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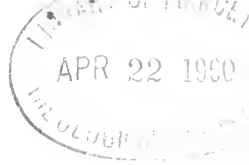




Miss Elin

Very truly Yours
Wm. Harper

LIFE OF
PRINCIPAL HARPER, D.D.



BY THE
✓
REV. ANDREW THOMSON, D.D. F.R.S.E.
EDINBURGH.

'Cujus vita fulgor, ejus verba tonitrua.'

SECOND EDITION.

EDINBURGH:
ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET.

1882.

P R E F A C E .

I N preparing this volume, we were keenly alive to the confidence shown us by the family of the late Principal Harper, in committing to our hands the important work of writing the story of his life. We felt that we were warranted in claiming to possess at least one qualification for this willing service, in the long friendship and mutual confidence which had existed between us and the honoured subject of the memoir. When, a few weeks before he was called up to his 'Father's house,' we preached to his congregation, at his own request, on the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination to the Christian ministry, we could look back, along with him, upon nearly half a century of intercourse and warm and unbroken affection.

The constant labours of a city pastorate, which could not be interrupted or even greatly diminished, must be accepted as at once explaining and justifying the fact that *The Life* has not appeared somewhat earlier; though modern biography, it is probable, has suffered quite as frequently from hasty as from tardy publication. We may be too near events and persons to think of them wisely and without bias or exaggeration. And moderate delay gives a writer the better opportunity of assuring himself regarding the accuracy of what he narrates.

The remarkable qualifications which distinguished

Principal Harper as a minister of religion and a Professor of Theology, in addition to the excellences of his character which shone so brightly in the more private walks of life, ought to be sufficient of themselves to render his biography, if written with a fair measure of success, both interesting and eminently suggestive. But beyond this, his work and influence as a Christian citizen and man of affairs, who helped to originate, direct, and help forward to triumph great public movements with which political and social as well as religious progress was identified, ought greatly to enhance the value of such a memoir. In regard to that branch of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland of which he was a member and a minister, it may be affirmed, in a modified degree, that he was so closely associated with all its most important public acts, during a long series of years, that the narrative of his life becomes, at various points, also the history of his Church. We are persuaded that, according to the measure in which the facts of his life are known, they will justify the high encomium of one of the most eminent of our Scottish judges, that Principal Harper 'has left the inheritance of a great and honoured name to his family and country.'

It soon became evident that the amount of Dr Harper's epistolary correspondence, which it was desirable to publish, could not conveniently or suitably be intermingled in the various chapters of the memoir. It was therefore resolved to present his letters in an Appendix, arranging them as nearly as possible in their chronological order. Not only because of the instruction and Christian consolation with which they abound, but also as bringing into special prominence the affectionate side of his nature, and gleaming at

times with a playful humour, which in him was not only natural but irrepressible, they possess a unique interest and value. And there is a beautiful fitness in the fact that the last letter in the series, which was written not long before 'his right hand forgot its cunning,' was addressed to a beloved child.

We have grateful pleasure in acknowledging our obligation to many ministers, formerly admiring students of Dr Harper, for the interesting recollections with which they have furnished us respecting his work as Professor, especially to Dr Blair of Dunblane, Dr Grosart of Blackburn, Mr Angus of Arbroath, Mr Howat of Liverpool, and Mr Buchanan, late of Greyfriars' Church, Glasgow. We are indebted to Mr Morris, librarian of the United Presbyterian College, for ready access to ecclesiastical documents, and to E. Erskine Harper, Esq., Advocate, for supplying us with much valuable material, and intrusting to our confidence many family documents. And not least gratefully do we own the kindness of Dr George Jeffrey of Glasgow, and Rev. William Gillies, of the Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, for the many useful hints with which they favoured us when the book was passing through the press.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE sale of the First Edition of the Life of Principal Harper in a few months, the favourable and kindly notices of the public press, as well as the wish expressed by many for a reprint of the book, have led to the issue of this second and cheaper edition. The few corrections that have been suggested have been gratefully considered, and accepted as far as they commended themselves to the Author's judgment.

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LIFE OF PRINCIPAL HARPER.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

1795-1813.

Genealogy—The Laird of Cambusnethan—Leighton—Lawyer and Ecclesiastic—Times of the Covenant—Fine and Imprisonment—Edinburgh Castle—School—French Officer—Juvenile Rhymes—Scenery around Lanark—‘Boy the Father to the Man’—Touching Interview—Conversion—Glasgow University—Home-Sickness—The Return—Professor Jardine—Medical Studies in University of Edinburgh.

