word. What else, then, about believing may be said to be a gift? Several things may be stated in answer to this question. 1st, God has caused the record to be believed to be written for men. 2nd, In the case of every hearer of the Gospel, he has brought that record before the mind as his own Word. 3rd, He works by means of the various circumstances and agents\* that influence the minds of men, so as to arrest their attention, and dispose them to credit his Word. When, thus taught and influenced by God, a man yields to credit his Word, and so is reconciled to him and saved, he may properly be said to have had faith given him of God. I do most firmly hold that when a man is saved by believing the good news, he has God alone to thank and praise for what has been brought about, as well as for all its consequences onward to eternity.

“3. *It is another precious truth that the Lord opens the hearts of those who believe.* (Acts xvi. 14)—‘And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.’ The Lord, from the first of this interview, was speaking to Lydia and her companions, by the Apostle. Paul was brought there by God. His Spirit spake by the apostle, and regulated all he did and said. He had also complete control over all the other circumstances that affected the mind of Lydia, so as to dispose her to listen to the truth concerning Jesus.† He so wrought all these together, and so spake by Paul, as an instrument, that she not only listened, but believed. This passage of apostolic history may clearly show us that God makes use of both the simple Word, and also of other means fitted to arrest the attention to that Word, and so to induce the unbeliever to look at the soul-saving realities made known in the divine testimony. Not for a moment, however, does it lead us away from the Word of God to seek for something else by which we are saved, NOR DOES IT LEAD US WHEN WE ACTUALLY HEAR THAT WORD TO SIT STILL AS IF SOME ‘SECRET TOUCH’ WERE NECESSARY BEFORE WE BELIEVE IT.”

Possibly some of our readers may be disposed to blame us

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\* “By ‘circumstances and agents’ are represented all those external means by which God influences the mind of man. Paul ‘planted and Apollos watered’—Paul and Apollos were agents by whom God brought the word before the minds of the Corinthians—‘but God gave the increase.’ God not only inspired his agents, and guided them in their work, but he also moved and regulated all those events and objects that were fitted to render the work of his agents successful; and thus, without the shadow of a call for our belief in a mysterious special influence, we see that God had ALL the glory of reconciling the Corinthians to himself (2 Cor. v. 18).”

† “The account we have of Lydia cannot be carefully read without the reader perceiving that she was a child of God before this, and only needed to have the understanding opened by means of Paul’s explanations that she might know Jesus to be the expected Messiah. The disciples of Jesus required the same (Luke xxiv. 45).”

for occupying our pages with so extended a quotation; but its importance in a historical point of view is our apology. There is no doubt that it was the fearless publication of these very expositions of difficult texts that led to the schism among the Scottish Congregationalists thirty years ago. And as we started with the plan and purpose of giving extracts from Mr. Morison's writings to illustrate and bear out our statements, we must do the same thing in the case of Mr. Kirk and his friends, although to a more limited extent, considering the unexpected length to which our narrative has already extended.

It is quite true that Mr. Kirk's expositions of these and similar passages were thought by many to be crude and immature. Dr. Wardlaw remarked in his own polished antithetic way, "This is not explaining Scripture, but explaining it away." But we beg leave here to submit that on no other principle of interpretation can such texts be expounded that will justify the ways of God to man.

We were much struck, many years after the first edition of the "Way of Life" was issued, to find, when reading Richard Watson's "Theological Institutes," that he explained John vi. 44, and the other passages referred to above, almost exactly as Mr. Kirk did. Now Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, paid Richard Watson the compliment of saying that he was at once the most philosophical and systematic divine whom the great Wesleyan body had produced. In fact, if you postulate the grand Arminian, or Free Grace, or Free Will position that God really and honestly desires the salvation of all men, it follows as a necessary and blessed corollary that the influence of the Spirit must be as world-wide as the atonement of the Son—that, therefore, while believers yield to him, unbelievers resist him—that the Father seeks to draw all men to the Son, but many will not submit to the drawing—that he is as willing to bestow the gift of faith on men as the gift of forgiveness, but, alas, many will not have it!—that He, who opened the heart of Lydia who sold the purple, wished also to open the heart of Bernice and Drusilla who wore the purple, and would have done so if they had only welcomed the initiatory and preliminary strivings of his grace.

The founders of the Evangelical Union may sometimes in their early publications, which were issued amid the hurry and bustle of overwhelming preaching engagements, have so

expressed themselves as to leave the impression upon half hostile readers that the spiritual and world-wide influence for which they pled was merely that of "moral suasion." But such a doctrine they neither held nor taught. A favourite illustration with them, about the year 1844, was that of the warrior and his sword. The Word, they stoutly maintained, is the Spirit's sword; but, like Goliath's or Wallace's, it would be impotent unless wielded by the warrior himself. That ubiquitous Warrior, however, they as fearlessly declared, was ever present on the battlefield when the truth was being preached, and was ever backing up the preacher's appeals, and urging home the truth, in ways inscrutable to human eye, but alas! often rendered nugatory by the thick bosses of human pride, indifference, and unbelief.

The "Way of Life" was published in the winter of 1842, and was followed by a companion treatise in 1843, entitled "Light out of Darkness." In this work the author was, if possible, still more outspoken than in the "Way of Life." He boldly assailed the frowning forts of predestination reared upon the eighth and ninth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and endeavoured to show that these portions of the Word of God did not really teach the restricted and partial views of divine grace which they had been supposed to teach. His expositions, of course without any plagiarism on his part, were, with a few modifications and peculiarities, to much the same effect as those of Wesley, Benson, and Adam Clarke. He showed that believers, like Joshua and Caleb, are those on whom God is pleased to have mercy; while resisting unbelievers, like Pharaoh, he is pleased to harden. The former are the vessels for honour, which are prepared on the wheel of the Divine Potter; while the latter, who would not become vessels for honour, are made up into vessels for dishonour, as the inevitable result of their opposition to God's primary will. Carrying the same principle of interpretation to Acts xiii. 48, Mr. Kirk translated the *dark* clause thus, "As many as were *disposed for* eternal life believed;" thus exonerating God, and making the sinner alone responsible for his own continuance in unbelief. On 1-Cor. ii. 14, he observed that "the things of the Spirit of God," which the natural man could not receive, were the advanced truths and lessons of Christianity. But, he added, let him become a spiritual man, by yielding to the Spirit and receiv-

ing the rudimentary truths of the Gospel, and straightway a holy relish for heavenly things will take possession of his renewed and transformed soul. Lastly, "chosen in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4), he thus explained:—

"In Peter's first epistle, chapter ii., Jesus is represented as a *chosen* foundation stone, and believers as coming to *him*, to be built upon *him*, who is thus the chosen of God. Here, then, is a striking illustration of the principle brought out in the passage before us. Jesus is chosen as a FOUNDATION. Now let us suppose that I choose a foundation stone and lay it down, with a view to building upon it, so that the whole shall become *one* beautiful edifice. The foundation is chosen and laid, not that it may remain alone, but that it may prove the foundation of a choice building. Well, as stone after stone is *laid upon* this, and thus becomes *part of the building rising* from the chosen foundation, stone after stone enjoys the honour and all the privileges of the original choice. In order to see how completely the benefits of the choice *depend* upon connection with the *foundation*, let us suppose that a stone, after being laid upon it, were for some cause or other removed, it would cease to be a chosen stone, inasmuch as it ceased to be a stone of the chosen building—it ceased to be connected with the chosen foundation. Jesus is then God's chosen foundation. He was eternally chosen to be the foundation of a glorious building. Every one truly connected with him is a part of this chosen building, and enjoys all the benefits of Jehovah's original choice."

These books were written with great simplicity and directness of style, and produced a mighty effect upon the public mind. Professor Kirk, in these early days, attended even less to the embellishment of his compositions than he has done latterly, and especially since his scientific works have introduced him to a cultivated and refined class of readers. But this very circumstance—that he did not apparently care how his ideas were expressed if he only made them plain and palpable to his reader's apprehension—made them all the more powerful and successful with the working classes, whom he then chiefly addressed. The lectures on these different texts, moreover, were first published singly at a cheap rate, and were thus widely circulated before being bound up in a book.

Now it must be confessed, as we have already hinted, that these advanced doctrines had never been promulgated within the bounds of the Scottish Congregational body since its formation about the beginning of the century. We therefore sympathise retrospectively with the leaders in the connexion as to the difficult circumstances in which they were placed. But we respectfully submit that a more patient and tolerant

course than that which was pursued would have been safer and more consistent with their recognised principles.

For one of the distinguishing features of Congregationalism, and one which had been often loudly proclaimed, was this, that it was trammelled by no stereotyped creed, like Presbyterianism. Now here was a man, keeping leal to the Bible, but only wishing to preach a more free and God-glorifying Gospel (as he considered it) than he had been accustomed to do. Evidently the more prudent course would have been to let him go on in his earnest career till the excitement on all sides had cooled down somewhat. That is generally admitted now; but practical wisdom is frequently bought with the heavy price of the suffering and sorrow that result from mistakes.

Mr. Kirk had already been taken to task by Dr. Wardlaw in private, in a kind way, for some extreme statements which that eminent man thought he had made on the question of total abstinence from strong drink. But he had been found to be immovable on that point; and he proved to be as impregnable in his new theological position when remonstrated with: for in both cases he believed that he was advocating precious and invaluable truth.

Congregational polity does not offer such advantages for bringing a minister forthwith before his betters as Presbyterianism does, when he deflects from the straight, or, at any rate, the prescribed line; and, consequently, the leaders of the Independent body hesitated at first to take any direct steps in the way of dealing with Mr. Kirk and the four or five ministers who, as it began to be whispered abroad, fully sympathised with him. But, inasmuch as rumour as firmly alleged that several of the students in the Theological Hall had embraced the "New Views" (as they began to be called), the Academy Committee, under whose care and jurisdiction the young men were placed, determined to sift the matter out, and subject the juvenile errorists to serious and solemn examination.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Examination of the Students of the Congregational Theological Academy—First Tested by their Sermons—Next, Three Searching Questions proposed to them—Mr. Alex. Duncanson's Reply—Mr. Ebenezer Kennedy's—Mr. William Bathgate's—Mr. James Samson's—Mr. James Robertson's—Mr. Fergus Ferguson's—Ten of the Students Examined before the Committee—Nine of them Expelled from the Institution—Excitement caused by this Ecclesiastical Action.

THE first note of warning, which apprised the students that mischief was brewing, came from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Alexander, of Edinburgh. The lamented Morell Mackenzie, Dr. Wardlaw's colleague, had been drowned in the wreck of the *Pegasus*, during the summer of 1843, on the coast of Northumberland; and it had been arranged that, after spending a session of six months at Dr. Wardlaw's feet in Glasgow, the class should be removed to Edinburgh, and be taught by Dr. Alexander, during the months of May and June, 1844. One of the students had written the learned Doctor, in name of the class, making inquiry as to what books would be required for the summer session. The Doctor gave the information courteously enough, but added a rather irate postscript to the effect that "some scrutiny would need to be made as to who should come to Edinburgh, and who should not; for, when he agreed to teach the class, he did not know that the Rev. John Kirk, of Hamilton, was to be his rival in forming their theological opinions." What the mode of scrutiny was to be, soon appeared.

It was a rule of the Academy that each student should read, once a year, a sermon before Dr. Wardlaw, which he criticised on the spot, pointing out whatever defects might appear in it, either in the way of matter or delivery. Now the first step which the Doctor took, acting in concert with the Committee, was to prescribe topics of discourse which would have the effect of bringing out the opinions of the suspected students on the debated points. There was not a little excited feeling in the class while these discourses were being delivered. One incident is memorable. While one of the students was reading his sermon he broke down and wept. He was honestly bringing out all his views. He was describing the difficulty he would have in pressing the sinner to immediate decision if, at the same time, he believed

that God might be keeping back essential grace from a non-elect soul; and, knowing that the very utterance of these sentiments might have a serious effect upon his future prospects in life, yet feeling that he could not speak otherwise than he spoke, the young man was overcome, and for a time could not proceed. The whole class was much moved,—and so was the renowned doctor of divinity in the chair, who was a kindhearted man, and must have felt himself to be placed in a very painful position.

Dr. Wardlaw having reported to the Committee of the Academy that he considered the sentiments of several of the students unsatisfactory on the work of the Holy Spirit, it was resolved to put to each student three questions, the written answers to which would effectually bring out the sentiments of the whole hall on the points in dispute. The class was a large one that year. Counting one or two private students, twenty-nine young men in all were in attendance upon the reverend Doctor's prelections. One day he informed the Rev. Mr. Shepherd, of Sligo, who visited the hall, that he had never lectured to so many students since he had been installed as tutor or professor to the Scottish Congregationalists. But, alas! when thus at the very climax of its prosperity, the class was to get a sad scattering, from which it did not recover for many a day.

The three questions which were proposed to each student were as follows:—

“I. Are your sentiments on the subject of divine influence the same now as they were when you were examined by the Committee and admitted into this institution?”

“II. Do you hold, or do you not, the necessity of a special influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to the regeneration of the sinner, or his conversion to God, distinct from the influence of the Word or of providential circumstances, but accompanying these means and rendering them efficacious?”

“III. Are your sentiments settled on the subject of the preceding query, or are you in a state of indecision, and desirous of time for further consideration and inquiry?”

The annual meetings of the Congregational Union were to be held in 1844, during the first week of April, at Dundee; and the students were requested to transmit their answers to “Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, Edward Baxter's, Esq., Ellangowan House, Dundee.” These answers were read before the general Committee there; and, ten of them having been pronounced unsatisfactory, a special Committee was ap-

pointed to meet with the young men in Glasgow on the 30th of April, to confer with them, and see if any good could be effected by means of private interrogation and discussion. We think it proper, at this stage of our narrative, to lay before our readers the letters of several of the nine students who were eventually expelled from the institution on account of their doctrinal views, as published by the students themselves after their separation. Our readers will thus be able to judge for themselves as to whether the general Committee at Dundee had grounds to be dissatisfied with the young men, and appoint a special Committee for the further consideration of the case.

The letters were published in the order of the seniority of the students. The "notes" appended to the successive replies, it will be observed, were not annexed to the letters when these were sent to Dundee, but were added by the students themselves after their expulsion, that their real sentiments might be more fully explained to the public.

The first letter ran as follows:—

"KENMURE PLACE, PARLIAMENTARY ROAD,  
"GLASGOW, 13th April, 1844.

"DEAR TUTOR,—The following are the queries proposed, with their several answers appended, according to the present state of my mind.

"'I. Are your sentiments now, on the subject of divine influence, the same as they were when you were examined by the Committee and admitted into this institution?'

"*Ans.* They are slightly modified since that time.

"'II. Do you hold, or do you not, the necessity of a special influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to the regeneration of the sinner, or his conversion to God, distinct from the influence of the Word or of providential circumstances, but accompanying these means and rendering them efficacious?'

"*Ans.* I hold, at present, that there is an influence required, above and beyond the Word and Providence, in the conversion of the sinner.

"'III. Are your sentiments settled on the subject of the preceding query, or are you in a state of indecision, and desirous of time for further consideration and enquiry?'

"*Ans.* My sentiments are by no means settled on this point, it being with me still *sub judice*.

"The above I have given in as short and, at the same time, as comprehensive a manner as possible; and remain, dear tutor, yours very respectfully,

"ALEX. DUNCANSON.

"REV. DR. WARDLAW."

"NOTE.—When I say, in answer to the second query, that I hold an influence above and beyond the Word and Providence in the conversion of the sinner, the reader will understand that it is the influence of the Holy Ghost, but that I understand that influence to be general

and not partial—not patent to some men only, but free to all—such an influence as is in its nature moral and not physical, acting on the human mind through the medium of God’s truth, and is always present where the Gospel is properly and faithfully preached—such an influence as, from its very nature being moral—can be and is resisted by man, even to his eternal destruction. And, were it otherwise—were man acted on in the irresistible manner that is supposed by some, not only does he become a mere machine in the hands of Deity—his free agency destroyed—completely nullified—but, in addition to this, there would be a large majority of the human race (namely, all on whom this irresistible influence did not act) shut out from the most distant hope of salvation—shut out as completely and as really as if no atonement had been made. Because, *First*, That which is confined to some, it is plain, cannot act on all; and, if its action is absolutely required, in order to man’s recovery (and this is agreed to on all hands), then it follows that all upon whom it does not act cannot be saved—their salvation is impossible, the *sine qua non* called divine influence being wanting. Thus, by the doctrine of a partial influence, there is placed in the sinner’s way as insuperable an obstacle to his salvation as if there existed no atonement. But, *Secondly*, The doctrine of a partial and irresistible influence destroys man’s free agency. For what is this doctrine? It is that man is acted on in such a way by a superior power that he cannot resist—that he is irresistibly brought to comply with the terms of salvation presented in the Gospel. Now, were this the case, the power of choice—the capability of complying or resisting—of believing or not believing at his pleasure (and this is necessary to make a free agent) is gone. It would be no longer true of him that he ‘preferred the darkness to the light,’ the world to God, time to eternity; in short, between him and the mere insentient thunderbolt, that dashes its way through space, there could exist no possible difference, both being impelled by a power which they could not resist, and consequently alike irresponsible. From these considerations, and others that might be presented, I most humbly deny a partial influence of the Holy Spirit in the sense embodied in the query; and that I interpret that sense properly, I may say that I depend not on the words of the query alone, but also on the definition of ‘special influence,’ as given by one of the members of Committee, when examined before them.

“In answer to the third query, the reader will see that it is said, ‘My sentiments are by no means settled on this point,’ meaning by this point, divine influence. This is a slip of the pen. I did not mean to convey the idea that my sentiments were not settled on divine influence itself, but rather on collateral topics. This error was explained to the Committee when before them. “A. D.”

This letter, in our opinion, gives a clear and convincing statement of the great point in dispute. Mr. Duncanson was ordained in the autumn of 1844 over the Congregational church in Alloa, Stirlingshire, one of the churches which sympathised with the “nine students,” and embraced their views. Thereafter he was called to be colleague with the Rev. A. C. Rutherford, Falkirk, as we have already had occasion to explain. Ultimately he emigrated to the United

States of America, where, we understand, he has been the pastor of at least two important Congregational churches. The last sphere which we heard of him occupying was in the city of Sandusky, in the State of Ohio, and on the shores of Lake Erie. The second letter was to the following effect:—

“PERTH, *April 12, 1844.*

“REV. AND HIGHLY ESTEEMED TUTOR,—With reference to the first question you have proposed—If my sentiments on the subject of divine influence are now the same as they were when I was first examined by the Committee and admitted into the Theological Academy, I have to say that, so far as I can recollect, they are substantially the same; only that my mind is more fully made up regarding them, and that I view them as of far greater importance than I then did. I am not aware, in fact, at this moment, that, in the papers I handed the Secretary of the Academy, I said a single word on the subject; and I do not recollect that, when before the Committee, a single question was asked me concerning it.

“With regard to your second query—If I hold, or hold not, the necessity of a special influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to the regeneration of the sinner or his conversion to God, distinct from the influence of the Word or providential circumstances, but accompanying these, and rendering them efficacious?—I beg of you to mark most distinctly—as you yourself, I think, as well as others, have misapprehended my sentiments on this subject—that, in the meantime, *I do hold* the necessity of a direct influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to the conversion of the sinner, distinct from the influences of the Word or providential circumstances. I do not pretend to explain its *modus operandi* (*i.e.*, how it operates upon the mind, the understanding, or the heart—*how, in connection with the truth, it effects the conversion of the sinner*); but the sentiment itself appears to me to be necessary, in order to the satisfactory explanation of many passages of Scripture. I do not, however, believe that this influence always *terminates* in the conversion of the sinner to God: and this leads me to the only thing I think worth contending for, *viz.*, that the influence of the Spirit is NOT IRRESISTIBLE. On any other supposition I cannot explain the Bible (*e. g.*, Gen. vi. 3; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14-16; Isa. v. 4; lxiii. 10; Acts vii. 51; Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19; Heb. x. 29)—on any other supposition I cannot throw the whole blame of his non-conversion upon the sinner himself—on any other supposition I have great difficulty in maintaining the free agency of man, which I hold to be a first truth—and on any other supposition I cannot reconcile the invitations and the threatenings of God with his character as a God of *love*, of *sincerity*, and of *holiness*.

“Strictly speaking, I suppose no reply is requisite to your third question; for I have just stated my *present* view of the subject. Though, however my mind is made up so far on the subject I have been referring to, I would not give you to understand that it is also made up on all the collateral subjects—such, for example, as the doctrine of election. That there is such a doctrine as that of an election, in some sense or other, taught in the Bible, I cannot deny; though the precise meaning of it, or the principle on which it is to be

explained, is, with me, at present, among the things hard to be understood.\*—I am, rev. and highly esteemed tutor, most affectionately yours,  
 “EBEN. KENNEDY.”

“NOTE.—The question at issue, between our brethren and ourselves, appears to me to be simply this:—Does God *withhold* or *keep back* from the sinner, to whom the Gospel is *simply, faithfully, boldly, earnestly, and compassionately* preached, any influence that is absolutely indispensable to that sinner’s conversion? Our brethren say he *does*. With the character of God, however, as unfolded in his own Word, as a God of *infinite love* and of *spotless purity*, full in view, I cannot hesitate for a moment to answer the question in the *negative*. To imagine that God calls upon sinners to believe the *saving truth*—threatens them for not believing it—and consigns them to everlasting destruction for not believing it, whilst, during the whole time, he himself is *keeping back* from them some influence or other, without which they cannot be saved, conveys to us an idea of God which is repulsive to our best feelings—dishonouring to his character; represents him as tantalising man—presenting the cup of salvation to his lips, but, by this ‘withholding,’ paralysing his powers so that he cannot take the draught! Upon the opinion of our brethren I can see no propriety, no point, no truth in the following question of Jehovah—‘*What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?*’ If their opinion be the true one, a ready reply would be at hand—‘Yes, thou couldst have done more—thou couldst have given that special, irresistible influence, which thou art now withholding, and then thy vineyard would bud, and blossom, and bring forth fruit in abundance.’ This would give quite a different turn to the point in question, and leave the blame of the unfruitfulness of the vineyard, not with the Jews, with whom it was intended to be left, but with God himself. “E. K.”

Our readers will confess that this letter also contains a most impressive and comprehensive statement of the theological tenet under discussion. It will already be very apparent to them that the young men who were thus called before their ecclesiastical superiors were well worthy of seats in a theological hall; and that, in lopping them off from the tree of Scottish Congregationalism, the Committee did not separate dead, but living, boughs. We are happy to say that the Rev. Ebenezer Kennedy still labours usefully in connection with our Scottish movement. His two published works, “The Doctrine of Assurance,” and “He is Mine,” reveal not only a pious but a cultured mind, and one which can give expression to rich and refreshing views of divine truth.

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\* “In answer to a question proposed by Mr. Alexander, at the examination in Glasgow, I stated that I was inclined to understand the doctrine of election to life as *founded on the foreknowledge of God of men believing the truth concerning Jesus.*”

The next letter was as follows:—

“GLASGOW, 29 PATERSON STREET,  
12th April, 1844.

“MY ESTEEMED TUTOR,—In compliance with your reasonable request, I transmit to you brief and conscientious answers to the following queries:—

“I. Are your sentiments now, on the subject of divine influence, the same as they were when you were examined by the Committee and admitted into this institution?”

“Since I was admitted into the Glasgow Theological Academy, my sentiments on the subject of divine influence, or the work of the Holy Spirit, have undergone such a change as to induce me to believe that my present views of the Divine Spirit's work and *collateral* topics seriously affect some of the vital parts of current systematic theology.

“II. Do you hold, or do you not, the necessity of a special influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to the regeneration of the sinner, or his conversion to God, distinct from the influence of the Word or of providential circumstances, but accompanying these means and rendering them efficacious?”