JAMES HARPER was born at Lanark, June 23, 1795. He was the younger son of Rev. Alex. Harper, minister of the Associate or Burgher Congregation in that beautifully-situated county town. His mother was Janet Gilchrist, daughter of James Gilchrist, Esq. of Gilfoot, in the neighbourhood of Lanark, a property on the banks of the Clyde in the parish of Carluke, still in possession of the family.

It deserves to be noticed that one of his ancestors, by the father's side, was Sir John Harper, Advocate, Sheriff of Lanarkshire in the reign of Charles II., and proprietor of the lands of Cambusnethan and Craigmook. He was the friend and frequent associate of the meditative and saintly Archbishop Leighton, whose

country house of Garion Tower, being not far from the Sheriff's residence at Cambusnethan House, gave the lawyer and the ecclesiastic easy opportunities of intercourse. But those were trying times in Lanarkshire. Persecution had waxed hot against the Covenanters who abounded in that part of the country, and both the Archbishop and the Sheriff were sincerely averse to the work of carrying out the arbitrary decrees of the Government against the sufferers. Leighton escaped from the perplexity and trouble by being allowed to return to his old home in the College of Edinburgh where he had formerly been Principal, and, not long after, by his retiring to a sister's house in Essex, where he spent his closing years in preparation for the heavenly kingdom.

But though no act of direct assistance to the 'men of the Covenant' could be proved against the Sheriff, his wife had been more demonstrative in her sympathies, and, on the suspicion of connivance with treasonable practices, as we learn from Wodrow, he was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle. He remained in the Castle prison for several months, and was only at length liberated, under a bond of £10,000 sterling, 'to answer, when called, to the premises, or any other crime laid to his charge.' We doubt whether the subject of this memoir could ever have been brought to regard this passage in the history of his ancestor as a blot on the family escutcheon.

At an early age, the boy was sent to school during the summer months in the small retired village of Cartland. His mother was wont to describe him as at this time a fair, ruddy, chubby, cheerful, and happy boy—fond of whistling. He was transferred to the Grammar School of Lanark, in which all the

common branches of education, as well as Latin and Greek, were taught. The lessons of the school were energetically assisted and supplemented by his father at home; while the whole course was by and by pleasantly diversified by the instructions of a French officer who came to board in the family, and who delighted to instruct his ready pupil in the French language, as well as to train him in the art of fencing. There was a large tree in his father's garden at Mansfield, some of whose branches the little student contrived to weave into a seat which was raised some distance above the ground, and in this leafy retreat he coned his lessons from day to day. In the later years of his boyhood he often attempted some verses in rhyme, 'lipping in numbers, for the numbers came.' There was a kind of self-education in all this which was by no means valueless. But in after years the juvenile rhymes were all placed by him in the mouth of a rabbit-hole and burned. A wise act of cremation, it is likely; but we are not so sure of his wisdom in committing at intervals to the flames so many precious sheaves of the writings of his vigorous manhood and his green old age.

Another important branch of the youth's education was meanwhile being carried on, in which nature was his only teacher, laying open to him some of the most picturesque pages of its great book in the scenery around Lanark. In the smiling orchards which, in summer and autumn, turned the valley of the Clyde, for many a mile round, into one great garden; in the famous waterfalls, the sound of which favouring winds bore to his home at Mansfield; and in the lovely glen of the Cartland Crags, his soul drank in high delight; and as he rambled alone, the shadows of many a

problem already began to rise dimly before his mind, to be anxiously and earnestly grappled with in later years.

‘Lo ! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o’erhung with pine,
And sees on high amidst the encircling groves
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine ;
While waters, woods, and winds in concert join,
And echo swells the chorus to the skies.’

In the few scattered recollections and impressions which it is now possible to gather regarding the growth of his character, it is not difficult to trace the early buddings of some of those qualities which became mature and prominent in him in later life. His veneration for his parents was not of that passive kind which we find in so many children, but glowed with all the fervour of a passion ; and it found ample exercise in later years. Among his companions, his delicate sense of honour and manly integrity, commanded their respect, while his moral courage, mingled with gentleness and unwillingness to give offence, won their love. If a boy wished to do a mean thing, he would take care not to do it in young Harper’s presence. There was a manly forbearance in the boy that made him, without knowing it, a peacemaker. We are confirmed in this impression by an incident which took place only a few years ago in Glasgow. Having heard of a gentleman being still alive who had been his playfellow more than sixty years before on the school-green at Lanark, he got his address and sought him out. He was shown into a room, and a few minutes afterwards, a gentleman entered bearing the marks of great age. The two stood looking at each other without recognition, when Principal Harper simply said, ‘James Harper.’ Instantly the old gentleman grasped

him warmly by the hand, and said with emotion, 'Jamie Harper, the boy who never made a quarrel!'

The question has often been asked in reference to one who afterwards rose to such a position of eminence and usefulness, at what period and in what circumstances did young Harper come under that supreme influence of religious principle and motive which the Scriptures describe by the name of conversion? Various gathered hints have led us to conclude that this great change took place in his boyhood; but in his case, as in that of thousands regarding whose personal Christianity there cannot be any doubt, it is impossible to determine, with even an approach to precision, 'the happy day that fixed his choice.' Dates are of little consequence where we have fruits. In the case of children who have lived in the atmosphere of a Christian home, there is an influence which often brings them at an early age 'near to the kingdom of heaven,' but it is no more possible to determine the actual moment of decision than to tell the very instant at which the first ray of light streaked the heavens at sunrise. 'There are differences of administration, but the same Lord.' The wind bloweth not only *where*, but *how* it listeth. One child in a family may be awakened from sleep by a thunder-peal, and another by a mother's kiss. One of the holiest and wisest of the Puritans, Philip Henry, declared, after his own curiously quaint manner, that he 'could not tell the precise time at which the match was made and the knot was tied.' We are strengthened in these impressions regarding the boy's early religious decision, by the glowing terms in which, throughout his manhood, and most of all in his old age, he was accustomed to speak of the singular happiness of his boyhood and youth. With our recollection of James Montgomery's

words, that 'youth is the poetry of old age,' we can scarcely doubt that the golden mist in which he ever beheld his earlier years, contained in it the supreme element of a loving heart at peace with God; though this does not exclude other elements which brightened his recollections, and made it possible for him, even to the last, to taste anew his earlier joys. In one of his latest letters, written to a daughter from the old family home at Lanark, after he had passed his seventieth year, he writes: 'We drove to Orchard by way of Cartland, a small retired village where I went to school one summer. I recognised some old fir-trees where the youngsters of old had their playground, and it so happened that the children now attending school there, were enjoying their play-hour as I passed, so that my recollections of boyhood were thereby rendered more vivid.'

By the time that our somewhat precocious youth had reached the age of twelve, the Grammar School at Lanark appears to have well-nigh exhausted upon him its rather limited resources, and it became a serious question at home, What was next to be done with the lad? His active mind must receive employment somewhere; and it was at length resolved to enter him as a student in the University of Glasgow. It proved to be a premature step, though probably no harm came out of it. Borne away from his native town where he knew every one, and where every countenance smiled upon him, into a great sea of strange faces where no one cared for him, he was seized, during the winter, with a measure of homesickness that made work impossible, and even his young life a burden to him. As time moved on, and his longing sadness did not pass away, he at length summoned courage to inform his father of his condi-

tion. With a considerateness that was characteristic of the lad, the letter was written in Latin, to secure that his father might be his only confidant. But it gushed with such a filial tenderness, and revealed such a weariness of spirit in the lonely boy, that the father's resolution was promptly taken. Early next morning the pony was saddled, and the good minister was on his way to Glasgow, a distance of twenty-eight miles, to bring the student home. On the way back the father and the son walked and rode by turns, and the house was brighter again when James was back. The home education was renewed, a miscellaneous lot of books was read, the old scenes of beauty and grandeur were revisited, study went on in his awakening mind even when there was no book in his hand; and in the following winter he returned to Glasgow with an invigorated body, and with braced resolution to pursue his University studies in right earnest.