“I do most *unwaveringly* believe in the necessity and reality of the Holy Spirit's agency, in order to the regeneration or conversion of a sinner. In so far as I have been able to understand the subject, I look upon that gracious Agent as the Omnipresent Superintendent of the economy of redemption. He is presiding over the events and circumstances of providence. He, by means of numberless agencies, is dispensing his own Word to perishing and depraved men: and, though his desires and *efforts* be thwarted and frustrated by sinful free agents, still he continues plying the rebellious with motives which, without any direct special emanation from the Divine Spirit himself, are sufficient to convert those before whose minds the motives are exhibited. My esteemed Tutor, when I take into account what *you* mean by special influence; when I remember that, in your estimation, unconditional election, special love *prior* to conversion, and special influence as the exponent of the previous love, are three doctrines which stand or fall together—then I feel impelled to venture an honest, and, I hope, intelligent denial of the doctrine of special influence. The three doctrines are linked together by consistency, but I do not believe in any of them.

“III. Are your sentiments settled on the subject of the preceding query, or are you in a state of indecision, and desirous of time for further consideration and inquiry?”

“While a sense of my responsibilities to God has constrained me to give as definite an answer to the preceding query as the present convictions of my mind authorise, nevertheless, I do wish time and opportunity for the further consideration and investigation of all the important branches of the subject. The controversy is compassed with difficulties—some of these found in the Bible, others (the mass, I think) in systematic divinity. I have refrained from stating either the grounds or defence of my views. I apprehend that you wish nothing more than a bare statement of these views.

“My beloved Tutor,—In transmitting this document to you, I will

not conceal how much my mind is affected when I survey the circumstances under which I write. Be the *issue* what it may, it gladdens me to be able to say that, during my entire Academical course, I have experienced no difficulty in esteeming highly, and loving warmly, him to whom I now write. I will ever remember, with gratitude to that Holy Spirit, whose testimony I expect to publish till my tongue is silent in death, my connection with that institution in which you hold such a prominent place. My earnest and daily prayer is, that the erring party (whoever may compose that party) may return to truth—to walk in her footsteps.—I remain yours, in much affection,

“RALPH WARDLAW, D.D.”

“WM. BATHGATE.”

“The following remarks were read to the Committee of the Academy, as an additional explanation of the statements in the above letter, which bear on the subject of divine influence:—

“If the doctrine of special divine influence, relative to the conversion of sinners, be expressed by the following proposition—When any individual sinner is converted, a certain divine influence is exerted upon that person, which influence is not exerted upon a sinner who remains unconverted amid those identical saving means which, by a special influence, were rendered efficacious to the regeneration of the former sinner—then I do not believe that that doctrine gives a correct exposition of the work of the Holy Spirit when he regenerates a soul. In such a representation of the Spirit’s work, divine influence whatever be its nature, is special, or limited in its extent: that influence is exerted upon the few who believe, and withheld from the many who remain in unbelief; it is esteemed indispensable towards the conversion of the few; consequently, the unbelief of the many cannot be removed without it.

“But if the doctrine of divine influence be that the Holy Spirit, by means of his own inspired testimony—by means of the Book of Providence—exerts upon the mind of the sinner, at conversion, a specific divine influence, which is put forth whenever regenerating truths and agencies are in operation, which is not exerted upon the mind of one Gospel hearer and withheld from another—then do I believe in the doctrine of divine influence.

“If any one should ask, ‘Is this divine influence something distinct from, and in addition to, the mere influence of sacred testimony and providential circumstances?’—I would answer, that owing to the personality and omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, there is a divine though not irresistible influence—a divine though not irresistible power—accompanying the curses, warnings, exhortations, invitations, and promises of the Scriptures. This influence may not be capable of definition; but were it possible for the Divine Spirit to forsake the work of Christ, when the great propitiation is being expounded to a perishing sinner—then a distinct personal converting influence would be suspended. I cannot tell what the work of Jesus could effect without the work of the Spirit; but, in so far as I understand the Scriptures, I look upon *both* as harmoniously co-extensive.

“From these statements you will conclude, not that the sinner, at conversion, is drawn to Jesus, by a special, irresistible influence, but that, as a free agent, he acts the reasonable, though unmeritorious, part of choosing the motives which win to the Saviour.

“In addition to these remarks, which were read before the Committee, I would observe, that while in my letter to Dr W. I deny *unconditional* election, I do not deny the doctrine of *personal* election. God forbid that we should ever wish to expunge either the term ‘election,’ or its meaning, from the Bible! “W. B.”

Our readers will be pleased to observe, in this his first published composition, traces of that thoughtful exhaustiveness which has ever since characterised the Rev. William Bathgate in his treatment of any theological or literary topic, and which shines forth so conspicuously in the successive volumes with which he has favoured the British public—“*Æternitas*,” “*The Moral Character of God*,” “*The Characteristics of a Superior Popular Literature*,” and “*Christ and Man*.” The work which he has just published—“*The Deep Things of God*”—consisting of eight Essays on momentous and closely connected religious topics, is distinguished by the same pensive profundity, and will be equally appreciated by a numerous circle of readers, or, rather more so, considering the maturity which advancing years and unceasing meditation impart both to an author and his works. We may say, we trust, without violating confidence, that there is perhaps no man living who more completely understands Thomas Carlyle than William Bathgate. He thoroughly believes in the grand Christian aspirations of the Chelsea philosopher; and is persuaded that the latter holds all that we deem vitally important concerning God, man, and immortality. In a recent communication Mr. Carlyle requested Mr. Bathgate to superintend the publication of a single volume of selected passages from all his works, in terms of Mr. Bathgate’s own suggestion; but this honourable duty our friend felt constrained to decline, on account of numerous pre-occupations.

When it was our privilege recently to be in Mr. Bathgate’s company, he gave us a few particulars concerning his religious history, which, in our opinion, will at once be interesting to our readers, considering the important services which he has rendered to the Evangelical Union, and appropriate in this connection.

When the late Rev. Henry Wight, in the first flush of his evangelistic zeal, was addressing revival meetings in the town of Hawick in 1838, William Bathgate, then a young man of eighteen years of age, was living there, having been apprenticed as an engineer in one of the local factories. He

attended the meetings, which were held in the Relief Church (Rev. Mr. Ramsay's). He was thoroughly awakened by a sermon which Mr. Wight preached from the text, "Adam, where art thou?" All the more common refuges of lies were mercilessly exposed by that powerful itinerant, whose fine bodily presence often lent a peculiar force to his searching appeals. On that occasion he hunted the sinner out of all his favourite hiding places; and young William Bathgate felt that he stood a self-accused culprit in the presence of Jehovah. His distress was great; nor was it removed by personal conversation with the preacher at the close of the discourse. Meeting Mr. Wight in the street, a day or two after, he informed him that his exercise of mind still continued; when the preacher only remarked, "So I see, you are not going to be satisfied with what Christ did on the tree," and abruptly took his leave. The young inquirer thought his spiritual adviser very harsh and cruel at the time; but the saying did him good afterwards, for it helped to lead him away from his search for evidences within, out to the grand evidence of divine compassion which Calvary supplied. One afternoon, during the same week, the anxious inquirer felt so unwell, on account of his mental disquietude, that he could not go to his work. But, when ruminating on John iii. 16 (which has proved to be the gate of heaven to so many), the thought darted into his mind, "if simple believing of the truth has done so much good to others, it ought to suit me too." In a moment all the joy which the knowledge of the truth concerning the love of God is calculated to impart immediately flooded his soul; and "he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But see how speedily the saving truth began to work upon his heart with its transforming power! He had flung himself upon his bed in the greatness of his distress; but, whenever the light of salvation dawned upon his darkened mind, the practical reflection straightway accompanied it—"My time is not my own. It belongs to the master to whom I have been apprenticed. If my soul is saved, I must show the reality of the change by a more conscientious discharge of duty than I have ever yet exhibited." The fact was, he had found a Divine Master, as well as a Divine Mediator; and that Divine Master sent him back to his earthly master to serve him better than he had ever served him before. That afternoon the grass looked greener, the birds sang sweeter,

and the Teviot purled more musically than ever, as the young apprentice was at work, because, like Nathaniel, he had found the Messiah.

When Mr. Bathgate came to Glasgow to be a student of the Theological Academy there, he was a moderate Calvinist, like Dr. Wardlaw. But Mr. Morison's trial before the Secession Synod, and concomitant doctrinal discussions, had widened out his theological creed to the amplitude and liberality indicated in the luminous replies given above. It must be a comfort to Dr. Morison and his friends that one so competent as William Bathgate has been found to succeed him in the superintendence of the great work of God in Kilmarnock, which he was honoured to originate.

We propose to insert still one or two other letters of the series. The next is from the pen of the Rev. James Samson, who has laboured for many years now as Independent minister in Sheerness on the Thames. His letter is the longest of those which were sent to Dundee; but our readers, we are persuaded, will confess that it is also one of the most complete and satisfactory:—

“GLASGOW, 12th April, 1844.

“RESPECTED TUTOR.—It gives me considerable pain to be compelled to express sentiments which I know to be at variance with the opinions entertained by one to whom I have been accustomed to look up with feelings of very considerable deference, and whose approval, next to the approval of God and my own conscience, I esteemed of most value to me. The duty which I owe to you, to myself, and what I conceive to be the truth, demands of me, however, to express these sentiments, even at the risk of incurring your displeasure, and expulsion (which I know has already been threatened in certain quarters) from that Institution, where I have (I trust gratefully) enjoyed so many advantages. With these remarks I proceed to answer your queries.

“*Ans. I.* I am not conscious of any very essential change having taken place in my sentiments on this subject since I was examined by the Committee, and admitted into this Institution.

“*Ans. II.* There are several words, such as ‘special’ and ‘influence,’ employed in this query, susceptible of more meanings than one, and which would consequently require explanation; without entering, however, into any formal definition of these, I shall proceed with my answer to the questions, hoping you will be in no danger of mistaking the meaning which I attach to them.

“1st. I believe as firmly in the existence and ‘personality’ of the Holy Ghost, as I do in that either of the Father or the Son.

“2nd. That his influence is a something distinct from the ‘Word’ or ‘providential circumstances.’

“3rd. That his influence is as necessary to the regeneration of the sinner, or his conversion to God, as is the work of Jesus Christ itself.

They are both necessary and essential parts of the one great scheme : John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born . . . of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'

"4th. That the 'Word' and 'providential circumstances' are some of the instruments by which the Holy Spirit brings his influence to bear upon the sinner's mind in conversion. But—

"5th. That this influence is special and irresistible—that is, is exerted only upon those who are ordained to believe, and exerted with a power which they cannot resist—are statements which, so far as my own experience is concerned, and so far as I have been able to examine and comprehend the language of Scripture, I do not feel warranted to assert ; but, on the contrary, I do think they are statements at variance with the Word of God. I shall only instance three passages in support of this idea, two from the Old and one from the New Testament: Gen. vi. 3, 'And the Lord said, *My Spirit* shall not always *strive* with man ;' Neh. ix. 30, 'Yet many years didst thou forbear with them, and testified against them by *thy Spirit* in thy prophets ; yet would they not give ear ; therefore thou gavest them into the hand of the people of the lands ;' Acts vii. 51, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always *resist the Holy Ghost* ; as your fathers did so do ye.' In these verses we have the following things:—

"1. That an influence was exerted upon unconverted men—men of whose after-conversion we have no account ; 'they were stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.'

"That this influence was resistible ; we are told they did resist it.

"That this influence was the influence of the Holy Ghost. The language of Scripture is the 'Spirit of the Lord'—'the Holy Ghost.' I cannot help thinking that it is an explaining away of the point and meaning of these passages, to say, that they merely signified that they resisted God's prophets, or his Word, or the providential circumstances in which they were placed. If no more than this had been really meant—if no influence of the Spirit was really exerted through these *media*—I cannot think that such language as 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man,' and 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost,' would have been used. Neither am I aware that the words τὸ ἅγιον τὸ Πνεῦμα [the Holy Spirit] are ever used in Scripture to denote simply, God's prophets, God's word, providential circumstances, or even the influence which these, apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit, may be supposed to exert upon the mind.

"The foregoing views are supported, I apprehend, by the exhortations conveyed to the saints, such as 'grieve not the Holy Spirit of God ;' 'quench not the Spirit.' Regeneration is the beginning of the new life. Sanctification is the maturing of that life. The same kind of influence which begins it, carries it on—the same kind of influence which carries it on, begins it. If this influence is such that it may be resisted at any of its stages, it seems to me that it may be resisted at the first as well as the last.

"I do not hold, however, that the bestowment of this influence is necessary to constitute man an accountable being—that man has any claim upon God for its bestowment—or that God was in any way bound by justice to bestow it upon man ; in this respect, the work of the Holy Spirit occupies the same ground as does the work or sacrifice

of Jesus. The atonement of Christ was not necessary to constitute man an accountable being—man had no claim upon God for the atonement—God was not in any way bound by justice to send his Son into the world. They both flow from the same source—the sovereign love of God. Neither do I think, that if God had seen meet to limit the atonement, or the bestowment of Divine influence, he would in either case have been acting unjustly toward any of his creatures. But God, in his sovereignty, caused that atonement to be made for all; and, I believe, in like manner also does he bestow the influence which is *necessary* to render that atonement available to all.

“*Ans.* III. I believe that, in so far as it may be said respecting any of our sentiments, at any particular period, that they are settled—mine are settled on the subject of the preceding query. Not that I do not find difficulties on the subject: these I feel to be many and great; but not so many or so great as those which I find on the other side. I hope I shall ever be found with my mind open to conviction, and the reception of truth, come from whatever quarter it may; guided, too, in all my investigations into this, and every other department of divine truth, by the Spirit of truth—and taught by the same Spirit, to hold all my sentiments on this, and every other doctrine, in the spirit of forbearance and love.—Yours respectfully,  
“JAMES SAMSON.”

Of a truth this letter also speaks for itself. We believe that there are few students in the divinity halls, either of Scotland or England, who could write so clear and Scriptural a *vidimus* of truth on the Work of the Holy Spirit. We are certain that if the learned Dr. Alexander, or any of the other brethren who took part in the “Expulsion,” should happen to cast their eyes now over this letter, if they would speak out the candid sentiments of their hearts, they would say, “The man who wrote such an epistle as that should not have been expelled from any theological seat of learning. On so difficult a point as election and irresistible grace, there ought to be forbearance, and room for difference of opinion, if only Christ the Head be held in all his integrity.” \*

The next letter which we insert is that of the Rev. James B. Robertson, who has ministered successively at Galashiels, Hamilton, and Bradford. We believe that Mr. Robertson now acts as Secretary to a Congregational Association in the West Riding of Yorkshire. We quote his letter, not merely for its own excellence, but because he had great influence among his fellow students at the time. He was a man of much intellectual power, and had gained, the

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\* Perhaps some critics may blame us for giving so many of these theological epistles. They may suppose that one would have been sufficient for our purpose. But it is our desire, even at the risk of overmuch reiteration, to show what the views objected to really were.

year before, the highest University prize in the Logic Class at Glasgow. Mr. Robertson's letter ran as follows:—

“GLASGOW, 12th April, 1844.

“RESPECTED TUTOR,—As you desired, I send you answers to the three queries proposed by you to the students. I might have answered them much more shortly than I do, but I was afraid you might misunderstand my meaning. Even as it is, I fear that some of the words which I use may be open to a wrong construction; but I have no others to express my meaning more correctly.

“In reply to the first question, I have to say that my sentiments are not now the same, in regard to divine influence, as they were when I was admitted to the privileges of the Academy. I am not sure if the dissimilarity can be said to amount to opposition.

“The second question, did I answer it by saying that I do hold a special influence, &c., would be correctly and honestly answered; but you would not know whether I agreed with or differed from you. Accordingly I answer it as follows:—I am *not* prepared to say (I think there is reason to suppose the contrary) that the influence put forth by the Holy Spirit through the Word and providential circumstances, is the only influence which he puts forth for the regeneration of the sinner or his conversion to God. I am, however, prepared to say, that, so far as my examination of the Scriptures has proceeded, I have not found anything to show, either that the Holy Spirit puts forth, or that it is *necessary* he should put forth, any other influence, except that which he puts forth by means of or through ‘moral suasion.’

“The expression ‘moral suasion’ involves to my mind—and it is chiefly as it involves this that I use it—resistibility. I think that such expressions as ‘ye do always resist the Holy Ghost,’ ‘grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,’ ‘quench not the Spirit,’ point it out as a fact that the Holy Spirit can be resisted.

“The third question I answer by stating that my sentiments on this matter are settled, so far as I have stated them—*i.e.*, I am at present under a conviction of their truth, which leads me to act upon them.

“I shall always seek that my mind may be kept open to instruction, from every quarter accessible to me, and have no hesitancy in saying that, in regard to the question of ‘divine influence,’ as well as many other questions, my opinions may be termed crude and ill-digested.

“I recognise the existence of an immense amount of phenomena, which have not yet come under my particular notice; and the examination of which may present difficulties, at present perhaps hardly felt. I shall cease to ask time for further consideration and inquiry only when I shall be conscious that I understand all the declarations of God upon the subject, which assuredly is not now.

“Feeling that there are difficulties now, I suspect that errors may exist, though I do not see them. I do not expect that time shall deliver me from all the difficulties, though I believe it shall from all the errors.

“I am, yours, very respectfully,

“JAMES ROBERTSON.

“REV. DR. WARDLAW.”

“NOTE.—The only statements, in addition to those in the letter to

Dr. W. which the Committee had before them, when they judged me as denying 'personal election to life,' were I think the following:—

"That I considered 'influence' as a word employed to conceal our ignorance of the secret workings of the Divine Spirit.

"That I consider it a very faulty mode of speech to talk of influence being *in* the Word.

"That *were it possible* for another agent than the Holy Spirit to employ that instrumentality, marked by the phrase 'moral suasion,' I believed an influence would be wanting which is not, He being the agent.

"That there may be persons in the place of torment upon whom influence has been exerted, *in order to conversion*.

"That I believed in election to blessings; but that, whilst I was not prepared to say what the blessings were, I did not believe that election was to the enjoyment of an irresistible influence of the Spirit, in order to faith, which influence was supposed to be necessary to conversion.

"That I considered the question of *irresistibility* as the main question in dispute. "J. R."

Passing over the answers sent by the Rev. A. C. Wood, now deceased, and Rev. Gilbert M'Callum, now of Springfield Congregational Church, Dewsbury, as containing nothing worthy of notice beyond the fact that they are to much the same effect as the foregoing, we are arrested by the two concluding letters—namely, those sent by the author's elder brother and himself. These brief notes are certainly not worthy of insertion for the sake of their doctrinal importance. We call attention to them rather on account of their brevity and the hesitation of mind which they express, and which certainly deserved more tender treatment than summary expulsion. We were mere youths at the time, and had been completely engrossed in the study of Latin and Greek, with a smattering of philosophy. All our theology had been learned in the Sabbath School, and from the pulpits of the Hamilton and Bellshill Congregational Churches, with the few popular works which we had read on the debated points. We thought the "new views" consistent and scriptural, but really wished to give the deep and important subjects on which we were questioned more mature consideration. Thus Mr. David Ferguson wrote:—

"I hold, as firmly as I hold the veracity of the Bible, that in every case of conversion the sinner is born of the Spirit; but before I can say whether the Spirit's operations in conversion be by motive, or by more than motive, general or special, resistible or irresistible, I must have time for further consideration and inquiry.—I remain, yours, very respectfully and affectionately,

"DAVID FERGUSON.

"To the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw."

The following are the replies sent by the author of this volume, then only nineteen years of age, and the youngest student at the time in the Theological Academy:—

“ROSEBANK, NEAR HAMILTON, 12th April, 1844.”

“I. My sentiments on the subject of Divine influence are the same now as they were when I was admitted into the Academy.

“II. I hold that without the influence of the Holy Spirit, the influence of the word, or providential circumstances, would never effect the regeneration of the sinner or his conversion to God; but I hesitate to admit that this influence is special, although I will not confidently assert that it is not.

“(It has caused me unfeigned sorrow, that I so unequivocally intimated my concurrence with the minute entered in the books of the Committee, on the day of examination, when admitted into the Academy, in which the influence of the Divine Spirit is designated ‘special.’ However much the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed, and the really undecided state of my mind, may excuse the step, I have, since that time, frequently wished that I had expressed *my leaning* to the opinion, that whenever the Gospel is faithfully preached, the influence of the Spirit *does* accompany the word spoken.)

“III. I have said that I *hesitate* to call the influence of the Spirit special. I am inclined to think it universal, from a broad view of the revealed character of God, and also from the general tenor of Scripture; but as there are several objections urged against this opinion, which I am not fully prepared to meet, and especially as there are some passages of Scripture which I cannot entirely reconcile with it, I think that I can, consistently with the above answer, ask time for further consideration and inquiry.—I remain, yours, very respectfully and affectionately,  
“To the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw.” “FERGUS FERGUSON, Jun.

“NOTE.—When examined before the Committee, I gave it as my more decided opinion that the influence of the Spirit is not special—is not irresistible; and also intimated my leaning to the opinion that the election of God is not an election *to* faith, but to holiness and to heaven upon foreknown faith.  
“F. F.”

The parenthesis inserted in the foregoing letter, after the reply to the second question, reminds us of a never-to-be-forgotten scene which was enacted in October 1843 in the Calton Convening Rooms, Edinburgh. We never pass that low-roofed building in the Scottish metropolis without being reminded of the incidents of that day on which we were examined before the Committee of the Theological Academy of the Scottish Congregationalists with a view of being admitted to that institution, the advantages of which, however, we only enjoyed for six months. We remember how awkward we felt when we rose to address the Rev. Drs. Wardlaw, of Glasgow; Alexander, of Edinburgh; Gowan, of Dalkeith; and Campbell, now of Bradford, with about twenty others, ministers and laymen, from the text, which had been

prescribed to us, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Of course we were not preaching to them, but *before* them—a *trial* sermon in more senses than one; yet once or twice we felt very uncomfortable when beseeching our "dear hearers" to "flee from the wrath to come"—which, if the reverend divines took it home to themselves, could only mean the ill-will they would get all over the country if they tried to crush the "New Views!" But what we remember most vividly of all was the fire of cross-questioning to which we were subjected for a full hour at the close of this tentative discourse. We bore with us a certificate of membership from the Rev. John Kirk, of Hamilton, to whose church we then belonged. The Committee were anxious that we should declare that we had no sympathy with what they thought to be some of his obnoxious tenets and statements on the work of the Holy Spirit. An aged layman, addressing us in half angry tones, said, "Young man, you must believe that the sinner is as dead and impotent as Lazarus was in his grave." There would not have been so much harm in this demand if our irate exhorter had been willing to admit that in every case in which the call "Come forth" is addressed to the dead soul, the influence qualifying him to come is granted by Him who calls—which, of course, the divines before us were not willing to admit. The regret to which the author gives expression in the parenthesis in his letter, had lingered in his tender conscience for half a year; because he feared that he had not sufficiently indicated his full sympathy with Mr. Kirk's views. His mind really was in a transition state, and was cloudy and confused on some points; but if he spoke perhaps too guardedly on the day of examination from a natural desire to be admitted into the institution, he threw all reserve away half a year afterwards, when called before the special Committee, after becoming somewhat more decided in his theological belief, and took the bold step of declaring in favour of resistible grace and conditional election—a step from which he has never since resiled, and which he has never since regretted.

We remember very distinctly the mental struggle through which we passed at this anxious time, when our ecclesiastical destiny for life was being decided. We used to lie awake at night making a strong effort to bring ourselves to accept the tenets which the Committee wished us to accept. But

the imaginary picture which rose up before our mind, and really turned the scale, was the following:—We fancied ourselves preaching to an impressed audience from such a text as that which had been prescribed to us for our trial sermon —“Ye will not come to me that ye might have life”—that we had waxed warm and earnest, and had pressed every hearer to decide immediately for eternity before leaving the building,—but that some intelligent listener had put the question to us at the foot of the pulpit stair, “Did you not sign a paper which declared election to be partial and unconditional?” That imaginary scene, we say, decided our wavering resolution.

When the Committee had considered at Dundee all the letters which had been sent in, we have seen that ten of them were deemed unsatisfactory, and that a smaller Committee was appointed to meet at Glasgow, on the 30th of April, 1844. Before this tribunal the suspected students, as already stated, were summoned to appear for final examination.

This Committee did meet in the vestry of West Nile Street Church on the day appointed, and the students were called in one by one. The object of the Committee seemed to be not to argue the points in dispute with the young men, but simply, besides putting a few doctrinal queries, to find out whether or not the lapse of a few weeks had produced any change upon their sentiments. The nature of the few questions which were put may be gathered from the foot-notes which are appended to several of the letters which have been already quoted. Thus the examination of all the ten extended over only two or three hours, and was concluded at a single sederunt.

The Committee's catechising was successful in one instance. A gentleman, now a minister of the U.P. Church, came up to their standard of orthodoxy, and was allowed to remain in the institution. His letter had been unsatisfactory; but his verbal explanations were pronounced up to the mark. We do not give the gentleman's name, lest he should consider that we took an unwarrantable liberty with him, at this distance of time. Nine of the young men, however, failed to give satisfaction, and they were told to return next day to the same place of meeting early in the forenoon.

The Committee spent the whole forenoon in debating what was to be done, while the nine students waited anxiously in an adjoining part of the building.

There seems to have been a good deal of discussion in the Committee as to the way in which the students should be dealt with; but at length Dr. Wardlaw moved and the Rev. Mr. Machray seconded that they should at once be cut off from the Academy. The Rev. J. H. Bateman, of Edinburgh, moved as an amendment, and the Rev. Mr. Weir, of Kilmarnock, seconded, "that they be not cut off in the meantime, but that a Committee be appointed to deal with them for two or three months, in order to see if they could come to a right understanding upon the subject." We need hardly inform our readers that the gentleman who proposed this kind and generous amendment is the same Mr. Bateman whose brotherly co-operation at Falkirk we have already had occasion to notice.

The motion of Dr. Wardlaw was however carried, and the students were called in to hear their sentence read in the shape of a body of resolutions which had been passed by the Committee. It was a very affecting scene. Dr. Wardlaw never looked the young men in the face, being apparently quite overcome with emotion. The students stood in a row lengthwise, up the room, in the order of seniority—Mr. Duncanson, as the eldest, standing at the far end of the line, and the author of this volume, as the youngest, at the end nearest the door. The following resolutions were then read over formally to the young men by the Committee's clerk or secretary:—

"That this Committee are strongly averse to everything that has in it the reality or even the appearance of laying constraint upon sentiment, and especially on religious sentiment, which, as it involves the deepest responsibility, ought most of all to be free:

"That they, at the same time, deeply feel the sacredness of the duty which, in present circumstances, has been imposed upon them, to the churches of the Congregational body in Scotland, with which they stand connected:

"That the doctrines of personal election to life, and of the necessity of a special influence of the Holy Spirit to the conversion of sinners, as following up and effecting the sovereign purpose of electing grace, have ever been among the things 'most surely believed' by the members of that body:

"That, this being the case, it would be an evident dereliction of their trust, on the part of the Committee of Management of the Theological Academy, to receive into that institution as students any brethren holding views at variance with the doctrines just mentioned, or even in a state of doubt and indecision respecting them; and that there would therefore be the same impropriety and unfaithfulness in retaining as in admitting them:

"That the following students have avowed their doubts, and several

of them more than doubts, relative to these important truths:—viz., Messrs. Alexander Duncanson, Ebenezer Kennedy, William Bathgate, James Samson, Alexander C. Wood, James Robertson, Gilbert M'Callum, jun., David Ferguson, and Fergus Ferguson, jun.; and that the Committee conceive it imperative that the names of these students be, in the meanwhile, erased from the roll of students connected with the institution; it being understood that they be re-eligible when they come to the conviction and profession of sentiments in accordance with the understood principles of the Congregational body:

“That in respect of the desire, expressed by some of the students whose names are erased from the roll, in terms of the preceding resolutions, for more time to consider the doctrines in question, the Committee—having the utmost anxiety to assist them in the attainment of settled views in accordance with the understood principles of the Congregational churches—appoint the following members of committee:—Dr. Wardlaw, Mr. Ingram, Mr. Thomson, and Mr. Russell, Glasgow; Mr. Knowles, Linlithgow; Mr. Machray, and Mr. Bateman, Edinburgh; and Mr. Sime, Airdrie—Mr. Russell to be convener—whose duty it shall be to converse with such of them as desire it for maturing and settling their views:

“And that, at the same time, this sentence be considered not as implying a charge of any such delinquency on the part of these young brethren, as the Committee have any right to reprehend, but simply as an act of consistency and of obvious duty to the churches, for which, and for the multiplication of which, the Theological Academy is designed to provide pastors and preachers.”

When these resolutions had been read over, the Rev. Mr. Machray proceeded to deliver an address to the students. This gentleman enjoyed a considerable reputation at the time as an itinerant evangelist. He had been loosed from his charge in Dumfries, and was supported by the late Mr. Douglas, of Cavers, that he might be wholly devoted to the work of preaching the Gospel from place to place. He remarked in the course of his address to the students that he could preach the Gospel as freely, as earnestly, and unreservedly as they claimed to be able to do; but that he possessed an advantage over them in one important particular. When he pressed men to come to Christ he knew that none of them would come, if left to themselves; but then he fell back confidently upon God's promise that he would make the Word effectual in the case of those on whom his heart was set. He even went the length of rating the students soundly for not reading their Bibles as they should have done, adding that if they had diligently studied the Word of God they would not be occupying their present position. The students were just about to be bowed out of the room after hearing this address; but one of their number

felt moved by the Spirit, whose work they honoured instead of dishonouring, to utter a few words in self-defence. The unexpected impromptu reply was uttered by Mr. J. B. Robertson. This gentleman was much respected by his fellow-students for his intellectual qualities as well as his fidelity to truth; and, as we have already noticed, he stood high in the University as well as in the Divinity Hall. Mr. Robertson said that "he and his fellow-students were doubtless thankful to the Rev. Mr. Machray for his plain and pointed observations, which possibly were well meant. But he could not let the address pass without repudiating in his own name and in that of his fellow-students the charge of inattention to the Word of God. For himself he could say that he never studied God's Word more anxiously or more earnestly than he had done for some months back; and from what he had heard and even knew, he might say the same for his brethren. And certainly when their entire temporal prospects might be said to be at stake, it would have been very surprising if they had not gone to God's Word with eagerness to see if they were not risking their future for an unscriptural dogma. No; they were not there for want of Bible study, but because they had studied the Bible for themselves. Mr. Machray had said that when he preached the Gospel he fell back with confidence upon God's promise that he would bless his preaching; and he had hinted that the nine young men now before them could not draw comfort from God's promised aid. The very reverse was the case. He and his fellow-students never ascended a pulpit without the comfortable conviction that God was with them,—more earnest than they were, more eager than they were, that all their hearers should get a blessing. While they were preaching they rejoiced to think that the Holy Spirit of God was pressing home the Word preached upon the hearts and consciences of their hearers, backing up their efforts and knocking loudly at the door of the soul. But if they held Mr. Machray's view, its effect upon their minds would be chilling in the extreme. For however earnestly they might pretend to cry to men, 'Why will ye die?' they would always be conscious of some mental reservation—of keeping back something from the people—since they would be concealing from them the fact that the irresistible grace of God's Spirit was *patent only to a few.*" These words, with which Mr. Robertson closed his address, "patent only to a few," seemed to come down upon

the Committee with mighty power, and under covert of them the nine students marched away, feeling that though "cast down they were not destroyed."

As may readily be believed, the expulsion of these nine young men caused great excitement throughout the country. On the one hand their peculiar views were caricatured and exaggerated into the grossest heresy, and they were even charged with denying the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost; but on the other hand many friendly arms of welcome were extended to them, and many kind words addressed to them. Mr. Bateman followed them out of the room to assure them that he still regarded them as fellow-labourers in the Lord's vineyard. The Rev. Mr. Lothian, of St. Andrews, could not sleep in his hotel in Edinburgh, when on his way home, but rose early in the morning to pen to them a sympathetic and fraternal epistle. They received even a long poetical address, printed off in blank verse, from some unknown friend as far away as Hull, in Yorkshire—himself a votary of the Muses, and who thought that they whom he addressed were under the same inspiration and care; for he likened them in his poem to the Nine Muses, and fervidly apostrophised them as "Ye noble nine!" But their most substantial help was received from Christian churches themselves; for in a few months the seven of their number who were prepared to enter at once on the work of the ministry were all settled either in churches that sympathised with their views or in new preaching stations where churches were soon afterwards formed. We have already noticed the fact, when quoting their letters, that several of these students eventually settled in England. Three of them are, while we write, labouring in connection with the English Congregational Union; and it certainly shows that a freer theological atmosphere is breathed south of the Tweed when we are able to add that not one of these gentlemen was asked to retract his views or sign any Calvinistic formulary of faith.

It would be observed that the Committee appointed a respectable Sub-Committee to whom any of the young men might go for counsel and advice with the view of being restored to the privileges of the Institution. But as the nine students knew very well that that Sub-Committee could do nothing for them unless their views were changed, they did not put them to the trouble of seeking an interview.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Ecclesiastical Action taken by the Congregationalists in Glasgow with Five Churches in the West of Scotland as to their Views on the Work of the Holy Spirit—The Hamilton Church—Correspondence between Dr. Wardlaw and Professor Kirk—The Hamilton Church refuses to part with its Minister—The Bellshill Church—Sketch of the Life and Labours of its Pastor, the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, Sen.—Reply of the Bellshill Church—Powerful Reference to Christ's Lament over Chorazin and Bethsaida—Bridgeton Church—They Reply by merely quoting Texts of Scripture.

WE must now pass from the ecclesiastical action which was taken in connection with the students of the Academy, to notice the peculiar way in which those churches were dealt with by the Scottish Congregationalists which were known to favour the doctrines of the universality and resistibility of grace. We have already mentioned that the students were under the immediate jurisdiction of the Academy Committee; but there was nothing like an ecclesiastical Court, to which the churches were amenable. For it is of the genius of Independency that all the churches of a district are on a level, and that no one has a right to interfere in the internal affairs of another. In these circumstances the somewhat peculiar course was resorted to of epistolary correspondence with a view to find out theological opinions. That is to say, the four Congregational churches in Glasgow determined to institute a brisk and lively intercourse by letter with the five churches in the west of Scotland, which were known to sympathise with the nine students, with this view, that in the event of the correspondence being unsatisfactory, they would withdraw from all fraternal intercourse with them.

We must now give the names of the five churches to whom the Glasgow letters were thus faithfully addressed. These were—the Congregational Church, Hamilton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Kirk; the Congregational Church, Bellshill, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, Senior; the Congregational Church, Bridgeton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Robert Simpson; the Congregational Church, Cambuslang, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John M'Robert; and the Con-

gregational Church, Ardrossan, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Peter Mather.

We say nothing as to the scripturalness or constitutional nature of the proceedings which were thus originated. We are aware that Dr. Wardlaw, who had recently published his work on Independency, thought that he had a fine opportunity of demonstrating to Presbyterians in Scotland how Congregationalists could manage a difficult doctrinal case without Courts of appeal. Perhaps he took the best course possible, looking at the matter from his stand-point; but, in our opinion, it would have been far better if he had let it alone—and this now is the general opinion in the connection. Of one thing we are certain—namely, that neither the apostle Peter nor Paul, nor James nor John, would have adopted any such course. Any man who confessed that Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God, had come in the flesh, they regarded as orthodox; and heresy they never scented till men like Hymeneus and Philetus denied the resurrection and “increased unto more ungodliness.” Practical immorality was what these founders of Christianity dreaded; and Peter would no more have dreamed of cutting off churches in Judea, Ionia, or Africa, because they differed from him in interpreting the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (in which he confessed that there were some things hard to be understood) than he would have thought of refusing fellowship to them because they met in the lower storey instead of the upper storey of a house, for the worship of the Lord.

Inasmuch as the “Entire Correspondence” between these Glasgow churches and the five suspected country churches has been published in a goodly volume, and is intimately connected with the history of the origin and progress of the Evangelical Union, we propose to give our readers some little idea of the arguments advanced, *pro* and *con*,—prefacing our notice of each case by a brief account of the minister who was thus taken to task.

We have already given a condensed biography of the Rev. Professor Kirk. Suffice it to say that, from the stage of his labours at which we left him, Mr. Kirk had pursued a career of indefatigable, evangelistic effort. He laboured, not only every week, but generally every night in the week, at what were then called “Revival, or Protracted Meetings,” and we believe that the name is still in vogue. He was the means

of planting many of the churches of the Evangelical Union, not merely in the neighbourhood of Hamilton, but in different parts of the country. We heard him once take as his text at the weekly prayer meeting in his own church in that town, in the middle ward of Lanarkshire, when he had come home exhausted from his much loved toil, these words of the similarly employed Apostle, "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 14-16.) Do not these words fully bear out all that the founders of the Evangelical Union ever contended for—namely, that God's Spirit, through his servants, is striving with all Gospel hearers alike; and that the diversity of their subsequent spiritual conditions results from their diverse treatment of the word heard? "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

One noteworthy feature of Mr. Kirk's history, from 1842 to 1844, was the close friendship which sprang up between him and the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., of Brayton Hall, near Carlisle. The Rev. Henry Wight brought Mr. Kirk with him to a series of meetings at Brayton, as we have already seen in connection with the case of the Rev. John Guthrie of Kendal; and the earnest baronet took quite a fancy to him. Indeed, under a sermon which Mr. Kirk preached in the library of the Hall, from the text, "I am the Way," Sir Wilfrid's view of the Gospel was made much clearer, and more satisfactory. He warmly espoused the cause of the nine students and the five churches; and many things were effected in these days of struggle and battle by his purse and influence which could not have been done without them. It is not too much to say that it is largely to the friendship of the family for Professor Kirk that Great Britain now owes the brave and thorough prohibitory career of the present Sir Wilfrid Lawson. The latter was a boy at the time when the Hamilton pastor first visited the Cumberland mansion-house, and thus early imbibed a love for the holy temperance cause.

It was when he was in the midst of this course of evangelistic effort that Mr. Kirk was called upon to buckle on his

armour to reply to the letters which were addressed to his church between the months of June and December, 1844, and which were signed by Ralph Wardlaw, Alex. Thomson, David Russell, and George S. Ingram, in name and by appointment of their several churches in Glasgow. There is this important difference between the letters addressed to the other four churches and those addressed to the Hamilton church, that the others were sent to the pastor as well as the people; whereas all the epistles which came to Hamilton were intended for the church alone. For the reverend interrogators held that they knew Mr. Kirk's views sufficiently from his published writings; and all they wanted to find out was whether or not his people agreed with him. The two questions which were put to the church in the first brief, introductory epistle were these:—

“1st. Do you hold that the influence which the Holy Spirit exerts in the conversion of sinners is a *general*, and in no case a *special* influence?—meaning by *general* that the Spirit's influence is put forth upon *all alike* who hear the Gospel, and that no *more* or *other* divine influence is exerted on those who *believe* the Gospel than on those who *reject* it.

“2nd. Have you ceased to hold the doctrine of personal and unconditional election?—meaning by that, the sovereign and gracious choice of individuals to eternal life by God.”

Of course, Mr. Kirk required to write the answers to all the letters which came (for no other member of the church considered himself fitted for close theological discussion), except passages in his own defence, which were written by Mr. John Naismith, the senior deacon. We may also state that the replies to the Hamilton letters were written by Dr. Wardlaw, so that the chief tug of war in this controversy lay between that renowned divine, who had won his first spurs as a controversialist in his debate with Yates, on the Divinity of Christ, as early as 1814, and the future professor of Pastoral Theology to the Evangelical Union.

There were four principal letters in all written, of considerable length—two by Mr. Kirk, and two by Dr. Wardlaw. We do not propose to give anything like an analysis of these compositions, which, however, we would recommend to the perusal of students of theology, as being fine specimens of dialectical skill. If the venerable Dr. Wardlaw excelled in clear, orderly reasoning, and in the power of elegant and eloquent expression, the then young Hamilton pastor was more than his match in earnest, zealous

declamation, with here and there powerfully pointed home-thrusts of Scriptural argumentation, besides having, in our opinion, the best side of the controversy. Dr. Wardlaw quoted some of the texts which have been already referred to, and which have always been thought strong redoubts on the Calvinistic side. Mr. Kirk endeavoured to parry these thrusts, suggested the Arminian interpretations, and quoted as formidable an array of texts on his side. We think that he succeeded best with Isa. v. 4, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it: wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Dr. Wardlaw tried to show that what God meant was, that he had done all that was needed among the Jews to make them accountable. But Mr. Kirk contended that God had really brought all the influence to bear upon them, which he could bring to bear upon them, in consistency with his all-wise providential arrangements, and the inviolability of that free agency with which he had himself endowed man.

Again, Mr. Kirk avowed it as his belief, and the belief of his people, that they not only held the influence of means, but the influence of the Holy Ghost working by means. Dr. Wardlaw retorted, that unless they would admit besides a direct, mysterious invincible energy, or breathing,—in fact, an inexplicable afflatus, accompanying the means, and rendering them in *some* instances effectual, he would conclude that they did not believe in the influence of the Spirit at all, but only in the influence of means. Now, this assumption, on the venerable Doctor's part, was, we maintain, wholly gratuitous. In nature, God works by means—yet he works really and powerfully, although sometimes barren ground resists his influence. And the same thing holds true in grace. For ourselves, we have always thought that the late Dr. Jenkyn's illustration of the universally diffused energy of nature, taking advantage of, and blessing the farmer's exertions—yet here and there resisted by bad soil—one of the very best types for setting off to advantage what we believe to be the real truth concerning the work of the Spirit—a universally diffused energy, which Christians, by prayer and earnest effort, can concentrate on given points in increased abundance—which obdurate men may resist to their own destruction, but which, in multitudes of instances, will result in the conversion of souls.

Dr. Wardlaw was very ill pleased with Mr. Kirk for saying that his view of the Spirit represented God as partial. But Mr. Kirk's reply was plain yet convincing.

“Suppose that two men throw themselves into a river to commit suicide—you are standing by the river with full power to save both—you exert that power in behalf of only one of the two—he is saved and the other lost. Now, we ask, why is the one saved and the other lost? We do not see that we would be talking absurdity if we said, ‘because you saved the one and refused to save the other.’ The one is saved because you pleased to save him—the other is lost because you did not please to save him.”

There is no doubt that the limitation in the Spirit's work for which Dr. Wardlaw pled just came to that; by a touch He might have saved all the non-elect, but He did not please to do it. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of candid people would call such procedure partial dealing.

Dr. Wardlaw again and again urged the Hamilton Church to say why, on their principles, one sinner was saved and another lost. Thus, for example, he wrote (at p. 69):—

“When the truth, then, is presented to many, and of these many it is received by a few and rejected by all the rest, we must still insist upon it, that in that case the cause of the difference between the former class and the latter *lies in themselves*; that they ‘make themselves to differ.’”

Now we never felt the force of this argument on which the Doctor repeatedly insisted and which he evidently deemed unanswerable. The judgment day will answer it. Those on the left hand—*should* they not have been on the right? And *might* they not have been on the right? If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the Doctor's difficulty vanishes into thin air. The righteous shall be on the right hand because they chose life; while the wicked shall be on the left hand because they would not have it. The righteous then “saved themselves” and “made themselves to differ?” In a most important and scriptural sense they did. God, through Ezekiel, said to the Jews, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit” (xviii. 31). And no less an authority than the Apostle Peter, and on the very day of Pentecost too, speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, by whom he had been newly baptized with fire, said, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts ii. 40). It will be, to all eternity, true that the saved took the step which the lost would not take; and the fact shall be to the everlasting *condemnation* of the latter (Heb. xi. 7).

Yet ask the shining ranks how they reached the blissful seats—and they will confess that the minute and comparatively immeritorious act of decision dwindles down into mere insignificance when compared with all that the Divine Saviour by his bleeding, and the Divine Spirit by his pleading, had done for them; so that, casting their crowns at Emmanuel's feet, they shall say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

Our readers may be interested to see how nobly the Hamilton Church stood up for their minister, and refused to part with him.

"You refer to our adherence to our pastor, as the ground on which you address us. Dear brethren, with regard to our beloved pastor, we know certainly that he has been much misrepresented. We fear he has been so to you. He has been charged with preaching universal pardon, and that man can save himself. It has been widely circulated that he denies the influence and work of the Holy Spirit. All this is utterly false. We, dear brethren, have been more delightfully engaged than in paying much attention to the cry of 'heresy' which has been raised. When our dear pastor came amongst us the great majority who *now* form the members of the church were living in rebellion against God. The number of members was then comparatively few. Very many of those who now address you were then living without God and without hope in the world, afraid of Jehovah, and yet not much alarmed for their condition. We were hiding, some under one refuge of lies, and some under another. Some of us, under the doctrine of election as we then understood it, were saying, 'If we are among the elect we will be saved, if not, we cannot help it;' and so we lived in sin. Some took shelter in the doctrine of a limited atonement, and thought that if Jesus died for us we were safe, and if not, we could not alter our case. A great many of us took refuge under what we believe is a more popular, yet not less fatal error, the doctrine of *partiality* in the Spirit's use of his influence, and were waiting for that without which we thought we could not believe the gospel. The very men whom you now suppose to be teaching error were the instruments in the hand of the Spirit of God of undeceiving us. They exposed, and thus destroyed in our minds, the lying refuges under which we were hiding. We were led by their means to flee to Jesus, the only refuge for the guilty soul. Some of us were convinced of sin, and the awful guilt of slighting God's message of mercy in the Gospel of his Son, by means of our dear friends and brethren, Messrs. Simpson of Bridgeton, Wight of Carlisle, Ferguson of Bellshill, MacRobert of Cambuslang, Morison of Kilmarnock, Morison of Bathgate, Rutherford of Falkirk, and James Samson, who was with us in our pastor's absence; but the great majority of us have been brought to the Saviour, and now enjoy peace with God, by the instrumentality of our pastor. We have more still, brethren, to tell you of the labours of our pastor. The church of Bellshill took its rise from ours. The church at Strathaven, consisting of about sixty members, now enjoying the labours of our

respected brother, Mr. Duncanson—that at Wishawtown, about the same number, favoured with the services of our dear brother Mr. Cross—were both branches from this church; and the majority of the members of these last two churches have been brought to the Redeemer through the labours of our pastor. We might refer you to the conversions to God that have taken place in Cumberland and elsewhere, but we forbear. We ascribe all the praise to God, who has thus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, given testimony to the word of his grace—his free and infinite grace—that flows to all through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Did you really know the doctrine and manner of life of our dear pastor, you would not—you could not—wish us to abandon him.

“We have written to you thus fully, dear brethren, in answer to your queries, that you might be fully able to judge of our case; and now, with all our hearts we pray—“May the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“We are, yours, in the bonds of the love of Jesus,

“*(Signed and Printed by the unanimous appointment of the Church, 23rd June, 1844.)*

“JOHN NAISMITH, SEN.

“HENRY DRUMMOND.

“WILLIAM REID.

“NEIL LIVINGSTONE.

“JOHN AIRD.

“ORD ADAM.

“JOHN THOMSON.

“CHARLES PILE.

“JOHN NAISMITH, JUNR.

“THOMAS PURDIE.”

We have inserted the names of all the deacons who signed this letter, for the sake, indeed, of giving the respected signatures complete, but chiefly that we might call attention to the fourth name, “Neil Livingstone.” He was the father of the renowned traveller, Dr. Livingstone. He had fully embraced Mr. Kirk’s views of world-wide grace, and died in the comfort which they imparted. He was a Nathanael,—“an Israelite, indeed, in whom there was no guile.” His son had become distinguished before the father died; but the latter had not seen him for fifteen years, and he longed to embrace him—as Jacob longed to embrace Joseph—before his departure. But the privilege was denied him. His frequent exclamation during years of weary waiting, while the valorous traveller was tracking the Zambesi from its source to the eastern sea, was, “O Davit, man, but ye’re lang o’ comin’.”

Doubtless the happy spirits of father and son have already met in the better world.

In the month of December, 1844, the final letter was received by the Hamilton brethren from the four Glasgow Churches, towards the close of which they were informed that they must needs separate, and that thenceforth there would be no ecclesiastical fellowship between them. But so signal were the manifestations of the Saviour's presence at the time, that, rejoicing much in his smiles, they did not feel deeply the disownment of men—pious and excellent in many respects although they were.

The next letter of inquiry as to the work of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of Election, was addressed by the Four Congregational Churches of Glasgow to the Congregational Church in Bellshill, under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, senior, now of Aberdeen. Before entering briefly on the consideration of this correspondence, it will be necessary to premise a little about the history of the church, with its pastor, which was thus addressed.