He continued a student at this time-honoured University during three sessions, from 1810 to 1813, passing through the course of classical and philosophical study which the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland require of their students previous to their formal entrance on the study of theology. Beyond the fact that his diligence, application, and opening gifts made him a favourite with his professors, and that he was loved by his fellow-students, with many of whom he formed lifelong friendships that mellowed with years, we have been able to glean almost nothing of his college life. Of one of his professors he was accustomed to speak, in common with thousands who had sat at his feet, with admiring gratitude. This was George Jardine, the Professor of Logic, a man who united in himself the possession of knowledge with a remarkable power of conveying it; who knew how to

stimulate thought in young minds, and to send away his pupils daily with the feeling that the last hour's training had made them intellectually stronger and wiser; and whose mingled dignity and affection drew forth towards him from the occupants of his crowded benches the veneration of children to a father. To the last he cherished fond recollections of his Alma Mater and his student days in Glasgow. 'On his last visit to us,' writes a son-in-law, 'he expressed a wish to see again the old University buildings, his student lodgings, and the road to Lanark which he had so often paced; and it was touching to observe the deep and somewhat pensive interest with which he viewed the old scenes.'

In the winter of 1813 he passed to the University of Edinburgh, where, in addition to the study of Natural Philosophy which was required by his Church, he stepped beyond the prescribed curriculum, and became an eager student, during two sessions, in the important medical classes of Chemistry, Anatomy, Surgery, and the Practice of Medicine, attracted by the names of such renowned teachers as Playfair, Gregory, and Hope. In after life, he always put high value on these supplementary studies. They enlarged his mind, widened his sympathies, enriched and diversified his intellectual stores, and helped him to make other spheres of knowledge, besides those supplied by sacred learning, 'pay tithes to the priesthood.' But that they did not indicate any hesitation of choice between the profession of the Christian minister and that of the physician, is evident from the fact that he had already entered, at the Divinity Hall of his Church at Selkirk, on his course of theological study. This last-named fact now turns our thoughts to Selkirk.

CHAPTER II.

STUDENT LIFE AT SELKIRK.

1813-1818.

Professor Lawson—Reception of Young Noviciate at Selkirk—Curriculum of Study and Manner of Instruction—Mingled Influence of the Professor's Gifts and Personal Character—Owned by People as well as Students—Lingering Fragrance—Traditional Estimate justified—Scenery of Yarrow and Ettrick—Half-Holiday Rambles—Evenings with old Selkirk Students—Reminiscences—Extract from Letter by Thomas Carlyle.

MR HARPER entered as a student of theology in the Theological Hall of the Associate or Burgher Synod, at Selkirk, in the autumn of 1813. The venerable Dr Lawson, who had been appointed Professor of Theology to that branch of the Secession Synod in 1787, though becoming old, was still doing his loved work with an efficiency that had been increased by ripening graces and long experience. It was an important step in our student's life, for it indicated that he had now set his face deliberately and stedfastly to preparation for the Christian ministry. Mr Harper's father had sat at the feet of the same professor in the earlier years of his professorship, and it was with mingled feelings that he now welcomed the promising son from the manse of the Lanark minister. 'Mr James,' he said, 'I must be getting an old man now, when my own students are sending sons to me.'

For a period of thirty-three years, Dr Lawson was the Synod's only Professor of Theology, and the curriculum of study extended over five years, with a session of nine weeks in each year during the two autumn months of August and September. In those busy months, the students listened to lectures on Doctrinal and Practical Theology, read critically large portions of the Scriptures in the original languages, with which the professor intermingled his invaluable exegetical comments. And all this was varied by the delivery in rotation of prescribed discourses and exercises by the students, which was followed by the professor's shrewd and kindly criticisms.

Probably the instances have been very few in which more real and thorough work was done in such short annual sessions as those at Selkirk, more especially as the professor never thought of stopping at the end of a scrimp hour, if his topic for the day seemed to need further expansion. Sometimes, indeed, when the sand-glass had been turned a second time, the students were still listening with unbroken interest to the old man's words of sanctified wisdom. Still it must be acknowledged that the system was defective, both in the narrow range of its subjects and in the too short annual period allowed each year for intellectual drill and discipline. And the fact that, during an entire generation, Dr Lawson gave to his Church a succession of ministers of solid and sustained excellence, proves to what an extent the deficiencies of a system are sometimes compensated by the rare gifts and qualifications, as well as by the personal character and influence of the man who administers it. The Selkirk professor was such a man. Over the whole of that region which is watered by the Tweed, the