Mr. Ferguson had been in business in Glasgow, and had retired to live in the neighbourhood of Hamilton. He had been a member and Sunday School teacher in the Church of Dr. Chalmers, when that great man was thundering Sabbath after Sabbath, both from the Tron pulpit, and, subsequently, from that of St. John's. Thereafter, Mr. Ferguson had joined the church of Dr. Wardlaw, having been attracted both by the greater purity of its communion and by the evangelical ministrations of that able divine.

When living in retirement at Hamilton, Mr. Ferguson could not be idle. He first threw himself into the political discussions which agitated the country-side about the time when the Reform Bill was passed, and also became President of the Hamilton Voluntary Association, which was originated by the exciting controversy on Church Establishments. He was Dr. Ritchie's chairman when that Champion of Dissent visited the town in his memorable ecclesiastical crusade.

But there was yet another movement which lay still nearer Mr. Ferguson's heart,—and that was the spiritual welfare of his fellow-men. He had not sat in vain at the feet of two such preachers as Chalmers and Wardlaw; and consequently the religious condition of the surrounding population pressed upon his spirit. He had joined the little Congregational

Church in the town of Hamilton, and had been somewhat instrumental in raising it to a condition of comparative prosperity. He taught a Bible-class every Sabbath-day in the little chapel, during the interval of worship; and it is noteworthy that while he was conducting his young scholars through the Acts of the Apostles, one of them gave himself first to the Lord and then to his people,—and that youth was David Livingstone, whose body, not long ago, was laid, with public honours, in Westminster Abbey.

But Mr. Ferguson began to venture to preach as well as to teach. Naturally fluent and forcible in speech, he established first a Sabbath evening service in the village of Quarter, where many of the rural inhabitants professed to give their hearts to the Lord; and the first public gift which he ever received was a large family Bible, presented to him by the grateful people in recognition of his unwearied labours there during successive winters. Still he had never attempted anything like preaching at canonical hours. It is interesting to hear how this was brought about.

Mr. Ferguson was a Deacon of the Congregational Church in Hamilton when the Rev. John Kirk was settled over it; and when his earnest labours began to tell on the surrounding neighbourhood, as we have already narrated, there were about a dozen simple-hearted men “whose hearts God had touched,” who joined the Hamilton Church, and walked into the town every Sabbath-day to public worship. Finding the journey of four miles to be somewhat inconvenient, and having heard of Mr. Ferguson’s labours, they requested him to visit their village, and preach the Gospel. At first they proposed to have only Sabbath evening services; but as these increased in interest, the idea of regular ministrations began to dawn upon their minds. Bellshill was a village situated half-way between Hamilton and Airdrie, and within an easy distance of several large mining centres of population. Mr. Ferguson’s first sermons were delivered in a saw-pit by the high-way side; and when a regular preaching station was first thought of, the only available place of meeting was a small school-room, which consisted only of two little dwelling-houses, with the partitions removed which had divided them.

But deeply interesting audiences of men and women began to be crowded into that small edifice. The country side was moved at the time by what was known as the “Kilsyth

revival;" and labouring and heavy laden souls pressed to hear the Word of God, and put the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Nor were they disappointed when they came; for Mr. Ferguson met them with the consolations of the Gospel, as well as with the terrors of the law. He had, by this time, attended James Morison's trial at Glasgow, and had read the earliest publications of that glowing evangelist, so that he was prepared to give his hearers rich and satisfying repasts of the Bread of Life. Careless ones, too, who came out of mere curiosity, were arrested by the Spirit of God. "He looked me full in the face," said a hardy son of the mine, who had served the devil only too diligently, "and cried out, 'Sinner, I mean you;' I hid behind a big woman who was sitting before me, and the next time I ventured to look over her shoulder the preacher looked me full in the face, and cried out again, 'Yes, sinner, I mean you.' I felt that God had a controversy with my soul." Tidings of these powerful ministrations began to be circulated in the neighbourhood. That celebrated local preacher, "Saunders Patrick"—whose memoir has been so admirably written by the Rev. Mr. Drake, Wesleyan minister,—happening to come from Airdrie to conduct a religious service in the village, was, according to his custom, praying for all the ministers of the parish in succession. When he came to the newest importation, he forgot Mr. Ferguson's name, but exclaimed, "O Lord, I mean the big man in the wee kirk."

As the school-room could not contain the half of the people who wished to attend, steps were taken to erect a building, which still stands by the way-side, with this inscription. "Congregational Chapel, 1842." It was capable of containing about 600 hearers, and cost only between £700 and £800, so plain was the structure—although, in truth, twice that sum of money would be needed to erect it now. It was opened by the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, who preached there to a crowded audience on the forenoon of a Sabbath-day in October, 1842.

Mr. Ferguson had, for some time, applied himself with zeal to theological study, notwithstanding that he had by this time reached middle life; and, as the number of converts had mounted up to about two hundred, they were formed into a church, and he was called to be their

pastor, in March, 1843. His ordination took place on the afternoon of a Thursday,—in that month, the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw addressing the pastor, and the Rev. Thos. Pullar, who lately died at Hamilton, Canada West, addressing the church.

We have a very vivid recollection of that service. We were attending Glasgow University at that time, and we came up by the coach to be present at the ordination service. It was the only occasion on which we ever had the privilege of conversing with Dr. Wardlaw, and we noticed the courtliness of his manners, and the charm that ever accompanied him in social life. We fancy we still see him standing in the pulpit and beseeching the newly-ordained pastor to approve himself in all things as the faithful servant of God. Some of his sentences still linger in our recollection:—"O my brother!" he said, "never forget that the greatest triumph which can be accomplished on earth is the conversion of a soul; and a minister's labours are never so highly honoured as when men are born of God through his instrumentality. It may be of importance to polish the jewel after it has been found, but the chief thing is to dig it out of the mine. It may be, and it is, important to dress up the stone for the front of the building, but he does the greatest work who excavates it from the quarry in which it lay imbedded." When speaking of the way in which the Gospel should be preached, the "old man eloquent" exclaimed again, "Oh, tell sinners to believe! tell them they have only to believe! tell them to believe now!" And then there was a sudden pause; the preacher's heart had filled; he had to wait a little till his emotion had subsided. The effect upon the audience was deep. The great majority of those who composed it had but recently passed from death to life themselves; and it delighted their hearts to hear a man so eminent in the Christian church speak so glowingly on the Gospel of the grace of God. When the same distinguished divine, however, sought, not long afterwards, to commend to them the creed, that only when special grace came—which had been provided only for some—faith was possible, the simple-hearted villagers were puzzled; they could not reconcile the theology and the tears. They believed the tears to be perfectly genuine; but they did not see how they themselves could have shed them, if the worthy Doctor's belief had been theirs, unless indeed they had wept over the hopelessness of

being ever able to reconcile points so really divergent and self-contradictory.

Mr. Ferguson's mode of conducting his ministrations in these days was remarkable. His residence was four miles distant from his church; and he drove thither in his own conveyance on both Sabbath-day and week-day, crossing the storied Bothwell Bridge on his way. Besides preaching on the Lord's day, he kept up an almost unbroken series of revival meetings in the mining villages around Bellshill. Holytown, Newarthill, Carnbroe, Chapelhall, and even the distant Shotts Iron Works, shared in his evangelistic labours. He was generally accompanied by his two sons when they were at home from College in the summer time—the one of whom acted as hostler, seeing the conveyance put up, and the horse attended to, while the other, the author of this volume, helped in the preaching of the Gospel. The people came to know the grey horse as it passed through the villages; and they had learned to call the conveyance "the Gospel chariot." The chapel became crowded, and the membership mounted up to over 300. After a series of successful meetings at Shotts Iron Works, as many as fifty individuals walked regularly to Bellshill to hear the preacher who had benefited them—a distance of ten miles! The people who dwelt in a hamlet through which the "pilgrims" passed could not understand what it was that took so many persons so far from their homes Sabbath after Sabbath. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and some of the curious young men of the place determined to lurk behind the hedges, and hear what the serious groups were talking about, as they passed on their way back on the Sunday afternoon. And lo! they were all talking of the great salvation and of the things of the kingdom of God!

Now, it was quite in the midst of this work of grace that the Glasgow questions dropped like thunderbolts in the summer of 1844, summoning the earnest miners to descend and investigate the mines of fore-knowledge and fore-ordination—deeper far than the coal-filled caverns in which they daily earned their bread.

The letter sent to the Bellshill Church was undoubtedly more Calvinistic in its type than that sent to the neighbouring church in Hamilton. The hyper-Calvinistic doctrine of Regeneration before Faith was plainly insisted upon in it;

and credit for the same was given by rumour to the pastor of the Nile Street Church, now settled in England. It need not be matter of surprise, therefore, that after postulating such a dogma, the writer should turn round upon the members of the Bellshill Church, and say, "Brethren, we are at a loss to conceive what you have done with the doctrine of Regeneration; for we can see no place for it in your system." The simple-minded people had no difficulty in replying that they had put the doctrine exactly where the Apostle James and the Apostle Peter had put it: for the former had said, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (i. 18); and the latter, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

A strong point, however, which the Bellshill Church made, was their reference to the Saviour's "woe" pronounced over Chorazin and Bethsaida:—

"Again, our Saviour says (Matt. xi. 21), 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.' Here it is plainly stated that works were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, *and resisted by them*, which would have converted Tyre and Sidon had they been wrought in those places. We do not enter here of course into the grounds on which Tyre and Sidon were condemned. These were doubtless quite sufficient to warrant their condemnation; but we quote the passage to show *what* the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida resisted—they resisted what would have saved others."

Now, we think that this quotation was most pertinent and powerful. The point in debate was, whether or not the influence which God brings to bear upon men, in order to accomplish their conversion, is always irresistible. Here the church which was called to the bar quotes a lamentation made by the Lord of Glory himself over the cities that resisted him, in which he alleges that, if such influence had been exerted upon Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented. How do the metropolitan interrogators ward off the scriptural shaft that was sent back to their battlements by the suburban warriors? Somewhat hesitatingly in their reply to Bellshill, but without hesitation in their reply to Ardrossan, —as if the lapse of a month or two had given them greater confidence,—they take up the position that the repentance spoken of was a national and superficial repentance, as in the case of the Ninevites (Luke ix. 32), and that it should

not be placed on a level with repentance unto life. Now we do not think that the context justifies this gloss. It is plain that the submission spoken of is that which will affect human destiny at the "day of judgment," and is parallel to the "coming" to Jesus, and the reception of his yoke, referred to at the end of the chapter (Matt. xi. 28-30). As to a national repentance apart from an individual one, we do not know very well what is meant by the phrase; and we have certainly read our Bibles amiss, and must have rejoiced over trophies of the truth without cause, if the men of Nineveh were not genuine converts, and did not, many of them, "pass from death unto life."

The second letter sent by the Bellshill Church was both dignified and decided, and contained a clear summary of the chief scriptural arguments in favour of the doctrine of World-wide and Resistible Grace. We give the following spirited passage as a sample of the reasoning:—

"Suppose two men equally guilty, and both under the wrath and curse of God, to hear a sermon, in which the scheme of salvation is clearly exhibited, and the claims of Jesus powerfully enforced. The special influence of the Spirit is given to the one, and he, of course, believes and is saved; the other receives no such blessing, and he resists and is condemned. What brings on him this condemnation? You will answer, his sins. But he was born with a corrupt nature, which leads him *naturally to sin*; and special influence is as necessary, according to your theory, in order to his believing, as is the propitiation, his own reason, or God's record. *His salvation is an utter impossibility without this special influence*; but he never receives it; and we ask you on what grounds will the man upbraid himself eternally in hell, and justify God? The misery of the condemned would be modified were their consciences not eternally to do this. O, brethren, see where your views lead the poor helpless sinner,—just to lie still and excuse himself till he get special internal influence to convert him."

It was this view of the truth that weighed so heavily with all the interrogated churches—namely, that on no other principle of administration than that which was afforded by the doctrines called in question, could the sinner be brought in "speechless" at the last day. As was to be expected from the tone of the correspondence, the four Glasgow churches bade the church in Bellshill "Farewell"; but although they did so, we do not believe that He who said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," approved of the adieu, or shared in its utterance. The church still prospers, being now in the enjoyment of the vigorous ministrations of the Rev. George Wisely.

The third letter of inquiry was sent "To the Congregational Church, Bridgeton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. R. Simpson."

Bridgeton is a populous suburb of Glasgow, or rather one of its eastern wings, having been for several years included in the extended municipality. Mr. Simpson, who had been at one time a deacon in Dr. Wardlaw's church, had been the means of forming a considerable church in the district. Both he and his people warmly sympathised with the views which Mr. Kirk and others had propounded about that time. Indeed, they knew no other way of either contemplating or setting forth the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The Bridgeton Church adopted a somewhat novel and even amusing mode of answering the crucial questions—namely, by the quotation of one or two passages of Scripture, without note or comment! This style of response was considered to be evasive and disrespectful by the four interrogating churches, who forthwith bade their Bridgeton brethren "Good-bye," not merely for the transmission of solely scriptural answers, but because their pastor and they kept company with the men whose answers had been explicit and distinct. Thus, if they were not shut out of the ecclesiastical nest because it had been proved that their feathers were of a heterodox hue, or because they had shown "the white feather," they were forbidden to approach the four-branched tree at Glasgow, on the principle that "birds of a feather flock together." Yet, in their isolation, they rejoiced because the Most High said, "He shall cover thee with his feathers;" and because they had pressed close to the heart of him who gathers sinners and saints to himself, "as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings," and weeps over those who resist his grace, and will not come.

We are happy to be able to state that the Bridgeton Church, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Robert Hood, is, at the present date, one of the most flourishing churches in the Evangelical Union.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Letter to the Church in Cambuslang—The Rev. Mr. M'Robert's simple but effective replies—Letter to the Ardrossan Church—Sketch of the Life of its Pastor, Rev. Peter Mather—His powerful and most triumphant replies—Correspondence with two Churches in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen—The Case of the Rev. Alexander Duff of Fraserburgh—Also of the Rev. Nisbet Galloway of Forres.

THE fourth letter, as we learn from the "Entire Correspondence," was addressed "To the Congregational Church, Cambuslang, under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. M'Robert."

Cambuslang is a village about four miles distant from Glasgow. It was the scene of a remarkable revival about 130 years ago under the unique preaching of the renowned George Whitefield. The glen stands unchanged near the parish church, where the great preacher stood in the hollow; while the people, seated on the grass, were spread out before him and above him in amphitheatric fashion. A Congregational church had been formed in the village about the beginning of the present century; and although its members were, comparatively speaking, not numerous, there were among them some of the "excellent" and the very "salt" of the earth.

Mr. M'Robert, who was pastor of the church in 1844, had been deeply interested in revival work, and had, without hesitation, adopted Mr. Morison's views as the only consistent doctrinal basis on which earnest revival preaching could be reared. He and his lady had both been brought up in the fellowship of Dr. Wardlaw's church, and had a great reverence for the character of that eminent man. Consequently it was with great pain that they found themselves brought into collision with their "mother church," and their "father in the Lord."

We have already explained, with respect to this theological correspondence, that the minister, in each case, wrote the letters, which the church afterwards homologated. The Cambuslang Church, in the exordium of their first reply, touched impressively on a subject, which indeed the other interrogated churches also noticed—namely, that it was quite a new thing in a Scottish Congregational church to make agreement on the Calvinistic doctrine of Election either

a term of admission to the denomination or of continued fellowship in it. They thus write:—

“We must, however, premise, that the nature of divine influence or the views entertained of election were subjects not inquired into, when we were admitted into the fellowship of the church. This is equally true of *four* of our number admitted to George Street, and of *three* admitted to Nile Street Churches, as of those admitted at Cambuslang. The chief thing sought was, that the applicants had obtained peace with God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. When we had satisfactory evidence, that they had been received by Christ and had a desire to walk with us in the fellowship of the Gospel, we gladly gave them the right hand of fellowship. In this way we may have done the work of the Lord *partially*, but though some of us have been for more than thirty years in the church, and were well acquainted with the original members, yet we never knew, nor heard of any other bond of union than love to the Lord Jesus, and a preference of our church order. Can it be, that for more than forty years we have all been under misapprehension? for we did think that our union with sister churches rested on our affording credible evidence of love to the exalted Saviour and to each other for his sake. We do hope that this is still to be the bond of union among our churches. Moreover, some of us distinctly recollect Dr. Waidlaw declaring from our pulpit, that the Creed of a Congregational church was this, ‘Man has sinned; the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ And further, the Magazine, whether under the title of *Missionary, Herald, or Congregational*, affords evidence that some diversity of sentiment has always obtained among some in the churches.

“We freely own to you, dear brethren, that there are shades of difference among us on the points called in question. But we have found no difficulty in forbearing with one another in love—we like better to ‘be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,’ than be compelled to wear the Chinese slipper of a stiff and rigid uniformity. But if our bond of union with sister churches is now to be our perfect concord in a whole system of doctrines, written and stereotyped, instead of affording evidence of being ‘Epistles of Christ, written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God,’ we are free to express our fears, that the results among us will neither be glory to God—good to his people—nor prosperity to his cause. To the details of a theological system, we greatly prefer, as a bond of union, the apostolic summary, ‘In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and on the Israel of God.’ Theological systems are important in their own place; but as a basis of union among professors of Christianity, they have hitherto proved a signal failure. Indeed, we imagined that such things, for a bond of union, were decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away.”

We are certain that the Glasgow churches must have felt the force of this touching and truthful remonstrance; and we would suppose that nine-tenths of all the Congregational churches in the land, were they polled to-day, would vote for

this plain and unadorned village confession of faith, rather than for the complicated one which the city clergymen were seeking to impose upon their neighbours a few miles up the Clyde.

Some of Mr. M'Robert's paragraphs, although expressed simply, have struck us, on re-perusing the documents of the period, as being fresh and original, and fraught with all the power of Biblical truthfulness. Thus he writes in his first letter :—

“We do not hold the Spirit and the Word as one more than that Jesus and the Twelve were one ; yet, still, the reception or rejection of their message, was the reception or rejection of Jesus, and of his Father too. We can distinguish between yourselves and your epistle sent to us. But should we fail to yield satisfaction on the two points, you will, no doubt, regard us as resisting you—*i.e.*, your friendly counsel. Now, it is simply because it is said in the great Text-book that the Holy Spirit is resisted by unbelievers, and may be grieved or quenched by believers, that we conclude his influence is not *invincible*: successful resistance in that case would be out of the question.”

He also puts the following point very pithily and well :—

“There is no need to seek to exclude boasting by election or special influence, when faith does it perfectly and for ever.”

Again, he writes in his second letter :—

“You say ‘To the gift of his Son God has added the gift of his Spirit: the *former* is *universal*. the *latter* is special. The latter is as *indispensable* as the *former*.’ We know without the shedding of blood there is no remission’; and we hold that the Spirit's influence is equally necessary to conversion. But, dear brethren, since his influence is thus *indispensable*, how can salvation be within the reach of any one to whom the Spirit's influence does not come? In that case there could not be good news to any but to the elect.”

Of course, the final “farewell” was sent out to Cambuslang as well as to the other three churches already named. But in this case, although final in the sense of coming in at the close of the correspondence, it was not final in the sense of lasting for ever ; for in a short time Mr. M'Robert, who had demitted his charge at Cambuslang, was received back into the Congregational body, and a few years afterwards the church itself was restored to the confidence and fellowship of the Glasgow churches. We do not know whether or not Mr. M'Robert (who has been labouring usefully for many years at Denholm, near Hawick) acknowledged any change of sentiment on the debated points when he was re-admitted by his former brethren. The statements which we have just

quoted are so convincing and unanswerable that, we should suppose, although his views may have been modified on some minor points, they cannot have been moved away from the great, full-orbed truths thus distinctly enunciated. And as to the church at Cambuslang, we have ourselves been told repeatedly by some of its leading members that, when they were received back to fraternal fellowship by the Glasgow churches, they were not asked to retract the doctrines of Universal and Resistible Grace, and Conditional Election, for which, as the public correspondence testifies, they had zealously contended. We cannot but record our joy that the Congregational churches of Glasgow have thus practically confessed that they were too precipitate in their action in 1844.

The fifth and last letter was addressed by the four Glasgow churches "To the Congregational Church, Ardrossan, under the pastoral care of the Rev. P. Mather."

Mr. Mather had been minister for many years of the Secession Church, West Kilbride, Ayrshire. All his life he had been respected, like one of whom we spoke in the last chapter, as "a Nathanael—an Israelite, indeed, in whom was no guile." We have heard a story told of him by an aged gentleman, when he came first to preach in that village as a licentiate of the Secession Church, and which we quote, both because it throws light upon the customs of the period and the character of the preacher. It seems to have been usual in West Kilbride, on the Saturday afternoon, to put in the prophet's—that is, the licentiate's—chamber a large Bible and a good stiff glass of whisky; and the landlady, as well as the *douce* elders who heard her gossip about the probationers, used to form their conclusions anent the piety and *spirituality* of the young men from the heartiness with which they turned to the spirits or the Scriptures! Some quaffed the liquor at once and neglected the Word. Others paid partial attention to both. But Peter Mather left the glass untouched, but pored diligently over the other "Glass," in which was to be seen reflected "the glory of the Lord." In all probability this was one of the reasons why he was called to be the minister of the church.

About the year 1834 Mr. Mather changed his views of church government. He had been led to prefer the Congregational system of ecclesiastical polity as more scriptural and primitive than the Presbyterian. Being a thoroughly con-

scientious and honest man, he sought an interview with Dr. Wardlaw; and having been encouraged to assume the pastorate of a small Congregational church, which then met in Brown Street, in the west end of Glasgow, he removed to that city. But although his mind was colossal, like his person, there was a monotony in his utterance that unfitted him, to a great extent, for a city charge; and, consequently, after having given the commercial metropolis a trial for a year or two, he returned to Western Ayrshire, "by way of the sea," where some scores of people, who had learned to respect his high moral worth when he was minister of Kilbride, gathered around him, and gladly sat at his feet. A humble chapel was built for him in Glasgow Street, Ardrossan; and for six or eight years before he was called upon to take part in the theological discussions of which we are treating, his tall and commanding form might be seen from day to day moving along the sandy and sea-washed shore between Ardrossan and Saltcoats, as he went to preach the Word in church or school-room, or at the bed-side of the sick and dying.

When Mr. Morison's case began to make a noise in the country, he warmly sympathised with him in all his efforts and as to all his trials. He was among the first of the Ayrshire ministers who appeared as a friend and brother in Clerk's Lane pulpit, when other faces were beginning to be turned away; and when the kindred controversy arose in the Congregational body on the work of the Holy Spirit, it will be seen from the sequel with what zeal and enthusiasm Mr. Mather embraced the views of the nine students who had been ejected from the theological hall. We do not hesitate to say that, while all the letters written by the other churches were clear and convincing, and did credit to the writers, those written by Mr. Mather for his church in Ardrossan carry off the palm for logical power and eloquence, and what we may call the withering satire of a holy indignation. The soul of the meek and harmless man was stirred by the terrible deficiency which he saw in that lame and unequal Gospel which represented a provision in Christ for all, but irresistible grace for only some, and also at the attempt which was made to impose so deficient a system on the churches as the *sine qua non* of orthodoxy and the touchstone of retention in fellowship. If he was angry, he felt that he "did well to be angry." He "was angry, and sinned not." He was jealous, with a holy jealousy, for the

cause and the character of God. For himself he was wholly unselfish. "Silver and gold had he none;" and he cast himself on the providence of God, glad because he had enjoyed the opportunity of testifying to the truth and the benevolence of his heavenly Father.