Ettrick, and the Yarrow, the names of Boston of Ettrick, and Dr Lawson of Selkirk, have left a sweet savour the fragrance of which has not yet departed. Their forms of religious thought and their very phraseology may still be traced in many a Christian household, even to the third and fourth generations. We question whether any theological tutor, since the days of the perhaps too gentle Doddridge, ever drew around himself so much of the veneration and love of his students, as did this simple and homely man with his unique, though noiseless power. Even students who came to Selkirk with the strong belief that the traditional estimate they had heard of him was exaggerated, were not long in catching the enthusiasm and reflecting it. His transparent simplicity and singleness of aim, which shone out in everything that he said and did, contributed much to produce this reverent regard. There was not one inch of unreality about him. Then the genial charity which took always the kindest view of things, which was slow to believe evil and made ready allowance for the exuberance of youth, evoked the generous sympathy and appreciation of the succession of young men that sat at his feet. And his pupils soon discovered that he was 'a far abler and more learned man than he seemed;' while his utter want of self-consciousness added a new and irresistible charm to his character, and transformed the professor into the sage. His saintly spirit led men to pronounce his name with something of the veneration with which we are accustomed to speak of the Christian fathers of primitive times.

No class of men was insensible to the influence of his holy character and 'unbought grace.' When

Prince Leopold, the future King of Belgium, accompanied by Sir Walter Scott, paid a transient visit to Selkirk, he acknowledged that the one happy allusion of Dr Lawson to his great ancestor, the Elector of Saxony, and to his connection with the Reformation, had more touched his heart than all the elaborate addresses and piled-up epithets of public bodies and municipal corporations. But rough and reckless men were equally ready to venerate simplicity and goodness as they saw it in him. We have heard it related that when a company of carters, more than twenty in number, were approaching Selkirk with twice as many waggons of coals for the winter use of the town, and they saw the old minister coming in the opposite direction, they immediately loosed their horses, and retiring into a recess on the roadside, asked him to pause and pray with them. The request was doubly welcome as coming from such men. In the impromptu prayer which followed, he rose above himself, for it seemed 'to have been given him in that hour what he should speak.' Like the great preacher of the Judæan wilderness in not very dissimilar circumstances, he did not spare their class sins, but prayed that they might ever be kept from 'taking the name of the Lord their God in vain,' and that they might always remember that it was written in His Word that 'a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.'

As the qualities we have named revealed themselves to our student, they awakened his unbounded admiration and enhanced his delight in the man and the place. And if anything could have added to these attractions of Selkirk, it was the unrivalled pastoral scenery of the Yarrow and the Ettrick, of which that little country town, standing on its breezy uplands,

was the centre; and in the midst of which every Saturday, as it came round with its half-holiday, allowed him and his fellow-students to wander at will. Nature was, in fact, another class-room to those who knew how to use it, and the old professor did not like those discourses of his students less which were redolent of the wild flowers rather than of the lamp. It was something to live in the very scenes from which, with their historic legends and their simple beauty, Scott had already begun to draw some of his inspiration, and which were, not long afterwards, to attract Wordsworth twice into Scotland from his poet's home in Rydal.

It was a treat of no common kind in earlier days to sit with a number of old Selkirk students, after they were far advanced in the ministry, and to mark how they kindled into enthusiasm as they spoke of their old professor,—dilating on his outward appearance in his spare form and ruddy countenance, his brown wig overlapping his ample forehead, and his shepherd's plaid wrapped round his shoulders, which, like the garments of the Israelites in the wilderness, seemed never to grow old. Others would bring forth their budget of anecdotes and racy sayings, which, though often repeated, never grew stale, and many of which still circulate upon men's lips like proverbs; while all would testify of the life benefit which they had derived from the man of God. One of Mr Harper's fellow-students, now beyond his eightieth year, writing from Portland, in the United States, thus conveys his impressions regarding him when they attended together at the Selkirk Hall:—‘I recall the form of your father, his sparkling eye, and the affectionate intonations of his voice. Being in course of

preparation as a student with a view to missionary work in Russia, your father, on this account, perhaps, showed me more than usual attention, and I had then and still feel a reverence for him such as his whole demeanour necessarily excited.¹

Of all the educational influences that helped most to mould and develop our student's mind and character, next to those of his Lanark home, those of the Selkirk professor were the greatest; and his Selkirk impressions and reminiscences continued to operate with undiminished influence to the end of his days, though it would be difficult to determine whether the power of the professor or of the man was the greater. We remember the hearty and grateful appreciation with which, a few years since, he read for the first time Mr Carlyle's genial and masterly life-portrait of the professor, and saw how readily, in listening to his mother's recollections of him at Ecclefechan, he had recognised in the old Selkirk sage one of Scotland's great men :

'It seems to me I gather from your narrative and from his own letters, a perfectly credible account of Dr Lawson's character, course of life, and labour in the world; and the reflection rises in me that there was not in the British Island a more completely genuine, pious-minded, diligent, and faithful man. Altogether original, too; peculiar to Scotland, and, so far as I can guess, unique even there and then. England will never know him out of any book, or at least it would take the genius of a Shakespeare to make him known by that method; but if England did, it might much and wholesomely astonish her. Seen in his intrinsic character, no simple-minded more

¹ Letter from Rev. J. Carruthers to E. E. Harper, Esq., Advocate.

perfect lover of wisdom do I know of in that generation.

‘Professor Lawson, you may believe, was a great name in my boy-circle, never spoken of but with reverence and thankfulness by those I loved best.

‘In a dim but singularly conclusive way, I can still remember seeing him and hearing him preach (though of that latter, except the fact of it, I retain nothing); but of the figure, face, tone, dress, I have a vivid impression (perhaps about my twelfth year, that is, in summer of 1807-08). It seems to me he had a better face than in your frontispiece, more strength, sagacity, shrewdness, simplicity, a broader jaw, more hair of his own (I don’t remember any wig)—altogether a most superlative steel-grey Scottish peasant (and Scottish Socrates of the period)—really, as I now perceive, more like the twin-brother of that Athenian Socrates who went about supreme in Athens in wooden shoes, than any man I have ever ocularly seen.’¹

¹ Letter to Rev. John Macfarlane, LL.D., late of Clapham.

CHAPTER III.

PROBATION AND ORDINATION.

1818-1820.

Non-Professional Reading—Advantages—The Probationer—On the Road—The Pony—Pleasant Life—Welcomes—Adventures—The Solway Firth—Fall of Stonebyres—Dreaminess—Craighleith Quarry—Calls—Unexpected Arrest and Delay—Mental Doubts and Struggles—Light and Peace—Ordination and Settlement at North Leith.

THE long recesses of nearly ten months that intervened between the autumn sessions at Selkirk, when not partly occupied by attendance on winter classes in Edinburgh, were spent by our student in the old home at Lanark, where he enjoyed the care and companionship of his father, and owned the healthful stimulus of his Selkirk training. And while theology had now become, more than ever, his principal study, he wisely indulged himself in a good deal of miscellaneous reading, mastering the systems of the leading metaphysicians, dipping deeply into history and books of travel, and storing his mind with the treasures of our best English classics. No doubt in all this he followed strong intellectual tastes, and gratified wide sympathies. But he was acting wisely even for his future ministry; for there are valuable acquirements which, if not made before entering on the busy life of a modern pastor, are not likely to be made in any sufficient measure afterwards, and the want of which

compels him to go 'halting all his days.' There is no profession in which a full stock of intellectual capital is more needed than that of a modern minister in a large town or city. He ought, before he enters on his charge, to have 'much goods laid up in store for many years.' If not, he will be likely to fare like the soldier who goes into the battle-field with only a few rounds of cartridge. He must soon either fall or fly. With his weekly preparation of discourses for the pulpit, and the endless details of pastoral work, much of which cannot even be delayed; with his constant exposure to interruptions, reasonable and unreasonable, not to speak of the letter-writing which almost every postman's rap forces upon him, the wonder is not so much that some fail, as that so many succeed.

On 3d April, 1818, Mr Harper was cordially licensed by his native presbytery, and sent forth to preach the Gospel. He had previously undergone, according to the custom of the Presbyterian Churches, a series of sifting examinations in Dogmatic Theology and Christian Casuistry, some of which were conducted in Latin; he had translated passages in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and delivered, *memoriter*, lectures, sermons, homilies, exegeses, and other exercises with learned names, and had acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of the grave and reverend presbyters, that many kindly prophecies 'went before' regarding him, which were eventually to be much more than fulfilled. The young soldier of the Cross received his formal commission with a mingled sense of honour and responsibility. This gave him weekly opportunities of ministering in preaching stations, or in vacant charges that were in search of a minister.