As Jonathan Edwards required to write some of his most difficult theological treatises in the midst of unhappy church disturbances and unkind treatment at Northampton, New England, Mr. Mather sat down to pen these treatises on the Work of the Holy Spirit with a heavy heart; for he thus opens his first letter of reply to the Glasgow brethren:—

"ARDROSSAN, *2nd October, 1844.*

"BELOVED BRETHREN,—The Congregational Church in Ardrossan received a letter from you, dated the 8th of June last, containing two questions, to which you requested them to send specific answers—in relation to which they wrote you a letter, dated the 24th of the same month, containing six queries for explanation before they proceeded to give a direct reply—and to these they received specific answers, in a letter from you dated the 5th of August. At the time the church received this letter, they were engaged, and had been engaged for some time, in a weighty case of discipline, that involved the character of four of their members, during the pending of which, such a spirit had been excited in some, that at the close of it, on the 18th of August, our pastor conceived it to be his duty to resign his office: this led to the complete breaking up of the fellowship. But after various preliminary steps had been taken, a large majority of the former members re-united in fellowship, and recognised Mr. Mather as their pastor; and though our number has been diminished, we constitute the Congregational Church in Ardrossan, assembling in the accustomed place of worship, holding fellowship with the churches of the Congregational Union of Scotland. And now that we have some leisure to consider the important subject, with your leave, we homologate the above-mentioned correspondence, and proceed to answer your letter of the 8th June, finding our way to do this made much easier by the very explicit answers sent to the six queries, for which we give you hearty thanks."

Alas! the veil is here lifted, revealing a state of things with which many a poor minister is but too familiar. A church rent in twain and needing to be re-constituted! How many sleepless nights does such a state of things imply, and days during which the minister, on whose shoulders the chief burden comes, would be sick at heart and sorrowful. And yet, as if the local troubles were not sufficient, a solemn missive must needs come down from Glasgow, threatening excision by rich and respectable brethren for alleged theological errors. In truth, the best reply that could have

been sent to so touching a disclosure would have been the following, by return of post:—"Glasgow, in the year of *grace*, 1844. Dear Brethren, we sist all ecclesiastical proceedings, and sympathise with you to the extent of £100. Yours sincerely, Ralph Wardlaw, &c."

But Mr. Mather was not the man to put on a poor mouth and cry for mercy. No. Having simply stated his church troubles as a reason for delay, he proceeds at once to discuss the theological questions which had been sent to him, with the manly independence and even with the holy indignation to which we have referred; for, on the very next page, we find him writing:—

"Keeping, therefore, the second particular of our answer in view, we shall not determine whether '*in any case*,' 'MORE OR OTHER divine influence is exerted on' 'some of those who BELIEVE the Gospel, than on those who reject it:' but we affirm that, *if not now*, at least hereafter, every saint will conclude that those condemned for not believing the Gospel had divine influence, in kind and degree, brought to bear upon their minds amply sufficient to have accomplished their conversion—influences, such as had been exerted on themselves, and which had subdued them to Christ—and further, we affirm that every sinner condemned for rejecting the Gospel will then feel convinced in his own mind, not through any deception, but from the clearest evidence, that he rejected the Gospel under *the very kind* of influences to which many yielded and were saved. This, in our estimation, is that which will give intensity to the unquenchable flame, and energy to the undying worm!

"Your second question respects personal and unconditional election: to this question we submit the following answer:—That God chose any number of persons to whom the Gospel comes, with a view to confer upon them *a special influence*, by which they might be brought into a state of salvation, and that he determined to withhold that influence from others, and yet condemn them for rejecting the Gospel, are sentiments which we not only do not hold, but which we strongly condemn; being satisfied that they are unscriptural, and, stripped of the dress in which they often appear, that they have but a feeble hold of the minds of any number of Christians in the Congregational Churches of Scotland."

Again, after another letter has come down from Glasgow, he thus writes:—

"We find that we did not misrepresent your views, and the views of many, of the Spirit's work in conversion, when we characterised it 'as a secret, unseen, indescribable influence, exerted *within* the minds and hearts only of sinners who are saved,'—this we said, 'we do not hold.' These words you quote, and respecting them and a previous quotation from our letter, you say, 'What you thus strongly condemn, and are satisfied is unscriptural, we firmly believe to be the truth of God.' Now, we regret exceedingly that you should homologate our description of your views, and yet entertain the idea of breaking the fellowship

of our churches, because different views are held of a dogma which you cannot logically define. You don't thus act respecting other doctrines; you can tell us what you mean by the doctrine of 'trinity in unity': for though *the mode* of the divine subsistence is inexplicable, we can tell one another in plain terms what we understand by the doctrine—we can do the same by the doctrine of the hypostatical union in the person of the Mediator—we can do the same by the doctrine of conversion—by the doctrine of justification by faith, &c. But here it appears, we must be at one with you in a doctrine that respects *an influence*, which, by your own admission, is 'secret, unseen, indescribable.' How dare you demand adhesion to a dogma that you cannot set before us in an intelligible form of words? We ask not how the Spirit works. We ask what he does. This you do not declare. You say indeed (page 2nd), 'His special work was by accompanying the truth to secure conversion;' and (page 9th), 'We hold that the Spirit accompanies the truth, and exerts a direct power within the mind and heart of the sinner.' Well, is it the pressure of a hand—the glance of an eye—a smile—a frown? You give us no information: yet you demand accordance with your views, or separate us from your fellowship! Brethren, we hold that 'there is divine influence put forth in conversion:' and notwithstanding your declaration to the contrary, we reiterate and maintain the *position*, that 'the question between you and us is not, Is there divine influence put forth in conversion? but, What is the influence?'"

In reply to the remark of the four churches that "there is nothing in your views that can be regarded as a recognition of the Spirit's influence at all," he makes the following forcible and glowing statement of his views:—

"By the Spirit's influence then exerted *upon* sinners with a view to their conversion, we understand the influence of doctrine, promise, precept, threatening, narrative: the influence of the glory and terror of the future: the influence of revealed eternal mercy and overpowering love: the influence of Christian conversation and Christian example: the influence of the private and public ministry of the word: the influence of the dispensations of providence by which the Gospel and sinners are brought into contact, and by which many are from time to time awakened to attend to the truth as it is in Jesus. All these and such like we regard as under the direction of the Holy Spirit, according to John xiv. 16, 17; xvi. 7-11; to which passages we crave your attention, comparing them with 2 Cor. iii, 8, 'How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?' The influences adverted to are sometimes in greater and sometimes in less abundance, according to His own infinite wisdom, as to what is and what is not suitable, in this and the other case. But we wish to state with equal plainness, that we regard these, and such like influences, as *personally* employed by the Spirit, *as truly* as we regard the frown or the smile which you put on, the authority which you display, the commands which you issue, and the promises which you make, as influences put forth by you: without you they are not; and whatever is effected by them is effected by you. Nay, much more—inconceivably more: your promises, commands, &c., may be found on record when you have left the world, and when you

can no longer, by any power of yours, employ them or accomplish anything by them. But the Holy Spirit ever lives: everything in divine truth, in divine love, adverted to *is his*: providential dispensations for furthering the interest of the kingdom of Christ are ever directed by him: the Gospel and all it contains is as truly his breath, his voice, his fire, at this moment as when first uttered by him; *and without him* the Word and other things specified accomplish nothing for the salvation of sinners. By these and such like does he testify of Christ, 'and knock at the door' for Christ: but that his influence is often resisted to men's eternal undoing, we must believe, according to many declarations in the Word of God, and from the very ground of the Gospel-despiser's condemnation. Any other view, however ingeniously put forth, tends, in our estimation, to impeach the truth, and sincerity, and justice of our Heavenly Father: 'But let God be true and every man a liar.'"

And yet, again,—

"God will not save your system; but he will save and glorify his own justice: and notwithstanding your opposition to the sentiments expressed in our last letter on this subject, both saints and sinners will see and acknowledge the equity of the divine procedure, in the very fact that all that the former received was *in all respects* within the reach of the latter. But, then, as a proof of the correctness of your views you say that the inward influence is in every case 'ultimately efficacious and *must* be so.' We make free to ask, Did any of you, *for any time*, resist that influence? If you answer 'No, it was never exerted till the last moment—we yielded just when it was put forth.' Then you will be incapable of repenting because of long continued opposition to the Gospel. Do you demur to this? Then you oppose your own views of truth: for without the special influence you could not submit: and therefore, if you repent, and your repentance accord with truth, as you view it, it must be mere regret that the Spirit of God was so late in working, and not regret that you were so late in yielding. But if this be unwelcome to you, then you must admit that the Spirit is resisted, even by those who ultimately believe, and that just up to the very moment of their believing: and hence, that by all preceding operations of this *efficacious* influence, nothing is intended—to give things their right names, it is mere play: or if every preceding operation of the influence is designed to produce substantial results, we are left in doubt as to whether the *ultimate efficacy* arises from its own intrinsic power, or from the *exhaustion* of the sinner through long continued opposition."

The following illustrations are pertinent and powerful in refutation of the assertion that no influence was worthy of the name, but that which was irresistible:—

"Were the testimony of man to be so viewed, as you appear to view the testimony of God, there would be universal scepticism in the world. For the testimony of danger will have *no influence* unless the testifier, at the same time inflict on you a heavy blow! The testimony that your prison doors are opened will have *no influence* on you unless the testifier seize your person, rush through the lobby, and hurl you over the stairs!"

There is something truly awful for the Christian mind to contemplate in the picture presented in the following appeal, a little farther down :—

“If, however, there be *in* the divine testimony that which is adequate to secure the faith and obedience of sinners, then it is easy to see how they are ‘responsible for rejecting the Gospel’; and that they must ‘be speechless at the judgment day.’ If not, it is easy to conceive, as they have heard your instructions, and perused your literature, which professes to give the only correct view of divine influence, they must say, just as others are represented as saying on a kindred point (Matthew xxv. 44), ‘Lord, when didst thou impart to us the special influence, under the power of which those at thy right hand believed and were saved? Condemn us for our sins, thou blessed Lamb of God, and not for rejecting thee, seeing there was nothing in the testimony sent to us to command our faith, as—witness, all ye saints!’ But you say right; they will be speechless; and therefore, our views of divine influence are correct.”

In reply to the rejoinder of the Glasgow churches, that on his theory the saved sinner has ground for boasting, Mr. Mather has the following paragraph, in which some apt illustrations are so triumphantly satisfactory, as almost to amount to sarcasm :—

“Brethren, if it be not as we have affirmed, then no saint of God can acquiesce in the condemnation of *unbelievers* until the ideas of eternal justice which he has derived from the Word of God be perverted. If you have been startled from your propriety, it is by a spectre of your own raising; for we can no more conceive than you of a saint having any ground of boasting either here or ‘in the place where angels veil their faces.’ But two beggars are perishing with hunger: the one absolutely refuses the provision that you urge him to take, and dies; the other, after much persuasion, takes it and recovers strength: he then glories in himself, and thanks himself because he allowed himself to be fed! Two men are struggling in the river; one of your number springs in to save them: the one orders you to bear off, he refuses to be saved, and plunges into the pool and dies: you stretch out your hand, lay hold of the other and bring him safely to shore, and the moment he has time to look round him, and to look upon you, his whole soul is fired with admiration of himself, and all his thanks are given to himself because he suffered you to save him. Admirable philosopher! It does seem very remarkable to us that a saved sinner cannot trace all his salvation in every part of it to the grace of God, because others have resisted grace and refused to be saved. And, if possible, it seems still more remarkable that before he can come to the proper pitch of gratitude and praise, he must be well assured that not one on the left hand of the Judge had one particle of that grace within his reach, under the power of which he believed and was saved—*all must be special*; otherwise the saint is dumb or only *self-gratulant*! Brethren, we would take a favour from you: you might build us a ‘synagogue’: but if you do—and we discover that the same favour, in similar circumstances, has been offered to another church,

and that they *successfully refused it*—then you must expect no gratitude from us: we will trace all our chapel comfort to our being *more easily persuaded* to receive the favour, than the other church that refused it; and our next step in all probability will be to engrave a tablet to our own merit!”

Perhaps our readers may think that we are giving too many extracts from Mr. Mather’s letters; but we make voluminous quotations for two reasons: (1) Because the respected writer has never, in our opinion, had full justice done him as a writer of eloquence and power, even in our own denomination; and (2), Because we believe that his arguments are mighty and unanswerable. It is quite plain from the reply of the four churches that they could not meet the crushing appeals made by the inoffensive but really majestic soul with whom they were combating. They had “roused a Tartar”; and they thought it best to be very brief in their answer. Indeed, Mr. Mather’s whole performance bristles over with these gems of unanswerable exposition and appeal. Take the following additional specimens:—

“Because many sinners are not saved, and we affirm that they have all that the saved get for conversion, you conclude that *all might disbelieve*; and that there is nothing according to our views to secure the faith of *any*. Your reasoning amounts to this—a teacher came to instruct my children: John and James abode in their ignorance; there is therefore nothing in his system of instruction to effect the enlightenment of any mind. We hold that there is in the means and influences put forth, wielded and applied by the Holy Spirit, that which is adequate to secure the conversion of every sinner; and on this account we joyfully accord with eternal justice in the condemnation of them that refuse the Gospel.”

We have another short but powerfully sarcastic simile at page 170:—

“You present the most suitable provision to a man dying of hunger; but the moment he looks upon it he is affected with dreadful nausea: you have a remedy that soothes the stomach the moment it is applied; but you withhold it, and claim credit for generosity by saying, *What could have been done more?* It is true, ‘God is under no obligation to furnish sinners with privileges, and far less with the grace of the Spirit to make them effectual,’ unless he mean to ‘reap’ and ‘gather’; but if he do, he hath laid himself under obligation to furnish both.”

And a little farther on, in the same page, we have one of the writer’s truly withering passages, being a rejoinder to the allegation of the Glasgow churches, that, in Isaiah vi. 4, “God was speaking after the manner of men”:—

“God *does not here speak* ‘after the manner of men’; for only dishonest men would so speak, pretending to have done all that is

needful, while the thing that is most needful has not been done at all. God *speaks* to the 'inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah'; and if they had learned to separate between the truth of the Spirit and the influence of the Spirit, for conversion, in the way you do, they might have replied, 'Yes, Lord, thou couldst have done more: thou couldst have given what thou didst to Abraham and Moses, and Miriam and Hannah, and Samuel, and to this thy messenger, Isaiah!' But the Word of God hints at no such reply: and we may safely conclude, that those to whom the appeal was made knew nothing about the distinctions which you make. With all their wickedness, conscience sealed their uncircumcised lips, and re-echoed the voice of God, 'What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?' And why speak, according to your theory, of 'God's being under no obligation to furnish them even with privileges'? Are men the better or the worse for privileges, 'without the grace of his Spirit to make them effectual?' Never to have been born is inconceivably preferable to the possession of such privileges—to have had a millstone bound about the neck in the earliest days, and to have been cast into the sea, is inconceivably preferable!—privileges that lay men under a tenfold greater condemnation than will be the portion of those who never possess them; while yet without *the influence* which, according to you, 'Jesus bestows on each of the promised seed, and does not impart to others' (page 1st). All abuse, all will abuse, what you call privileges; it has ever been so, it always will be so: it is uniform, and must be so, as the succession of day and night, according to your theory. Better far, therefore, be Hamites, dwelling in degraded and oppressed Africa, than the children of Abraham, according to the flesh, dwelling in the 'valley of vision,' the land of milk and honey. With the light of the Gospel to guide you, why do you thus insult truth, and the God of truth, under such a mistaken notion of doing him honour? Our heavenly Father neither condescends to *think nor speak*, in this passage, after *your manner*. He gives privileges, but he gives with them all that is needful to make them efficacious: and when he condemns those whom he has thus favoured, he condemns them for despising what was really *designed* and calculated to bring them to penitence, purity, and love."

Let us not be misunderstood, as we linger over this controversy, and endeavour to give point again to these sharp arrows which were shot thirty years since by a strong arm from a powerful bow. We have no wish to revive any of the acrimony that gathered around these old discussions. But it is due to the present, and perhaps to succeeding, generations, that they should know the reasons why the separation was made in the Congregational, as well as in the Presbyterian body, and why the Evangelical Union stands by itself in the land. We did not act in a schismatic manner. We did not go out rashly and ultroneously. We were thrust out. And we think that we have shown, in these successive chapters, that if the "view" of truth we had got a hold of was

somewhat "new" in the connection, it was justified by Scripture, and should have been made a ground of forbearance, especially by Congregationalists, who recognised no authoritative confession of faith in symbolical standards. It was all very well and very easy for the four Glasgow churches to insist upon an inward and invincible work of the Spirit, and to maintain that they who denied that denied the work of that Divine Agent altogether; and this is the point on which they ring the changes continually throughout their share of the *Entire Correspondence*. But the subject has another side, especially when we take into account the fact that this irresistible influence is regarded as being conferred upon the unconditionally elect alone. There may not be so much difficulty, in connection with it, in accounting for the salvation of the righteous on the right hand at the last day; but it presents a terrible stumbling-block to the candid mind when one thinks, we repeat, of the *speechlessness of the wicked on the left hand*. And it is because the letters of the five churches, and particularly those written by Mr. Mather, bring out this most important view in a most unanswerable light, that we have lingered over them in this and previous chapters, and given copious extracts. Indeed, in our opinion, no other view of divine influence will *cover all the ground*, and meet satisfactorily the claims both of God as Sovereign, and of man as a responsible sinner, than that which admits, on the one hand, the indispensableness and reality of the work of the Holy Ghost; but, on the other, asserts it to be world-wide in its extent, and resistible in its nature.

Before leaving the subject of the *Entire Correspondence*, we must do ourselves the pleasure of remarking that, apart from the course of authoritative investigation and ultimate withdrawal which they adopted, the four churches, with their pastors, were strictly honourable and gentlemanly in their dealings with their opponents. They took no undue advantage of them; and in the matter of allowing them a fair hearing, and afterwards of publishing in full all they had thought proper to write, they did them every justice. Nor need this be matter of surprise when it is remembered that the courteous Dr. Wardlaw, and others that might be named, took the lead in the proceedings. It really grieved them to do what they thought it to be their duty to do.

Plainly, however, the point should have been made one of forbearance among brethren who agreed on the grand

cardinal doctrines of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Depravity of Man, and the Deity of the Son of God. And we doubt not that a more cordial feeling will soon spring up between all the parties in the churches thus rudely separated, both in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches; and to this increase of harmony two factors, in our opinion, will mainly contribute—recent revivals of religion, drawing all true friends of the Gospel nearer to one another in love; and recent assaults of scepticism, rallying them in a united phalanx against a common foe.

Mr. Mather continued to minister to the Congregational church in Ardrossan for a short time after the four Glasgow churches bade him and his people farewell. But *The Christian News* having been projected in 1846, in Glasgow, he settled in that city as editor of that weekly journal. He filled the editor's chair with great dignity and success for many years, and was at the same time generally employed in the pleasant work of preaching on the Lord's-day the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. His Christian worth and urbanity of manners made him highly acceptable wherever he went in town and country; nor did he desist from his much-loved labours till a slight stroke of paralysis warned him that the shades of evening were gathering around. In the close of his life he enjoyed a pension, which the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson kindly settled upon him.

We are happy to be able to add that the church in Ardrossan continues to flourish at the present day; and no wonder,—for it has enjoyed, ever since Mr. Mather demitted his charge, the valuable and much appreciated labours of the Rev. Alexander Cross.

Besides the five Congregational ministers and churches in the south already referred to, two or three others in the north of Scotland were suspected of being unsound as to their views of the nature and extent of the work of the Holy Spirit, and were dealt with accordingly, in the year 1844, by the sister churches in their immediate neighbourhood. We may here remark that this mode of neighbourly remonstrance of church with church was the plan of ecclesiastical action recommended by Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow. Dr. Alexander, of Edinburgh, however, was all along opposed to such a mode of procedure; for he took up the ground that the pastors should be dealt with, not the churches; inasmuch as, he maintained, churches would adopt, as a general rule, any

view or set of views which their pastors might please to advance, so that if the pastors could be got over, the churches would follow. This programme of action was certainly more complimentary to the clergymen than to the churches; but as there were no ministerial heretics in Dr. Alexander's immediate neighbourhood, he had no opportunity of acting out his minister-isolating scheme.

The two suspected churches in the north were at Westhills, then called Blackhills, and Cotton, or Woodside, both in the immediate neighbourhood of Aberdeen; and the Aberdeen churches resolved to adopt Dr. Wardlaw's plan of catechetical correspondence with them. The pastors of these churches, whom rumour declared to be unsound, were the Rev. Alex. Monro, now Dr. Monro, of Forres—a gentleman who has since proved to be a benefactor to his native land, by his lectures and publications on the hydropathic treatment of disease, as well as by the establishment of hydropathic institutions in different parts of the country; and the Rev. James Byres Laing, M.A., now Dr. Laing, of Hamilton, province of Ontario. The questions which were sent to these ministers, as the representatives of their churches, and which were intended to be laid before the latter, bore chiefly on the doctrine of election and the work of the Holy Spirit, and were much to the same effect as those already quoted, which had been sent from the Glasgow pastors to their brethren in the neighbourhood of that city, although they were differently classified, being all ranged under the three heads, Regeneration, Sanctification, and Election. The Aberdeen missives were signed by Alexander Thomson, John Kennedy, David Wallace, and David Arthur, in name of, and as representing the three Congregational churches in George Street, Blackfriars Street, and Frederick street, of that city,—one of which, however, was a collegiate charge. Our readers will recognise in this list the names of the eminent Dr. Kennedy, of Stepney, London, recently the chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, as well as of the Rev. Mr. Arthur, whose ministry in Aberdeen for upwards of thirty years has been so eminently successful, and whose friendship and kindly co-operation have been so highly prized for some time back by the Evangelical Union churches in that city.

The Blackhills Church, in their reply, took up peculiar and impregnable ground; or, if the latter word be thought too

strong, it was certainly ground which it must have been felt very difficult to storm. Mr. Monro's predecessor had been the accomplished Rev. Anthony Gowan, afterwards Rev. Dr. Gowan, of Dalkeith, and one of the Professors of the Congregational Divinity Hall. He had found the meetings of the church strictly limitarians as to the atonement of Christ—believing that the Saviour had really shed his blood only for the elect. Mr. Gowan had left them believers in the doctrine of the universal atonement; for he had taught them Dr. Wardlaw's view, and they had, to a man, aye, and to a woman, received it. Now this enlargement of view, on the part of the Blackhills Church, was very well known in the north, and accordingly the interrogated brethren made a dexterous use of the fact in their rejoinder. They refused to answer the questions which were put to them by the Aberdeen churches; (1) because these were not asked for the sake of eliciting information, but simply, in their opinion, with a view to provide an ostensible ground for a pre-determined condemnation; and (2) because it was most unreasonable that the Aberdeen churches should find fault with their enlarged view of the Holy Spirit's work when they had found no fault with their enlarged view of the work of Christ, and all the more when the second enlargement was only the logical and legitimate outcome of the other. Our readers will now understand what we meant when we said that this Blackhills position was hard to take at the point of the ecclesiastical bayonet. The little church seemed to be strongly and securely entrenched on its *black* and frowning eminence. A reconnoitring theological general, if candid, would have confessed that it had rather an ugly look, and that it would need to be cautiously circumvented and surprised!

Mr. Laing and his church as we learn from the published correspondence, also replied to the three questions proposed by calling in question the right of their sister churches to make agreement on these difficult points which had perplexed theologians of all lands and ages, the basis and condition of continued fellowship. They say, "Were we to propose these questions to each individual member, it is very likely that some among us might answer them in one way, and some in another, while others, and perhaps the majority, would be very much at a loss to *comprehend* your queries so as to give any definite answer to them at all." Of course such replies were not deemed satisfactory, and final

letters were sent to the two suburban societies announcing the withdrawal of the city churches from fellowship and co-operation with them. We may mention that the Blackhills or Westhills Church is still supplied from the Evangelical Union and is in connection with it; but the Woodside Church, ten or twelve years ago, when Dr. Laing removed to Canada, was taken back again into the fellowship of the Congregational Union, and that too, without having professed its faith in the Calvinistic doctrine of the unconditional election of some men to eternal life. It is freely asserted that Dr. Kennedy, of London, with the enlarged charity of heart which thirty years of public life have produced, and having himself also kept pace with the development of religious thought in the southern part of the kingdom, does not now hesitate to say that the ecclesiastical action of 1844 was a mistake. We have already mentioned the name of him who is to-day the leading and the senior Congregational minister of Aberdeen as having, by his conciliatory conduct, indicated a similar change of opinion. We hope that the friendly interchange of denominational greetings between the C. U. and the E. U. annual conventions (if not the comprehensive confederation of the two connections), which has been recently proposed, may yet take place, and may have the effect of repairing the rent that was made yet more effectively, and of wiping out all that was disagreeable in the past.