The life of a Scottish licentiate or probationer was

very different sixty years ago, from what it is in our time. Railways were still unknown, and even stage-coaches were only common on the more frequented roads. The usual and almost necessary equipment for the young preacher was to have a pony, and to become, as Mr Harper was accustomed laughingly to say, with allusion to the Church militant, 'one of the Church's mounted cavalry.' The distance which he was obliged to travel from one church or station to another was often very considerable. But it must have been a pleasant thing for a young man of one and twenty, or thereabouts, who delighted in fresh air, and in such scenes of sublimity and beauty as those in which Scotland abounds, to move along, with abundance of time on his hands, through sunny glens, by the side of limpid trouting streams, or on lonely mountain paths, assured of a kindly welcome at his journey's end; for in those old Seceder families by whom he was entertained, the preacher was welcome for the sake of his message, and there was abundance of 'straw and provender for the beast' because of his master. Strange stories are told of preachers who carried their library with them, and made their pony groan by loading him, in front and behind, with volumes of Henry's *Commentary*, or Caryl *On Job*; but such pedants as these were usually veterans who had been long on the road.

Our young preacher enjoyed this wandering life while it lasted, up to the full bent of his nature, and was often gladdened by the warm religious life which he discovered under many a rough exterior in the families with whom he dwelt, and which did so much to enhance the hospitality.

His brief and pleasant season of probation was chequered by not a few adventures, and he was accus-

tomed, in his later days, to tell of some that might have ended fatally. Their effect was to foster in him, through frequent recollection, a sense of dependence on God. Every one knows to what a great distance the waters of the Solway Firth recede at ebb tide, what a vast stretch of sand remains uncovered, and with what startling rapidity the tide, when it has once turned, again fills the channel. Scottish song and fiction, as well as unwritten legend, have made this fact familiar. The young preacher, averse to a long circuitous route, and wishing to cross the Solway sands on his pony's back from some point in Scotland to the Cumberland coast, and seeing the many miles of sand that stretched southward out of sight, flattered himself that he might surely venture across without the least danger of being overtaken. Following in the course of a man who was driving a cart, he was already a good way over, when he saw the tide advancing with alarming speed, and crested with foam. On it came, the sand becoming soft and treacherous, and the pony beginning to stumble and sink. The old man in the cart, seeing his danger, called to him to leap from his horse into his cart, which was already swimming, holding the bridle in his hands. They reached the shore with a straining effort, which a few moments more of delay would have made vain.

On another occasion, he was crossing the Clyde on his pony, a little distance above the famous fall of Stonebyres. Supposing himself to be beyond the power of the current, and not dreaming of danger, he became aware at length that he had come within the suction of the stream, and that, in another minute at the utmost, the 'astounding flood' would carry him to an awful death. Turning the face of the animal up

the stream, and urging it onward, he succeeded, with a desperate struggle, in reaching the opposite bank. He used to mention, when repeating the story of this 'hair-breadth' deliverance, his noticing at the time how the intelligent animal trembled, as if it had become fully aware, as well as himself, of its imminent danger.

It would almost appear that, at this period, he was rather given to moods of dreaminess. The pony, however, does not figure in the next adventure. He was passing by the famous Craighleith Quarry, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, reading a book. A man who had been stationed near at hand, to warn passers-by of a coming explosion, had given the wonted signal. But the absorbed student neither heard the warning nor saw the man; and a large mass of rock soon after falling at his feet, was the first indication to him of the great danger to which he had been exposed. The incident made a deep impression on his mind; and in later years, he never afterwards passed the place without remembering his hazard and deliverance with renewed feelings of devout gratitude.

This wandering life, during which trial was being made of the young preacher's gifts, and which could only be pleasant for a brief period, did not long continue. Before midsummer was past, more than one congregation had begun to look to him with longing eyes. In the month of May 1818, he received a call to the pastorate of the Associate Congregation of Stonehouse, in his native presbytery; and, while measures were proceeding for his settlement there, a new congregation, which had recently been formed in North Leith, in the Presbytery of Edinburgh, addressed to him an invitation to become their first

minister. According to the practice in those times, the two competing calls were laid on the table of the Supreme Court of his Church, that it might decide between the contending claims, and choose for him his place. The Synod did not meet, however, until 2d September of the same year. Meanwhile difficulties and obstacles of a formidable kind had arisen in the young licentiate's own mind. It was intimated in a letter which Dr Peddie had been authorised by him to read to the Synod, that it was 'Mr Harper's deliberate and fixed resolution to accept of no fixed charge.'