A third minister in the North of Scotland, the Rev. Archibald Duff, of Fraserburgh, also suffered in this same year of 1844 for the maintenance of the "New Views." This gentleman, as well as Messrs. Monro and Laing, had been a fellow-student of Mr. Kirk at the Congregational Academy, and had warmly sympathised with the doctrines of free grace which Mr. Morison and he had taught. At first the leading members of the church in Fraserburgh fully approved of Mr. Duff's teaching, and took part with him in the circulation of the tracts that came from the south. But eventually it was supposed that some personal misunderstandings led these gentlemen to array themselves against Mr. Duff's doctrines as well as against himself, fortifying their theological position in various stormy church meetings by letters from neighbouring ministers in Aberdeen, Banff, and Stuartfield. As the result of these disputes, Mr. Duff withdrew from the church, along with fifty-nine members,

three of whom were deacons, and formed a new Congregational church, which has ever since received ministers and licentiates from the Evangelical Union. Mr. Duff preached his last sermon in the Mid Street Congregational Church, on the last Sabbath of 1844, and his first to the nucleus of the new cause on the first Sabbath of 1845, in the Town Hall of Fraserburgh, the use of which was kindly granted to him by the chief magistrate, the late Lewis Chalmers, Esq., till his new chapel would be ready. This building was rapidly proceeded with; and it may be mentioned that the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, a warm friend of the "New Views," as they were called in the town, contributed handsomely towards its erection. Mr. Duff afterwards removed to Liverpool, where he preached for some time to the friends of the Scottish movement in that important centre; and subsequently he rendered very important service by filling the pastorate of the Independent Church in Hawick for several years, which has since joined the Evangelical Union. Ultimately he was induced to return to Canada, whence he had come to Scotland to prepare for the ministry; and there he at present ministers to a large Congregational church, in Sherbrooke, province of Quebec.

About the same time the Congregational church in Forres was shunted, by the ecclesiastical proceedings which were common at the period, into the siding of the Evangelical Union, from which body it has ever since received its supply of preaching and its ministers. Mr. Nisbet Galloway had finished his theological training at the Glasgow Academy just a year before the expulsion of the nine students took place. But, although he had narrowly escaped the crucial test of May, 1844, he was not to be let off altogether; for when he had received and accepted a call to the Congregational Church in Forres, it began to be rumoured throughout the north of Scotland that he too had been infected with the heretical taint of believing that there was "no respect of persons" with God's Holy Spirit. Accordingly, a committee of inquiry must needs come down on him too. The Rev. Messrs. Monro, of Knockando (father of Dr. Monro), and M'Neil, of Elgin, met with Mr. Galloway, and, after a lengthened interview, declared his views on the work of the Spirit to be unsatisfactory, and refused to ordain him. Dr. Monro, of Forres, writes us: "Mr. Galloway then applied to Dr. Laing and myself to ordain him. Compliance on my

part was the unpardonable offence that cut me off from fellowship and intercourse with all the churches I had been familiar with from my youth." It is sad to observe to what suffering a man of Dr. Monro's affectionate disposition must have been subjected, in being thus denied ecclesiastical intercourse with his dearest friends, and, among them, his own father, for maintaining that the Divine Spirit knocked honestly and earnestly at the heart of every man to whom the Gospel message came. Mr. Monro, sen., was a good man; but he took high ground as to this Calvinistic position. Doubtless, it must have pained the veteran minister to be separated ecclesiastically from so excellent a son; and on the other hand, He who said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," would take note of the sacrifice which the son made in venturing to differ from and displease his venerable sire. What a comfort to reflect that all such differences shall be forgotten and obliterated in that blessed land of light to which we are all hastening, and where we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known!

The Rev. Nisbet Galloway, who recently fell asleep in Christ as pastor of the church in Newburgh, Fife, subsequently laboured for thirty-two years in connection with the Evangelical Union. We have no hesitation in saying, that the reason why the E. U. Church in Muslin Street, Bridgeton, became so thoroughly and intelligently consolidated, was that it enjoyed for ten or twelve years the advantage of his thoughtful and edifying ministry.

In bringing to a close our history of the doctrinal contentings of thirty years ago as to the nature and extent of the work of the Holy Spirit, we are impressed with the conviction that perhaps the earnest and able writers in their zeal to make plain the resistibility and universality of that Divine Agent's operations, did not sufficiently dwell upon their inscrutability, and that therefore they could not be fully explained by, or to, the human mind. For ourselves individually, we always maintained, as the share which we took in these early controversies, that as the Saviour had likened the Spirit's movements to those of the invisible wind, we would count it irreverent to pretend that we knew all about the mode and the secrets of His dealings with the soul of man. And the longer we live we are more and more deeply persuaded that the Creator of man's mind may have

means of access to that awful, regal tenant of the body, which we cannot fully analyse or describe. But of course the result of his operation must, in every case, be the awakening of moral reflection and resolve; since only in that way can a moral being be influenced, or moral government be maintained. But in so far as the resistibility and universality of the Divine Spirit's work is concerned, we think that the demonstrations which we have submitted to our readers are impregnable in their logical and Scriptural strength; and it is certainly a matter of surprise that, at so early a date, the minds of the writers had reached findings and expositions so fully matured.

We are aware that it is frequently objected to this doctrine that if the Holy Spirit strive with all flesh, where is there any necessity for praying for his gracious aid? To this we might be content to reply (1) that God himself tells us that his Spirit strives with all flesh; and (2) that we pray for daily bread and other temporal blessings, even although we believe that God is willing to bestow them on us, and has even already made provision in the laws of nature for our supply. But we do not hesitate to go further and maintain (3) that a *reserve of grace* is in the Lord's hands, and is poured out in answer to believing prayer. This fact the founders of the Evangelical Union were from the first ready to admit; and several references to the tenet are found scattered throughout those early publications, our review of which has now been concluded. Their opinion seems to have been this (and indeed they indorse the sentiment to this day) that when a church is roused to earnest and united prayer, God can do more through its members and in connection with their zeal than he could do in a different state of things, even as in certain temperatures and conditions of the material atmosphere specially abundant and fertilising showers do fall. Thus it will be observed that this doctrine of a reserve of grace is not inconsistent with the Divine complaint so often insisted on during these controversies, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Nor is the all-important point of resistibility thereby sacrificed; for the conversion of sinners is not necessitated by that increased degree of influence, but only rendered more probable. Under the less degree a sinner may be saved; while under the greater degree he may still harden his neck and be lost.

Yet whatever our readers may think of our doctrines (and we are persuaded that their simple exposition must have carried conviction to many a candid mind) we are of opinion that the great majority of the readers who have perused our narrative will by this time have concluded that it is wrong to make so difficult a doctrine as that of the unconditional election of some men to life a test of orthodoxy, and to extrude from Christian societies earnest, devoted, and useful men who think that they have seen cause in their Bibles to question it.

## CHAPTER XX.

Formation of a church in Glasgow, in 1844, in sympathy with the Evangelical Union—Formation of a similar church in Edinburgh—Case of the Rev. William Scott, of Free St. Mark's, Glasgow—Formation of an E. U. church in the city of Aberdeen.

WE have now, in this detailed history, narrated all the ecclesiastical proceedings which took place in connection with those ministers and churches that may be regarded as the founders and parents of the Evangelical Union, along with the students of the Congregational Theological Academy, against whom also distinct action was taken. These were—Kilmarnock, Bathgate, Falkirk, and Kendal, in the Secession Church; and Hamilton, Bellshill, Cambuslang, Bridgeton, Ardrossan, Westhills, Woodside, Fraserburgh, and Forries in the Congregational body. There were so many village stations, however, principally in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock and Hamilton, which desired preachers, and eventually pastors, in full sympathy with the expelled ministers, that the number of the churches co-operating with the new denomination soon mounted up to twice the original thirteen. For these young charges the nine ejected students, as well as Mr. Morison's first quaternion at Kilmarnock, were found to be quite providentially prepared. Thus, Mr. William Bathgate, in 1844, was settled at Shotts Iron Works; Mr. A. C. Wood at Strathaven; and Mr. J. B. Robertson at Galashiels—the latter being the first, but happily not the last, outpost in the south-eastern part of Scotland, at which the banner of the Three Great Universalities was unfurled.

But as yet no voice was lifted up on behalf of this world-wide Gospel in any of the great centres of population such

as Glasgow and Edinburgh. It is true that the Muslin Street Church, in the suburb of Bridgeton, had already been opened; but many who had heard Dr. Morison plead at his trial in Glasgow, and who also warmly sympathised with the nine Congregational students, were very anxious that the condemned tenets should be publicly expounded and defended in the heart of that great city. Accordingly, as early as the month of June, 1844, arrangements were made to hold a series of protracted meetings in the Trades' Hall, Glassford Street. The late Mr. John Little, author of "The Death-bed Experience of Mrs. Little" (a tract which reached an immense circulation, having been highly recommended by Dr. Campbell in the columns of the *Banner* newspaper), and Mr. James Clark, well known in political and religious circles in the city of Glasgow, were prominent among the Christian laymen who formed the nucleus around which the new cause gathered. The meetings from the first were a decided success. Large numbers attended on week nights; and on the Sabbath day, especially at the evening service, the hall could not contain the crowds that assembled to hear the words of eternal life. The Rev. Messrs. Morison, of Bathgate and Kilmarnock; Kirk, of Hamilton; Ferguson, of Bellshill; M'Robert, of Cambuslang; and Mather, of Ardrossan, assisted by some of the nine students, took part in the meetings, which were held for several weeks. The ministers themselves were surprised at the great number of people who remained for religious conversation. The leading doctrine which they advocated—immediate peace to the soul of man through the simple belief of the great fact of the atonement effected eighteen hundred years ago, brought relief to many sin-burdened consciences, and also dispelled, by God's blessing, the clouds that hung over the minds of many good people who had been mixing up their own subjective frames and feelings with the great objective work which alone reveals the heart of God, and alone constitutes the ground of reconciliation. Before the meetings were concluded, as many as seventy or eighty individuals had put down their names in token of their willingness to be formed into a church, on the basis of the unlimited love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the whole world. These friends were formed into a Church by the Rev. James Morison, of Kilmarnock, towards the end of July, who dispensed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to them in the

presence of as great a multitude as the hall and the adjacent rooms and lobbies could contain.

The brethren of the new church were very anxious that Mr. Morison should have removed, at that time, from Kilmarnock to Glasgow, to take the pastoral oversight of them; for his fame and popularity were such that an immense multitude was always eager to hear him, when at any time he was advertised to preach in the city. But Mr. Morison could not see it to be his duty at that time to leave the church in Kilmarnock, which had clung to him so devotedly during his ecclesiastical trials. Ultimately, the attention of the church was called to Mr. Fergus Ferguson, jun., the youngest of the nine students who accepted the call which had been tendered to him, in the month of December, 1844. For a few months Mr. Ferguson acted as missionary to the church—visiting the sick during the week, and either preaching himself on the Sabbath day, or supplying for those who occupied the platform in the Trades' Hall. In the month of April, 1845 (on the Glasgow Fast Day), he was ordained, before a large congregation, in the City Hall of Glasgow, and removed in the month of June, in the same year, with the Trades' Hall Church, into the chapel in Blackfriars Street, where he ministered till the month of February, 1876. At that date, he was compelled to remove to a new church in Montrose Street—one of the railways having acquired the Blackfriars Street Chapel by virtue of an Act of Parliament. He and his accomplished colleague, the Rev. Robert Craig, M.A., preach there to a large congregation.

A successful effort was also made, towards the close of the year 1844, to draw together a church on the basis of the "New Views" in Edinburgh. Mr. J. H. Stott, one of the magistrates of the city, took the lead in the matter, and secured the Waterloo Rooms for a series of week-day meetings and Sunday services similar to those which had been so successful in Glasgow. The ministers already referred to all aided in the effort; and immense crowds came together in Edinburgh also to hear of God's great salvation. The fact is, that not only had the ecclesiastical proceedings against them made these preachers notorious (and notoriety is next door to popularity); but large masses of the Scottish public, by reading the proceedings in the church courts, and the pamphlets which had been published

from time to time, had come to the conclusion that this was a consistent Gospel for which these men had suffered—indeed, the only honest basis on which an earnest call can be addressed to men indiscriminately. And this belief is entertained still by thousands who have not been resolute enough to leave their own time-honoured churches, but who, nevertheless, respect the men that were willing to brave excision for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

We have a very distinct recollection ourselves of the eager multitude that used to fill the Waterloo Rooms, in Edinburgh, when the new cause was started. Not only would the large hall itself be densely crowded, but a gallery at the far end of it, and the platform behind the speaker. The scene was most inspiring; and generally the preacher was unexpectedly carried "out of himself," and led to enlarge on the topics which he proposed to discuss far beyond his original intention. We remember how appreciatively a dense audience, of evidently most intelligent people, listened one Sunday evening to a discourse from our lips on the words, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" In these days there was always an inquiry meeting at the close of first service, at which a shorter address was delivered, and the the difficulties of the anxious met. At Edinburgh, as at Glasgow, there were always perplexed inquirers waiting to be conversed with. Indeed, the founders of the Evangelical Union were called to do, in their narrower sphere, just what Messrs. Moody and Sankey have of late been doing in their wider one; for although our movement was a controversial one, the controversy always was made to turn on God's controversy with man.

The affections of the nucleus in Edinburgh began to be concentrated on the Rev. John Kirk, of Hamilton. Mr. Kirk's name had been widely used in connection with the recent discussions,—so that he always drew large audiences, who did not fail to be satisfied with his lucid and powerful exhibitions of the love of God. Mr. Kirk, for the sake of the extension of the truth, reluctantly tore himself away from his church at Hamilton, and was ordained in the Waterloo Rooms, on the Fast-Day, in October, 1845. Shortly afterwards the church removed to the large chapel in Brighton Street, where Mr. Kirk continued to minister till the present year (1876), when his increasing infirmities compelled him reluctantly to resign his charge. We may add

that there are now three congregations in Edinburgh in connection with the Evangelical Union.

Before we leave the year 1845 we must make some reference to the case of the Rev. William Scott, of Free St. Mark's, Glasgow, which was decided in the month of May in that year, by the General Assembly of the Free Church. It is quite true that Mr. Scott never actually joined the Evangelical Union; but during the years which immediately succeeded its formation, he rendered very important services by his zealous co-operation with its ministers. He preached in connection with them in all the important towns throughout Scotland, and was a most acceptable and influential speaker at all the principal soirees and public meetings of the denomination. Moreover, his case in the church courts had so close a relation to our own doctrinal discussions, and so materially aided our struggle, that we could not write the history of the Evangelical Union and leave it out.

Mr. Scott had been much blessed in soul by revival services which had been held in Roxburghshire, and in which some of his relatives had taken an active part. The truth of the Gospel had been comfortingly applied to his own mind through the reading of an MS. of a zealous minister's discourse, entitled, "Believe and live." As was natural, he began to present to his own congregation in Glasgow the doctrines which had become so precious to himself; but he was surprised to find that sundry critics among them conceived that he was making statements which did not square with the *Confession of Faith*. The fact is, that the controversy in both the Secession and Congregational bodies had put men on the theological *qui vive*; and accordingly a proportion of keen heresy hunters were to be found in every congregation, ready to scent afar off any deviation from the beaten track of orthodoxy. The statements which Mr. Scott made in his own pulpit were no more out of the beaten track than those made by the distinguished American Revivalists who have lately visited this country: but some advance has been made even in the Free Church in the course of thirty years; and the assertions which then startled the sticklers for orthodoxy in St. Mark's Church, would now be allowed to pass unimpeached.

Mr. Scott kept continually saying, "It is not 'Live and believe,' but the Bible representation is 'Believe and live.' You do not need, O sinner, to wait till life be put into you

before you believe ; but believe to-day, and to-day you shall live."

Angry and stormy meetings of the session, to which some of the complainants belonged, led to angry and stormy discussions in the Presbytery; and when these were reported in the newspapers of the day all eyes began to be turned towards St. Mark's Free Church and the occupant of its pulpit. Mr. Scott's opponents at first thought that he could be terrified or coaxed into submission ; but they began to discover that he was one of those men whom opposition makes more confident in their own opinion, after it has been fairly formed, and who are quite willing to sacrifice all earthly friendships and honours for what they believe to be the truth of God.

Dr. Candlish wrote to a minister, "There's your friend, Mr. Scott, going to set the whole Free Kirk in a blaze. Send him in to me that I may see what he is stumbling at." But neither the interview which Mr. Scott had with Dr. Candlish nor with Dr. Duncan, the eminent metaphysical theologian, whose biography has lately produced so much sensation, had any effect in moving him from the position which he had taken up—namely, that real spiritual life does not precede the faith of the Gospel, but enters the soul of sinful man along with faith, or by means of it.

Mr. Scott has favoured us with a letter, in which he has tersely stated, and in few words, the theological point in dispute between him and his brethren, and which ultimately led to his separation from the Free Church.

"You are right, so far, in stating the question between the Glasgow Free Presbytery and me. It was expressly this: Is Regeneration *before* faith or *by* faith? the Presbytery maintaining the former; I the latter, and defining Regeneration, in scholastic language, as the completed act—*Regeneratio regenerata*, not *Regeneratio regenerans*, the process—in which I admitted, of course, the agency of the Spirit to be prior to man's acting in the matter. Many things in the history of the case were very curious; but now, perhaps, they are not worth recording."

Dr. Buchanan and Dr. M'Gilvray led what might be called the prosecution against Mr. Scott, both in the Free Presbytery in Glasgow, and in the General Assembly at Edinburgh. They laid stress upon the doctrine of man's total depravity, and insisted that his powers were so sadly deteriorated by the fall, that he could not believe the Gospel. They quoted again and again such passages as the following: "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John xiv.

17), and "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). They therefore maintained that there must be life in the soul before the Gospel can be believed. Mr. Scott urged, in reply, that if there could be genuine spiritual life in man's soul before the faith of the Gospel was consummated, there would be no need of Christ at all; for the soul that had spiritual life in it would undoubtedly be raised to the kingdom of heaven. He quoted with great power and emphasis the Saviour's own unqualified declaration; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have NO LIFE in you" (John vi. 53); and again, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (ver. 63). He also appealed to Isa. lv. 3, "Hear and your soul shall live;" exclaiming, "See! it is not live and hear; but, O ye dead ones, hear and your souls shall live. For 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'" As to the passages quoted by his opponents from John and Corinthians, with similar texts, he maintained that while worldly and natural men could not receive and appreciate the advanced truths of Christianity, they could believe the initial or rudimentary truths, through the reception of which their taste would be awakened for the strong meat of the kingdom. He maintained that through the influence of the convincing Holy Ghost, who knocked at the door of the sinner's heart, there was an awakening of the soul, more or less, before faith; but he refused to assign to this preparatory excitement the name and character of true spiritual life.

When we look back upon the deed, it appears assuredly to have been a sinfully schismatic act to have deposed an earnest man on so narrow an issue as that which we have described; yet true it is and of verity that the Rev. William Scott was cut off in May, 1845, by the vote of the General Assembly of the Free Church, for maintaining that the Gospel call was not Live and believe, but Believe and live. We suppose that the great majority of Evangelical Christians will say to-day that he was in the right, and that only a few rare hyper-Calvinistic antiquated Confessionists will be got here and there to take the side of the Edinburgh General Assembly. Suppose that Mr. Moody had stood up in the Free College Church in Glasgow two years ago, and had

solemnly made this statement, "None here can believe the Gospel unless they first get spiritual life, and that is given only to those who have been unconditionally chosen from all eternity," would not such a statement have murdered the revival? And suppose that Mr. Sankey, acting under high ecclesiastical advice, had said one day, "That well-known hymn, 'There is life in a look at the Crucified One,' is all wrong, and we must sing it thus:—

'No life in a look at the Crucified One,  
Till the heart has been changed into flesh that was stone,'"

we trow that no Orphean effects would have been produced by the sweet singing of that evangelical Apollo that day.

Mr. Scott has often remarked that a sense of loneliness came over him as he took his seat at the bar of the General Assembly in Edinburgh, before rising to plead his cause. But the words of Paul flashed into his mind, "At my first answers no man stood with me; but all men forsook me. . . . Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." And the remembrance of the words and the promised aid did strengthen him, so that Satan did not dismay him with the temptation, but "he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." By a stroke of dexterous generalship a meeting had been got up to hear D'Aubigné elsewhere, at the very hour of Mr. Scott's trial, so that few of the general public were present to listen to the libelled minister's defence. But he let the public hear of it afterwards, by the publication of a large and spirited pamphlet, entitled "Free Church Heresy," containing a detail of the history, and chiefly of the theological merits of the case, which had an immense circulation over the length and breadth of the land.

The great majority of Mr. Scott's congregation clung to him after his deposition, and entered the Trades' Hall as tenants a few Sabbaths after Mr. Ferguson's congregation had vacated it. It may easily be conceived that the formation of this second large congregation, committed to the public maintenance of almost, or rather of identically the same views as the founders of the Evangelical Union had propagated, must have produced no small stir in Glasgow, and throughout the west of Scotland generally.

We may add that Mr. Scott's congregation met for three years in the Trades' Hall; and that in the month of

October, 1848, the commodious chapel in Pitt Street, which they have ever since occupied, was opened for them by their pastor and the Rev. James Morison, of Kilmarnock.

We have thus narrated the chief events of 1844 and 1845; but we must now briefly notice the introduction of Evangelical Union principles into the important city of Aberdeen in the spring of 1846; for, although the progress of the cause had been surprising in Glasgow and Edinburgh, it was yet more remarkable in the Granite City, whose inhabitants had always been deemed as unsusceptible of change in theological opinion as the stone that gives the place its descriptive name.

Several pious and thoughtful people, both in connection with Presbyterian and Independent churches in Aberdeen, had been convinced that the views held by Messrs. Monro and Laing, and which the Congregationalists of that city had impeached, were in reality the very truth of God. Reports of the trials, too, of Messrs. Morison, Rutherford, and Guthrie, had been wafted as far north as that remote region, so seldom visited then by southern travellers; for the good Queen Victoria had not yet fallen in love with Balmoral and the Dee. Lord Byron called the late Earl of that ilk "That travelled Thane, Athenian Aberdeen," on account of his classical polish and deep interest in the treasures of art which the ruined capital of Greece still contains. We may apply the epithet to the city itself—not thinking, however, of Socrates and Plato, but of Paul the Apostle, and Luke his historian, who said of the Grecian metropolitans of his day, "They spend their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Yes, the Aberdonians were Athenian in their curiosity; for when "the New Lights" came north, like fresh streamers in the sky, the rumour ran through the town that "the men who have turned the world upside down have come hither also"—and so the worthy citizens went forth to see and hear for themselves.

Their appetite had been whetted indeed by a series of meetings which had been held at Woodside, in the Rev. Mr. Laing's Church, in June, 1845, by Rev. Fergus Ferguson, then of Bellshill. The village was just the distance of Bethany from Jerusalem; and, as many of the Jews went out to see and hear Jesus long ago, not a few of the Aberdonians went out to hear the preacher from the south, and obtained "soul-refreshing views of Jesus and his Word." An

intelligent lady, who was at that time a member of John Street Baptist Church there, has often told us since that this expression was quite a new one to her—"A satisfied God." Mr. Ferguson employed it as quite a common and current one with himself; but it struck her forcibly, and was the vehicle of a great spiritual blessing. She had always been looking *in* for at least the concurrent ground of her acceptance; but she was led to look *out* to God as well pleased in Jesus, for the sole source of her joy. Many sinners by these meetings were brought into the fold; and many saints were cheered and edified. Still, although the suburbs had been blessed, there was as yet no thought of beginning a cause in the city itself.

It was the late Mr. George Cornwall with Mr. J. F. Kelles and Mr. George Shearer, still respected citizens, who were the means, under God, of hoisting the E. U. standard in Aberdeen. We remember seeing these gentlemen taking their seats on the platform on the occasion of the soiree that was held in the Waterloo Rooms, Edinburgh, on the evening of Mr. Kirk's ordination, in October, 1845. The steamer had been detained by adverse winds (for there was no railway then), and they were late of arriving. They had come with the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." They had come to ask the ministers who were present if they would make an effort to supply Aberdeen for a month or two, if a place of meeting could be secured.

A large chapel in St. Andrew Street, capable of containing 900 hearers, happened to be vacant at the time, and was leased by these energetic laymen for the proclamation of the everlasting and unstinted Gospel. Strange as it may appear, it was filled from the first day it was opened in March, 1846. They who went for curiosity's sake the first day, returned for Christ's sake the next. The leading ministers of the young denomination took their turn in supplying the pulpit; generally staying two Sabbaths at a time. We remember distinctly to this day the impression which was produced upon our mind, when, on a Saturday night, the welcome lights of the city appeared, after we had been on the top of the coach from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m.—how peculiar and beautiful Union Street looked as we drove down its rattling streets to the sound of the guard's sonorous bugle—how we admired all the next week the Dee and the Don, the two Universities, and "the melancholy main":

but most of all, how we delighted in the eager congregations who seemed as if they could not tire to hear of "Naaman the leper," or "What think ye of Christ?" or "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; for thereby good shall come unto thee." Especially do we remember, not merely the dense crowd of the Sabbath evening, but the hungry hundreds who attended on the Monday following, because we had announced that we would paraphrase the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and how they seemed to heave a great sigh of relief when we condensed for them the expositions of John Goodwin, Adam Clarke, Fletcher, of Madeley, and John Robertson, of St. Ninians, and showed them that believers were the vessels of mercy, and unbelievers the vessels of wrath, and that it was a man's own fault if he was fitted unto destruction.

The cause became so prosperous that the newly formed church were encouraged to call the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, of Bellshill, to be their pastor, whose visit during the previous summer had produced so much effect in the immediate neighbourhood. Mr. Ferguson thought it to be his duty to leave his attached flock at Bellshill—much to their regret—for the sake of the larger field to which Providence seemed to point. He was ordained in St. Andrew Street in August, 1846, and has lived in Aberdeen ever since. In November, 1848, the handsome new Chapel in St. Paul Street was opened by the Rev. William Scott, of Glasgow, the pastor of the church, and the writer, his son. For twenty-five years the congregation of seven or eight hundred hearers was steadily maintained; and Mr. Ferguson has lately, in his old age, been privileged to hand over a vigorous and flourishing church to a distinguished successor, the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, one of the most scholarly and accomplished men of the day, and, while we write, a highly-recommended candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews. A second E. U. Church in Aberdeen is also large and flourishing, under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Alex. Stewart, likewise a minister of great scientific acquirements.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Formation of E. U. Churches in Greenock, Dundee, Paisley, and Barrhead—Also in the South-Eastern District of Scotland, Perth, Carlisle, Manchester, Belfast—Removal of Dr. Morison to Glasgow—The Theological Academy—Dr. Morison's Writings—Dr. Guthrie's—Professor Kirk's—Question of Church Government—The Churches from the Relief Body—The Annual Conference, how Constituted—Important Resolution of the Conference of 1858—Controversy on Predestination in 1853 and subsequent years—The Revival of 1859-60: Church in Eyemouth—Church in Shapinsay—List of Ministers—Curriculum of Study—List of Students—Questions put to Licentiates—Mutual Aid—The Cumberland Presbyterians—Attitude of the Evangelical Union towards other Denominations.

HAVING now described at length the steps which led to the separation from their former communions of what might be called the thirteen original churches which went to form the Evangelical Union, and having also described how it was that the banner of the three great Universalities was hoisted in the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and new churches formed there in connection with the young religious movement, it is not our intention to prosecute the narrative further with that minuteness of detail hitherto observed. We have shown how the ball was set a-rolling. Our readers may themselves imagine how it continued to roll, and continued to grow. All Scotland had now heard of the kindred theological contentions in the Secession and Congregational churches; and societies, about thirty in number, as we have seen, extending from Forres in the north to Galashiels in the south, had already declared in favour of the "new views." The outline of the new denomination had been fairly sketched. All subsequent progress has simply been the filling up of that initial programme, or, in other words, the results that might have been expected to flow from the doctrinal upheaval which we have endeavoured to describe. All that remains for us to do is simply to tell succinctly how the Evangelical Union came to take root in a few other important localities, to give some notes as to the progress of the body since the period of its formation, and define the attitude which it maintains towards the other denominations of Christians in the land.

We have already seen how an Evangelical Union church

was formed in the town of Greenock, through the labours of the Rev. A. C. Rutherford. The brethren there met for several years in the old Independent Church, Sir Michael Street, which they purchased and repaired. In 1865 they erected a fine modern edifice in the west end of the town. The church has prospered for several years exceedingly under the ministry of the Rev. Alexander Davidson, one of Dr. Morison's earliest students, who came in, after the events of 1844, from the Congregational side of the house. Mr. Davidson has proved one of the most useful and popular ministers of the Evangelical Union.

The E. U. flag was not unfurled in Dundee till January, 1848. The gentleman who was chiefly instrumental in opening up an entrance for the new denomination into that important town was John Baxter, Esq., a member of Ward Street Chapel (late Rev. Dr. Russell's). He warmly sympathised with the statement of the nine students, and felt called upon to do what in him lay to let his fellow-townsmen know about the doctrines which had been condemned, but which he believed in his heart to be the very truth of God. The body has been enabled to sustain an interest ever since in Dundee with varying fortunes. At present there are two E. U. churches there—the first in Reform Street, under the pastoral care of the Rev. William Hamilton, M.A., and the second in Lindsay Street, under the Rev. Peter M'Nish.

Dr. Morison preached in Paisley at a comparatively early date. The chief friends of the movement purchased the old Low Church, which was at that time unoccupied. They have worshipped in it ever since. The substantial building has recently been made very comfortable by extensive and expensive improvements. We are happy to be able to report that the church, at the period at which we write, is in a very prosperous condition. Their first minister was the Rev. A. M. Wilson, who was settled among them in the autumn of 1845. Their present minister is the Rev. Alexander Wilson, who was inducted in 1870. A thriving church has also existed in the adjoining town of Barrhead since the early days of our ecclesiastical struggle. Some of the most intelligent abettors of the new views formed a church in the village of Neilston in 1844, and secured the services of the Rev. Gilbert M'Callum, one of the nine students. They prudently built their chapel, however, in the adjoining town of Barrhead. Their present minister,

the Rev. Alexander M'Nair, M.A., is a scholarly and accomplished man.

The Congregational Churches which were located in the south-eastern districts of Scotland embraced, almost without an exception, the world-wide views of the grace of God which had been advocated by the leaders of the Evangelical Union. The earnest labours of the Rev. J. H. Rutherford, of Kelso (now Dr. Rutherford, of Newcastle), doubtless contributed to this result. The churches in Kelso, Hawick, Melrose, Jedburgh, and Selkirk, besides that in Galashiels already referred to, may all be classed in this list. The pastor of the church at Melrose (Rev. William Crombie) has filled his present charge for twenty-two years. The church at Hawick has lately shown its own vigour, as well as its love to its pastor, the Rev. David Hislop, B.A., by building him a fine manse—an example which other churches in the denomination would do well to follow. The Rev. Alexander Brown has been settled in Galashiels for fifteen years, where he has laboured with decided success. In 1873 a handsome new chapel was erected for his increasing congregation.

The church in Perth was not formed till the year 1856. By that time the Evangelical Union Home Mission had begun its work; and through its agency several important fields have been opened up, in which good fruit has been reaped. The movement in Perth was one of the first which the Home Mission inaugurated. This important society has owed much, for many years, to the enthusiasm and energy of the Rev. Hugh Riddell, a gentleman who has helped largely in this way to extend the Evangelical Union cause in Scotland. The church in Perth was carefully and diligently nursed by its first pastor, Rev. William Adamson, now of Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, a man of much intellectual power, and to whom the Union is indebted in many ways. Its present minister, the Rev. Robert Finlay, is also greatly encouraged in his work.

Time would fail us to particularise the origin and progress of all the churches now in connection with the Evangelical Union. Suffice it to say, that the original thirteen have been increased to eighty-two at the date at which we write. These are studded all over the country, from Wick, Caithness-shire, in the north, to Dalbeattie, in Dumfriesshire, in the south of Scotland; and from Arbroath, in the east of Scotland, to Ayr in the west.

Our movement being essentially a Scottish one, has not made much headway in England,—as, indeed, it could not be expected to do. Besides Kendal, already referred to, a church was formed, at a very early date, in Carlisle, which owed much to the zeal and liberality of the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., but yet more to the indefatigable exertions of its first pastor, the Rev. John Whitson, now of Beith. It was during his ministry that the handsome building was erected which the church still occupies. More recently—in 1868—a third English Church was received into the Union, located in Harpurhey, a suburb of Manchester, which prospers exceedingly under the ministry of the Rev. Robert Mitchell. This Christian community is not only in full ecclesiastical connection with us, but is in hearty sympathy with our doctrines and aims. We owe it indirectly to the piety and zeal of the late Rev. E. Weeks, of Harpurhey, a warm friend of our cause.

In the year 1853 an Evangelical Union Church was formed in Belfast, chiefly through the ardour of some Scottish friends of the movement, who had removed their residences to the sister isle. J. B. Ferguson, Esq., of that town, cordially espoused the doctrines of the new denomination; and it was largely through the influence of his purse and social position that the connection found a local habitation and a name there. At present two vigorous churches represent the Union in the metropolis of Ulster, occupying handsome edifices of their own, and respectively under the pastorates of the Revs. George Cron and Robert Paterson.

As to the general progress of the connection since its origin and formation, besides the increase of churches already detailed, we would name, among the causes of congratulation, the removal of Dr. Morison from Kilmarnock to Glasgow, in October, 1851. Although unwilling to leave his beloved church in that Ayrshire town, when solicited to come to Glasgow in 1844, the Doctor had gradually been brought to see that it would be for the interests of the denomination, in more ways than one, that he should be settled in that city, which is really the metropolis of Scotland, in so far as population and commercial importance are concerned. The result has proved that the step, although not taken without hesitation and anxiety, was in reality wise and well ordered. Not only is the North Dundas Street Church, over which he was called to preside, prosperous and influential; but there are, while we write, eight

churches of the Evangelical Union in Glasgow, with ten pastors, since two of them are collegiate charges. Glasgow, moreover, is felt to be a more convenient centre for the Theological Academy which meets there in the autumn of every year, and in the instruction of which Dr. Morison has, for several years, been assisted by three earnest and beloved brethren. Nor has Kilmarnock meanwhile suffered; for the large church which the youthful warrior, as we have seen, carried with him through his harassing ecclesiastical troubles, has now grown into two influential churches, which both prosper under the powerful ministries of the Revs. William Bathgate and Robert Hislop.

Mr. Morison had made his mark, as an accomplished theologian, in Glasgow, as early as the year 1847, by the delivery, in Blackfriars Street Church, of a series of week evening lectures on the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. These were subsequently published in a large volume, with a learned preface on the history of the literature of the chapter, and were favourably reviewed by the leading theological journals of the day. More recently, Dr. Morison has published his "Exposition of the Third Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans," and his "Commentaries" on the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, which have given him a high place among the theologians and critics of the country, and have done much to remove the prejudice which had existed, in many minds, against himself and the denomination which he had done so much to found.

Dr. John Guthrie, now pastor of West Campbell Street E. U. Church, Glasgow, brought out in 1854 his elegant translation from the Latin, of Brandt's Life of Arminius, which will always be popular among our people. He also published in 1869 his poetical work, entitled, "Sacred Lyrics; or, Hymns Original and Translated from the German, with Versions of Psalms." The first piece, "The Redeemer's Tears," is alone sufficient to give the work immortality. It has been re-published in various compilations and hymn-books, both in this country and in America. About the same time, Dr. Guthrie carried off from many competitors a prize of fifty guineas, which had been offered by the Liberation Society in London for the best essay on Church Establishments in the conversational form—that is, in the form of question and answer. The work was intended to make the young members in dissenting families acquainted with the chief arguments

urged in favour of non-conformity. The volume has had a large circulation in all parts of the country, and, as we understand, is used as a text-book in some of the Dissenting colleges in England.

About ten years ago, the Rev. John Kirk, of Edinburgh, was appointed Professor of Practical Theology to the Evangelical Union. This chair was founded at the instance, and maintained for some years through the liberality, of John Somervell, Esq., of Kendal, who was anxious that the students of our Academy should have the advantage, in a course of practical prelections, from year to year, of Mr. Kirk's wide experience in preaching the Gospel and dealing with troubled and perplexed souls. During these latter years, also, Professor Kirk has not been idle with his pen; for his collected writings fill two large volumes,—while his contributions to serial literature have been unwearied. Of late, likewise, he has been more ambitious both in the style and the subjects of his compositions; for whereas he was content, in the earlier days of his authorship, to produce only earnest, practical expositions of Gospel truth, he was led by finding, about the year 1866, that many inquiring minds were puzzled through the speculations of members of the British Association, to investigate their theories and attempt their refutation. Accordingly, he issued in the year mentioned his "Age of Man"—a work in which he does not hesitate to break a lance with Sir Charles Lyell. Indeed, the late Sir David Brewster was of opinion that Professor Kirk had exposed the weakness of some of Sir Charles's positions, as the reader may find out for himself in the life of the Edinburgh Principal by his daughter. Since that time the Professor has read important scientific papers on such subjects as "Force" and "Prayer" in Relation to Providence, at the successive meetings of the Victoria Institute in London, which have been duly published in the records of the Society. We regret to have to state, that in September, 1875, at the close of the session of the E. U. Academy, Professor Kirk's health seriously and suddenly broke down through a long latent heart-affection, so that he has been compelled to resign both his pastoral charge and his theological chair. We hope that his valuable life may be spared for some years yet, and that in the retirement which he has justly earned he may be able to help the cause with his pen which he long furthered by the living voice. Only

three professors are left in our Academy as we write, or rather two—Professor Taylor in the Chair of Systematic Theology, and Professor Hunter in that of Hebrew; for Dr. Morison also has been compelled by failing health to retire from the Chair of New Testament Exegesis. It is proposed, however, to retain his all-important services as Principal, and reconstruct the Divinity Hall by the appointment of new Professors and other important changes, which, we regret to say, are incomplete as we go to press, so that they cannot be detailed in this volume.

For some years after 1844 there was a little jealousy of the Evangelical Union on the part, not so much of the ministers, as of the laity, of the Congregational churches who had been separated from the Congregational Union on account of their liberal views. Inasmuch as Dr. Morison and his brethren still adhered so far to Presbyterian polity as to manage their church business by a session or bench of elders appointed for the purpose (although thoroughly independent *ab extra*), it was thought by some zealous Congregationalists that their principles would be compromised, if they joined the Evangelical Union. But, as years rolled on, it was found that such fears were groundless, and that the Evangelical Union churches were as truly independent as those of the Congregational Union, either of Scotland or of England and Wales. Eventually all the ministers, and the great majority of the churches, joined the Evangelical Union, so that not the slightest jarring on the point of church government now remains. And even in the one or two instances in which the churches have not been formally incorporated with the denomination, they are affiliated with it through pecuniary contributions, and hearty sympathy and co-operation.

In two instances, churches belonging to what was called "The Relief" connection, have joined the Evangelical Union. This body had seceded from the Church of Scotland during the last century, under the leadership of Mr. Gillespie, on the vexed question of Patronage, at a later date than the Erskines, the founders of the Secession Church. The two bodies had not coalesced; but, in 1846, a union was effected between them, and the denomination has since been known as the United Presbyterian. In some instances, however, there was an unwillingness on the part of the Relief Churches to amalgamate with the Seceders; and two of these churches,

that, namely, in Coupar-Angus, and that in Newburgh, Fife, approving of the doctrines of the Evangelical Union, have joined our body, and are at present supplied by our ministers. The Rev. Robert Wallace, after having laboured for twenty years in Coupar-Angus, and been highly respected in all the adjacent counties, has recently removed to Glasgow that he might take charge of a new church in the south-eastern district of that city, which has been formed there with a fair prospect of success.

The annual meetings of the denomination are held in Glasgow in the last week of September, at the close of the session of the Theological Academy. Besides the pastors of churches, who are members of this Conference *ex officio*, two lay delegates from each church, sent up by annual vote, have a right to take part in the deliberations of the assembly. The meetings last for four days; and at least one large public gathering indicates, to some extent, the comparative strength of the denomination in the city, as well as throughout the country. The business brought before the Conference is simply that which affects the connection generally, and not the affairs of individual churches. A clerical brother is elected President at the first meeting of the pastors and delegates, who fills the chair of honour for one year. A committee of brethren, called a Commission, are also annually appointed at the close of the meetings of Conference to watch over the interests of the body throughout the year. The President is chairman of this committee, and its meetings are quarterly, or more frequent, as necessity may demand. Like the Conference, Commission does not interfere with the internal affairs of any church, unless these, in the case of a dispute, for example, may be freely and voluntarily referred to it by both parties. It reserves to itself the right, however, should any scandal arise, whether through ministerial delinquency or the errors of a church, and no action be taken by neighbouring churches, to point out the path of duty, and ask that it be pursued.

An important measure was adopted by the Conference which met in September, 1858. On the one hand it had been said that the Statement of Principles which had been issued at Kilmarnock in 1843, and which we have already epitomised, was a binding creed; while, on the other hand, it had been felt by many that, as a statement of principles, it was not sufficiently complete. Consequently, it was

resolved to issue a new Doctrinal Declaration, both to show that we could *alter or enlarge our creed* if we pleased, and also to set before the world more fully our theological belief. Sixteen topics in all are treated briefly but satisfactorily in this comprehensive document—"Free Will, Divine Sovereignty, Divine Foreknowledge and Foreordination, Original Sin, Unity of the Godhead in the Remedial Plan, the Nature and Extent of the Love of God the Father, the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of the Son, the Nature and Extent of the Work of the Holy Spirit, Concurrence of the Divine and Human Agencies in the matter of Salvation, Human Ability and Inability, Repentance and Faith, Justification by Faith, Peace with God, Regeneration, Election and Reprobation." It will be plain, at a glance, that quite a little body of divinity is contained in this pamphlet of twenty-eight pages. We recommend the Doctrinal Declaration to any who wish a comprehensive and yet conveniently portable exhibition of our views.

We think it proper in this our concluding chapter to make a few brief extracts from this deliverance, both to show that the men of 1858 held by the main principles contended for by the men of 1843, and also to bring before the notice of our readers some fresh points as to which we have not been thoroughly understood.

Thus, the Conference says, at page 5, on Free Will :—

"Free Will is in man a lineament of the divine image that will eternally remain, misuse it as much as he may. It is essential to his accountability. Under this character he is dealt with in all the arrangements of mercy. His free will is respected throughout; and this illumines difficulties otherwise inexplicable. And thus, in opposition to the scheme of a necessitated will as held, not by Calvinists only, but (as would appear) by all classes of infidels, the E. U. Conference holds tenaciously the doctrine of free will as lying at the foundation of all religion, natural and revealed. In holding this, they do not hold the heathen doctrine of Chance, or that any event happens without a cause; but they hold that the will-endowed mind, though acting in view of motives, is the free and self-determining cause of its own choices. The proof of the perfect freedom of the human will is to be found in universal consciousness, universal conscience, universal language, and in universal law."

On the subject of Original Sin, the following statement is made :—

"On this topic it may suffice to state, in order to prevent or correct misconception, that we hold as strongly as any the doctrine of the depravity of man and his utter helplessness and hopelessness in the matter of salvation till he comes under the gracious provisions of

the plan of mercy. We believe the divine constitution with Adam to have been federal in its character, and that his sin in consequence is, to the extent of the primeval curse, imputed to his posterity. We believe that the imputation of Adam's sin extends to the whole race, and thus embraces infants; but, as infants were in no respect morally implicated in that transgression, we reject with abhorrence the dogma that any who die in infancy are subject, on the ground of Adam's first sin, 'to the pains of hell for ever.'

As it is often persistently alleged that we deny the work of the Holy Spirit by those who either are not fully informed on the subject, or are inclined to misrepresent us, we add the Deliverance that was given by Conference on that important doctrine.

"*The Nature and Extent of the Work of the Holy Spirit.* As respects the nature of the Holy Spirit's work, we believe, in harmony with the views above set forth on the perfect freedom of the human will, that the influence which that Divine Agent exerts on the human soul is moral and resistible. In thus rejecting the dogma of irresistible, will-suspending, and faith-necessitating grace, we do not limit the Holy Spirit, nor do we deny the necessity of his work, in order to salvation. We trace faith in every instance, with all its antecedents and consequents, to his free, sovereign, anticipating grace; and we could admit as many inscrutable modes and media in his operation as may reasonably be imagined, provided none of them imply any antagonism to the responsibility of man, or any infringement of the inviolable freedom of the human will. This moral and resistible feature imparts a grandeur and sublimity, and a transparent consistency, to the work of the Spirit, which the doctrine of irresistibility completely destroys. It is in harmony alike with every principle of the moral Government of God, and with every dictate of the moral nature and conscious experience of man. Its proofs are inwoven into the entire texture of revelation—the Bible throughout being one sublime and majestic Persuasive. Every warning, entreaty, remonstrance, promise, and threatening of the Book of God, and every instance in which a believer makes shipwreck of his faith, is a proof of the moral and resistible nature of the Holy Spirit's influences—not to mention such direct proofs as those in which inspired men speak, on the one hand, of the Spirit 'striving with man,' and on the other, of sinners 'vexing,' 'grieving,' 'quenching the Spirit,' and 'always resisting the Holy Ghost.' We reject, then, the distinction between the special and the common influences of the Spirit usually propounded; and hold, on the contrary, that, notwithstanding all the varieties, complications, and inscrutable mysteries connected with his work, its essential character is in every instance one and the same, namely, to do all that infinite Love, guided by infinite Wisdom, morally can, to arrest the sinner in his hellward career, and hedge him up to attend to and believe the glorious gospel of the grace of God; and to promote the sanctification and comfort of the believer.

"As respects the *Extent* of the Spirit's work, we believe that, compatibly with all the varieties and specialities it implies, its aspect and

bearing are as impartially benignant, and strictly universal, as the love of the Father, and the atonement of the Son. This is demonstrated by the nature of the case; for, besides the harmony of counsel and aim that ever pervades the Godhead, the Spirit is sent on his evangelical mission by the Father and the Son; and if he truly lays bare the heart of the Father, who 'will have all men to be saved,' and truly unfolds the work of the Son, 'who gave himself a ransom for all,' he will exert an influence co-extensive with the fallen family of mankind. As there must be infinite harmony of heart and aim among the co-eternal Three, to limit the work of the Spirit is, in effect, correspondingly to limit the love of the Father and the atonement of the Son. No inconsistency, then, can be greater than that of maintaining that the Son died for all, and that his atonement expressed the Father's love for all, while at the same time, it is contended that the needed influence of the Spirit stops short of all, and embraces those only who are included in the circle of the unconditionally elect. Either the limitation belies the universality, or the universality belies the limitation. We, for our parts, have chosen the alternative of universality; and we do so, not merely because (though this were proof sufficient) the love of the Father and the work of the Son are demonstrably universal, but also because the language of Scripture is not less explicit in proof of the universality of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is said to 'strive with *man*'—a generic term inclusive of the whole human race. He 'convinces the *world*'—a term identical and co-extensive with that world which the Father loved, and for which the Saviour died. He, equally with 'the Bride,' says, 'Come—Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely;' which it were unwarrantable to affirm, if, along with this invitation, an influence which it was his to bestow and which was indispensably necessary to enable men to come, he gave only to some, and withheld from all the rest."

The brief article on the Concurrence of the Divine and Human agencies in the matter of Salvation covers the whole ground of dispute between ourselves and our theological opponents, and we are certain that it will commend itself as a just and scriptural representation of divine truth to every candid and unprejudiced reader:—

"By comparing what has been just advanced on the nature and extent of the Spirit's work, with what is above set forth in Articles 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, relating to the free will of man, and the sovereignty, foreknowledge, and foreordination of God, it will be seen that we believe in a synergism or concurrence of the Divine agency and the human in the matter of salvation. Instead of running away with the Divine element, as Calvinism does, to the virtual exclusion of the human, and to the stultification of the innumerable statements of Scripture that teach us our responsibility and urge us to action; and instead of running away with the human element, as Pelagianism does, to the virtual ignorance of the Divine, and the contradiction of every text that sets forth the free grace and sovereignty of God: we believe in the indispensable necessity and harmonious concurrence of both, and are thus enabled to reconcile all

the varieties of Scripture phraseology, otherwise irreconcilable, on the agencies and instrumentalities connected with salvation. Saving results in the soul of man stand connected in Scripture, sometimes with the agency of the Divine Spirit, sometimes with the agency of the sinner himself. Sometimes they are ascribed to 'the truth,' and sometimes to the sinner's faith in that truth. Thus variously in Scripture are conversion, regeneration, sanctification, salvation, accounted for. This, on our principles, is precisely what was to be expected, and on the same principles we at once discern the congruity of all those passages that urge us to prayer, and consequent dependence on the Divine agency, with those others that urge us to the employment of our own. Both agencies being necessary to salvation, both are recognised. This concurrence of the Divine and human in our salvation can have no true place in any theology based on absolute and universal foreordination and necessitation; but in our theology it has. The inviolable freedom of the human will being recognised as a pervading principle in the Divine administration, the sovereign agency of God shapes itself to it, and thus we are enabled to explain—what, on other principles, are not only utterly inexplicable, but also ominously becloud the character of that God to whose foreordination and necessitation they must all in that case be traced—the perplexing anomalies and failures, to wit, that mark the course of the dispensations, and the suasive character throughout of the entire structure of revelation."

We are strongly tempted to add additional extracts; but space forbids. We may observe that the connection owes the first draft of this admirable digest of its doctrines to the masterly pen of the Rev. John Guthrie, D.D., of Glasgow.

Towards the close of the year 1853 considerable excitement was created throughout the country by the fact that the Glasgow Protestant Laymen's Association, when fighting valiantly against Popery, deemed it dutiful to proclaim the doctrine of universal Predestination as one of the tenets on which all true Protestants were agreed. One of the E. U. ministers in Glasgow having deemed it to be his duty to explain the doctrine of Limited Predestination and Conditional Election as held by Melancthon, in contrast with the harsh dogmas which Calvin maintained, a challenge was issued to him by Mr. Alexander Jamieson, the salaried agent of the Protestant Laymen's Association. The minister in question held one debate with that stern champion of Genevan fatality; and afterwards doctrinal discussion, for a year or two, became quite common in all parts of the country. Mr. Jamieson visited many parts of Scotland, and the North of Ireland likewise, challenging on all hands the ministers of the Evangelical Union to debate with him on the most knotty points of the Calvinistic creed. He was

closely followed on his controversial tours by Mr. William Adamson, Mr. Thomas Forsyth, and others; and several of our ministers thought it their duty to enter the lists of debate with him that the misrepresentations advanced in his lectures might be cleared away. We admit that platform discussion is apt to do harm, inasmuch as few have the calmness of temperament which is necessary for extemporaneous debate; and angry feelings are apt to be engendered, and angry words let drop, over which good people subsequently mourn. But there are circumstances in which such discussion is justified; and when the theological belief of a religious connection is publicly attacked, the blessing of God may be expected to accompany its public defence. The fact was, at the time referred to, that if some little harm was done, a preponderance of good was really effected, inasmuch as the consistent and God-glorifying views held by the Evangelical Union were brought under the notice of many who had before been ignorant of them; perplexed souls were relieved; and many of our churches throughout the land were confirmed in the faith and reinforced in numbers.

The wave of revival which swept over the whole country about the time of Mr. Hammond of America's first visit to Scotland, in 1859-60, tended not a little to revive the spiritual tone of several of our churches, and plant new ones in localities where we had not previously a local habitation and a name. Among other places we may mention the fishing-town of Eyemouth, in Berwickshire, on the shore of the German sea. As early as the year 1844, indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Thomson of Haymount, near Kelso, had been accustomed to visit Eyemouth as their sea-bathing quarters, and had brought with them several of the earliest publications of Messrs. Morison, Kirk, and others. They had been the means of enlightening the mind of a young native of the town, Mr. William Landels, now the eminent Dr. Landels, of London. Mr. Landels attended the Kilmarnock Theological Academy for two sessions (1844-5), before he became a Baptist, and has never been slow to acknowledge that he owes much of his subsequent theological acquisitions to the impetus which he received from the prelections of Dr. Morison. It was not, however, till the time of revival just mentioned, that the Rev. Thomas Salmon was brought to Eyemouth to preach in the "Mason's Hall," ostensibly under the banner of the Evangelical Union. The cause became so

prosperous that a fine chapel was built,—the hardy fishermen bringing stones themselves in their boats from distant parts of the rocky shore, and labouring night after night with their own hands at the work of rearing and plastering the same. The piety of fishermen is eminently simple-hearted and sincere; and we have repeatedly been reminded of Simon Peter and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, as we have seen the boats returning from the fishing-stations, off Eyemouth, and afterwards listened to the hardy sons of the deep engaging in prayer at the meeting of the church. Between the earnest ministries of the Rev. Robert Finlay, the first, and the Rev. W. Wylie, M.A., the present pastor, the Church in Eyemouth cannot forget the pious and successful labours of Mr. Matthew Dick, one of the students of the E. U. Academy, and now a Congregational minister in Australia, whose health broke down in the midst of an extensive revival of religion in that town.

We spoke, a few pages back, of Wick as being the most northerly station in Scotland at which the Evangelical Union had planted an outpost. We must so far correct ourselves as to say that since the year 1850 an E. U. church has existed in the island of Shapinshay in the Orkney group. A pious and consistent stone-mason who was helping to build Balfour Castle, one of the finest mansions in the Orkneys, had brought some of the pamphlets on the Atonement Controversy with him from the south, and had circulated them in the island. Such a hungering and thirsting after the word was excited that the Rev. William Crombie, (now of Melrose), and the Rev. Robert Wallace (now of Glasgow), then students of the E. U. Academy, were induced to visit Shapinshay and preach night after night. When a church had been formed, and ground was needed for the erection of a chapel, the proprietor of the island, J. Balfour, Esq., readily granted two acres for the building, with manse and glebe attached. This excellent and enterprising gentleman and his amiable lady have continued to be on cordial terms with the three ministers of the Union who have successively laboured in Shapinshay, Rev. Messrs. Salmon, Hutchison, and Craig.

That readers at a distance from the centre of our operations may be able to form some idea of our strength in the country, we insert here the list of our churches, which appears in the Evangelical Union Annual for 1876.

EVANGELICAL UNION CHURCHES, AND CHURCHES AFFILIATED  
WITH THE UNION.

CHURCHES.	Formed.	Joined Union.
Aberdeen—St. Paul Street, .....	1846	1856
"    John Street, .....	1863	1863
Airdrie, .....	1845	1846
Anstruther, .....	—	1861
Arbroath, .....	1864	1866
Ardrossan, .....	1837	—
Auchterarder, .....	1854	1855
Avonbridge, .....	1844	1844
Ayr, .....	1844	1845
Barrhead, .....	1844	1857
Bathgate, .....	1843	1843
Beith, .....	1861	1862
Belfast—Wellington Place, .....	1854	1856
"    Spa Mount, .....	1869	1869
Bellshill, .....	1841	1854
Brechin, .....	1867	1869
Carlisle, .....	1849	1855
Carlisle, .....	1846	1858
Catrine, .....	1844	1844
Coatbridge, .....	1860	1860
Coupar-Angus, .....	1789	—
Dalbeattie, .....	1865	1872
Dalkeith, .....	1847	1855
Dalmellington, .....	1844	1850
Dreghorn, .....	1864	1865
Dumfries, .....	1862	1862
Dundee—Reform Street, .....	1848	1849
"    Lindsay Street, .....	1864	1864
Dunfermline, .....	1851	1855
Edinburgh—Brighton Street, .....	1845	1862
"    Buccleuch Church, .....	1859	1861
"    Grindlay Street, .....	1866	1866
Eyemouth, .....	1861	1873
Falkirk, .....	1872	1875
Forres, .....	1803	—
Fraserburgh, .....	1845	1865
Friockheim, .....	1843	1861
Galashiels, .....	1844	1864
Galston, .....	1843	1844
Greenock, .....	1845	1846
Glasgow—Muslin Street, Bridgeton, .....	1843	1861
"    Montrose Street, .....	1844	1863
"    North Dundas Street, .....	1848	1848
"    Nelson Street, Tradeston, .....	1849	1855
"    West Street, Calton, .....	1858	1862
"    Govan, .....	1865	1869
"    West Campbell Street, .....	1866	1867
Hamilton, .....	1854	1854
Hawick, .....	1848	1859
Jedburgh, .....	—	1875
Kelso, .....	1841	1871
Kendal, .....	1843	—
Kilnarnock—Clerk's Lane, .....	—	1843
"    Winton Place, .....	—	1843
Kilwinning, .....	1844	1845
Kirkcaldy, .....	1867	1871
Lanark, .....	1847	1862
Langholm, .....	1864	1872
Larkhall, .....	1875	1875

CHURCHES.	Formed.	Joined Union.
Leith, .....	1844	1853
Manchester—Queen's Park, .....	1868	1868
Melrose, .....	1842	—
Montrose, .....	1847	1859
Motherwell, .....	1872	1874
Muirkirk, .....	1854	—
Newburgh, .....	—	—
Newcastleton, .....	1849	1870
Paisley, .....	1845	1846
Perth, .....	1856	1857
Saltcoats, .....	1859	1863
Sanquhar, .....	1864	1865
Selkirk, .....	1842	1871
Shapinshay, Orkney, .....	1852	1855
Shotts, .....	1844	—
Stewarton, .....	—	—
Stonehouse, .....	1860	—
Strathmiglo, .....	1871	1872
Thornhill (South), .....	1851	1856
Tillicoultry, .....	1850	1862
Westhill, Skene, .....	1804	1862
Wick, .....	1846	1871
Wishaw, .....	1862	1874

It may interest the ministers and members of other denominations to learn the programme of study which is laid out for our theological students, in so far as that may be made plain by the entrance examinations which they require to pass from year to year.

#### ACADEMY RULES.

1. *The Length of the Curriculum.*—The Curriculum shall consist of Five Sessions at the Academy, and, if possible, Four at the University. If any student desire to finish his course of study at the close of his fourth Academic Session, he shall stand an Examination in Systematic Theology, Exegesis, Hebrew, Philosophy, and some prescribed Theological Treatise; and in the event of the Examination being judged satisfactory, the four Sessions shall be held as a sufficient Curriculum. Any Student wishing to pass such Examination must send in his application not later than the 1st of August in any year; the subjects of Examination for the year to be announced at the close of the Session of the Academy preceding.

2. *Qualification for Admission.*—All Applicants for Admission to the Academy must have attended at least one Session in Classics at a University, or be able to stand the Entrance Examination, and shall write an Essay on some prescribed Theological subject.

*Entrance Examinations: First Session.*—Latin—De Bello Gallico, lib. iv. cc. 28-36.

Greek—Gospel according to Luke, chap. xv., xvi., with an analysis of chap. xv., 1-10.

Biblical Knowledge—The Acts of the Apostles.

*Second Session.*—Latin—Cicero, De Officiis, lib. i., cc. iii. v.

Greek—Galatians, chaps. ii. 11-21; iii. 1-14.

Hebrew—Isaiah, chap. i. 10-20, and regular verb.

Theology—Moses Stuart's Letters on the Divinity of Christ.

*Third Session.*—Latin—Calvin's Institutes, lib. ii., c. i., §§ 5-9.

Greek—Romans, chap. v.

Hebrew—Psalm ii., and Syntax of Pronoun.

Theology—Gilbert on the Atonement, lect. v.

*Fourth Session.*—Latin—Calvin's Institutes, lib. iii., c. xi., §§ 1-9.

Greek—Romans, chaps. ix., x.

Hebrew—Exodus, chap. iii., and regular verb with suffixes.

Theology—Gilbert on the Atonement, Lectures vi., vii.

Biblical Knowledge—The Book of Exodus.

*Fifth Session.*—Latin—Anselm's Cur Deus Homo, lib. i. §§ 1-15.

Greek—Romans i., iii.

Hebrew—Psalms lxxxiv.-v., and Syntax of verb, §§ 125-130.

Theology—The Nature and Extent of the Holy Spirit's Work.

Church History—Arian Controversy; Neander's Ch. His., vol. iv., pp. 1-73 (Bohn's Edition).

Practical Religion—Beecher's Lectures on Preaching (First Series).

*Closing Examination.*—Examination of Students wishing to finish at the close of fourth Session:—

Latin—Anselm's Cur Deus Homo.

Greek—Ephesians.

Hebrew—Daniel, chaps. xi., xii.

Biblical Knowledge—Alexander's Connection of the Old and New Testaments, Lecture viii.

Theology—Liddon's Bampton Lectures, i.-iii., with notes.

Church History—The Theology of the Schoolmen, Neander's Ch. His. (Bohn's Edition), vol. viii., pp. 121-239.

Hermeneutics—Doede's Manual.

Practical Religion—H. W. Beecher's Lectures on Preaching (First Series).

NOTE.—Certificates of having passed the Classical Examination for M.A. degree will entitle to exemption from the Examination in Latin and Greek.

*Re-Application.*—Students must apply for re-admission each Session of their course; such application being understood as an expression of continued sympathy with the views and aims of the Union.

*Intermitting a Session.*—No Student will be allowed to intermit a Session without special reasons satisfactory to the Committee.

*Preaching.*—Students applying for preaching appointments for the first time require to preach before a Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose. Preachers are not at liberty to make alterations in their appointments except through the Secretary of Supply Committee. Disengaged Students are not at liberty to make engagements for vacant Sabbaths before communicating with the Secretary of Supply Committee. It is imperative on all Students receiving preaching appointments not to read their sermons.

When a student has finished his curriculum of study, and is about to be licensed as a qualified preacher of the gospel,

the following questions are put to him in presence of the assembled Conference :—

“Do you hereby signify, in presence of the brethren of the Conference, your ardent desire to be engaged as a Preacher of the Gospel, in the work of the Lord ?

“Can you, in the presence of the brethren of the Conference, avow it to be your solemn conviction that, by the grace of God, you are experimentally acquainted with that Gospel in which you ardently aspire to live and labour ?

“Is it your solemn conviction that, in desiring to give yourself up to the labours of a Preacher of the Gospel, you are actuated by no sinister or selfish motives, but by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in the salvation of sinners, and edification and sanctification of saints ?

“Are you determined, should God be pleased to make use of you in his work, to cultivate, by the help of the Divine Spirit, and with earnest assiduity, whatever things you know to be of indispensable, or even subordinate importance, for insuring your success in your evangelical labours ?

“Are you determined to be a man of prayer ?

“Are you determined to be a man of study ?

“Are you determined to be a man of labour ?

“Are you determined to be a man of self-denial, keeping under your body, and bringing it under subjection, lest, by any means, after preaching the Gospel to others, you yourself should be cast away ?

“Are you determined to be a man of courtesy, characterised by a uniform decorum of manners ?

“Are you determined to have your conversation always with grace, seasoned with salt ?

“Is it your sincere and fixed purpose to do what in you lies to preserve the harmony and promote the prosperity of the Union ?

“And now, my brother, is it your sincere resolution to make it your constant study to be blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as you have been taught, that you may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers ?”

This quotation, from the printed form for the ordination of licentiates, will show that we are anxious to secure and maintain, by God's blessing, a prayerful and spiritually-minded ministry.

One other recent event of our ecclesiastical history it may be proper to refer to before laying down our pen. Hitherto we have had nothing sent us like denominational greetings from other bodies of Christians, except in 1857, when the Rev. Mr. Lyle crossed the Atlantic as the delegate of a branch of the Wesleyan Church in America to our Confer-

ence. But we were surprised and delighted in the summer of 1871, by receiving Christian salutations from a large body of Christians in the United States, called the Cumberland Presbyterians, whose views of divine truth turned out to be remarkably like our own.

This denomination was formed in 1810, on the banks of the Cumberland, a tributary of the Ohio, (whence their name), by an earnest band of Christian people, who differed from the great Presbyterian connection on two points:— (1.) The propriety of ordaining to the ministry (during the exigency of a religious revival) men who had acknowledged gifts, even although they might not have a full college curriculum; and (2.) That licentiates, when ordained to the ministry, should be allowed to express their adherence to the Confession of Faith, *barring fatality*, that is, excepting the doctrines of universal predestination and unconditional election. What the exact doctrinal position is which Cumberland Presbyterians occupy, may be learned from the following succinct statement in a work published by one of their leading ministers.

“*First.* That there are no eternal reprobates.

“*Second.* That Christ died not for a *part* of the world only, but for all mankind.

“*Third.* That *all* infants dying in infancy are saved through Christ and sanctification of the Spirit.

“*Fourth.* That the Spirit of God operates on the world, or as extensively as Christ has made the atonement, in such a manner as to leave *all men* inexcusable.”

The following are, at present, the statistics of this comparatively influential denomination, whose churches are located chiefly in the Western and Southern States of the Transatlantic Republic:—It comprehends 24 Synods, 103 Presbyteries, and above 1,100 Ministers, besides over 200 Licentiates, and 200 Candidates. It has also three Universities, with several colleges. Its lay membership amounts to about 150,000. Besides other important periodicals, at least two weekly newspapers seem to be published in connection with the body, each with a circulation of several thousands.

Well, it happened in the Providence of God that in the year 1870, the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was made aware of the existence of the Evangelical Union of Scotland, and of the remarkable similarity that obtained both in the history and doctrinal

belief of the two denominations. It was through the loyalty to their home church, of two young gentlemen, the sons of J. B. Ferguson, Esq., of Belfast, then resident in Winona, Wisconsin, that this important fact was communicated to the Assembly. The Messrs. Ferguson had shown Dr. Woods, the pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Winona, a few of our denominational publications; and he brought the matter before the Supreme Court of his church. Dr. Milton Bird, the stated Clerk of the General Assembly, was instructed to commence a correspondence with the Scottish brethren which was continued for several years by "pen and ink," but has more recently been consummated in the interchange of living delegates. In the summer of 1874 the Rev. Dr. Morison of Glasgow, and the author of this volume visited the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, at Springfield, Missouri, where they were warmly welcomed, and had the privilege of meeting and addressing brethren beloved. In 1875 and 1876, the Rev. George Gladstone of Govan, having been deputed to attend Temperance Conventions in the United States, found time to visit also the Cumberland Presbyterian General Assemblies at Jefferson, Texas, and Bowling Green, Kentucky. On the other hand the Rev. Dr. Millar, President of Waynesburg College, Western Pennsylvania, was deputed to attend the Conference of the Evangelical Union at Glasgow in September 1875, on which occasion he made a most favourable impression, by his truly Christian spirit and eloquent addresses. Thus the Evangelical Union has been strengthened by the sympathy and support of her older and more fully developed American sister.

As to the attitude, finally, which the Evangelical Union holds towards other denominations of Christians, we can, without hesitation, characterise it as one of friendship and brotherly love. We have all along been ready to recognise that the points as to which we agreed with our fellow-Protestants were more numerous than those as to which we differed from them. Even when we have been unkindly treated by those who did not understand us, we have tried to breathe the prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." We have lived to see our distinctive doctrines preached from all the pulpits in the land, or, at least, practical advantage taken of them. The tenets of unconditional election and partial grace are rarely ever referred to by

ministers of the Gospel, and are rarely published in books, save in new editions of the old *Confession of Faith*. Surely justice will be done us some day, as the men who have suffered for a free Gospel, and who have the best right to cry aloud at meetings for religious revival, "Whosoever will, let him come." Meanwhile, whether we get brotherly recognition from our fellow-Christians or not, we hope, by God's help, to continue the twofold work to which we seem to have been providentially called in this country, namely, that of influencing and educating other denominations, and of preaching and defending, within our own spheres, the world-wide Gospel of the grace of God.

There is one reason indeed, which we have sometimes heard urged against us, as justifying our exclusion from the fraternal intercourse and regard of other communions, namely, that we are controversial in our spirit, and give too great prominence in our books, and at our public gatherings to our distinctive principles. But if Free-churchmen, Baptists, Congregationalists, and others, advocate their peculiar Shibboleths on platforms, and in pamphlets, and yet are considered good Christian brethren by those from whom they differ, may we not do the same and be regarded in a similar light? Is it not possible to "speak the truth in love"? Is it not possible, for example, to write and publish such a book as this, and yet wish well to the entire household of faith?

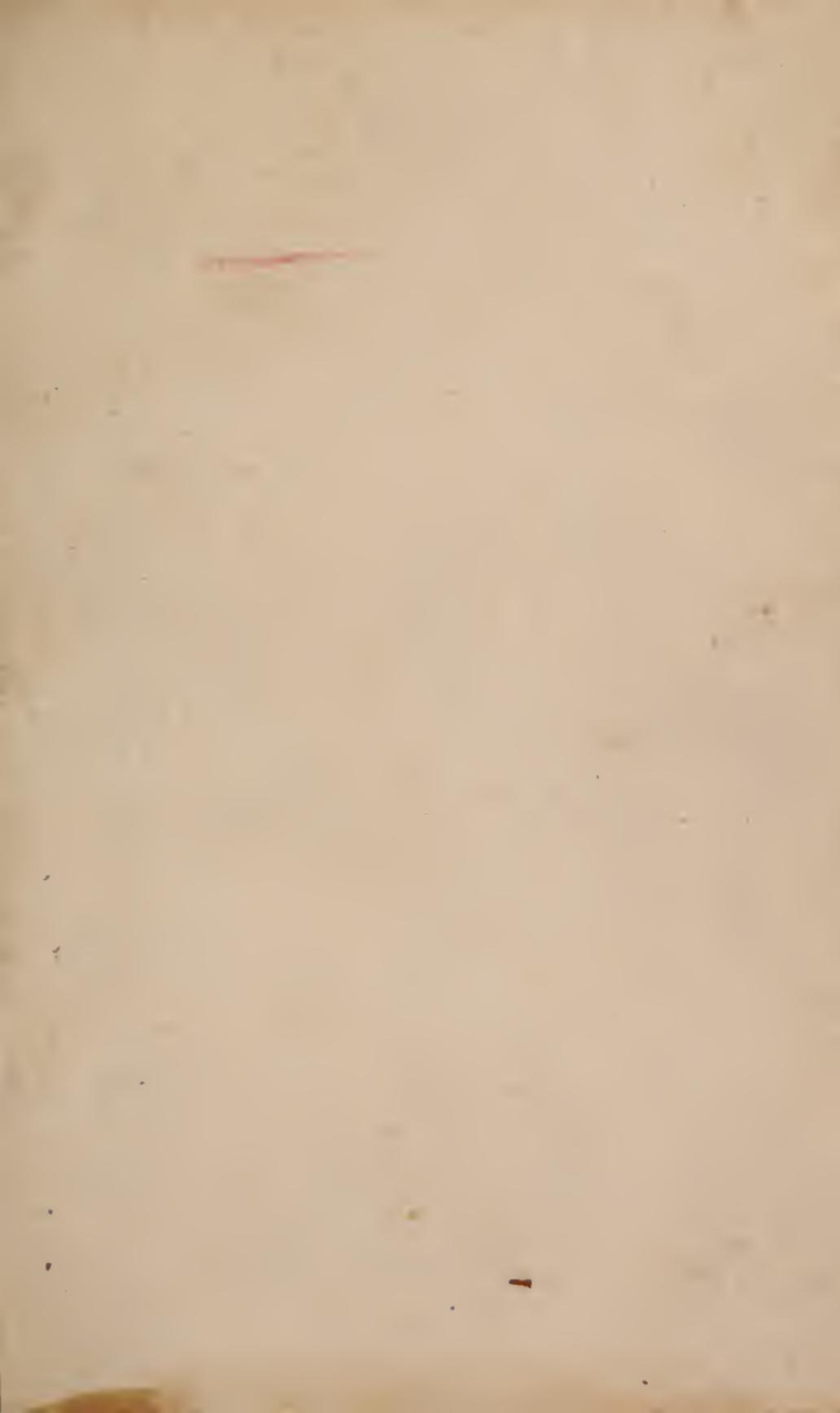
In now drawing this history to a close, we can honestly say that we have spared no pains to make the narrative correct and complete. We have endeavoured to strike the golden mean between too great diffuseness on the one hand, and too great condensation on the other. And, if we have succeeded in giving our readers a better understanding than they had before of the early struggles and sufferings of the founders of a body which, as we believe, is destined to affect the theology of the churches of the future more largely than might at first be imagined from its numerical strength, we shall feel ourselves to be amply rewarded.











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