The Synod appears to have been much surprised by this sudden arrest on progress; but those who intimately knew the man in his later days, will be able to guess at the explanation with considerable likelihood of accuracy. He had now to look in the face the grave responsibilities to be undertaken by him in his ordination to the Christian ministry. But one purpose was immoveably fixed in his mind, that he would bind himself to preach nothing but what he believed; and that if he could not deliberately and *ex animo* accept the faith of his Church, he would not go forward to be ordained as one of its ministers. He therefore proceeded to question himself upon the grounds of his belief, going down to the very foundations, and reviewing his convictions on the Divine origin of Christianity itself. And temporary doubts appear to have disturbed his mind, and to have made action impossible until they were dispelled. One to whom he once spoke respecting a crisis in his mental history, which we believe to have been this of which we are now writing, informs us that his struggles with doubt were more like the result of direct temptation

than of ordinary inquiry. He became sad and silent, and almost abstracted from the outer world; even his bodily health suffered from the inward conflict. His state resembled the experience described in some passages of Bunyan's autobiography, and afterwards reflected in his great allegory. 'Like his Lord, he had to be led into the wilderness and learn the truth of Luther's saying as to the threefold qualification of the minister—*meditatio, oratio, tentatio*. He read with incredible eagerness works like Grotius *On the Truth of the Christian Religion*, and the famous article of Chalmers, just launched amidst breathless interest, on Christianity. But the enemy departed, and the student, stronger in faith for the trial, could go forth to publish the Gospel of the kingdom. He never regarded doubt as strength; but he knew what it was to have been compassed with it as infirmity. Hence he could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way.'¹

But even when this temporary 'eclipse of faith' had passed away for ever, there remained, and indeed had partly grown out of these very experiences, an almost overwhelming sense of the difficulties and responsibilities of the pastoral office, which made him shrink from submitting himself to the 'laying on of hands.' The high intellectual standard which, from the beginning, he wished to reach in his pulpit ministrations, may have had something to do with this, but much more the thought of the burden which must be borne for life by one who had undertaken 'the care of souls.' Through anxious days and sleepless nights the cry of his heart was, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' The Synod, however, believing that his

¹ Funeral sermon by Dr Cairns.

hesitation was born not of indifference but of self-diffidence, and confident that 'to the upright light would arise in darkness,' did not allow his letter to stay their progress. Preferring the claims of the congregation in North Leith, they appointed the Presbytery of Edinburgh to take all regular steps for his ordination over that church, so soon as his difficulties were removed. But it was not until the 2d of February in the following year, 1819, that Mr Harper went forward with trembling steps, and bowed his head to the laying on of hands. His venerable father, from Lanark, preached on the occasion from those solemn words to which the son's full heart responded, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood' (Acts xx. 28).

If the yoke of the Christian pastorate has seldom been assumed with greater diffidence and humility, it has as rarely been borne for so long a period and with such ever-increasing efficiency and honour. The congregation at North Leith, which had worshipped in an old deserted parish church since 1816 when it was organised, entered with high hope on a new place of worship, containing above a thousand sittings, early in 1820. But it was still in its feeble infancy, the call to Mr Harper, which now lies before us in its 'sear and yellow leaf,' having been signed by only 138 persons. He had therefore not only to minister to a congregation, but to make one. We are now to see in the use of what measures he did this, and with what success.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE STUDY.

Leith Past and Present—Early Rising—Doddridge—Preparation of Discourses—Choice of Texts—Courses of General Study—System—Habits—Commonplace Books—Conversation—Harvests—Science and Literature—Favourite Books—*Edinburgh Review*—Influence—Experience reflected in Counsels to Others—Extracts.

THE Leith of the present day has almost ceased to be distinguishable from Edinburgh. A stranger looking down from the Calton Hill, would find it impossible to determine where the beautiful capital ends and the busy seaport begins. But sixty years ago, when Mr Harper entered on his ministry in Leith, the two places scarcely touched at any point. Gardens and nurseries, and old family mansions in enclosed parks, where the sheep grazed peacefully, intervened. Leith Walk, the connecting link between city and seaport, had still its long unbroken hedge-rows in many places on either side, and the 'Half-way House' was a familiar and welcome resting-place. Not many years earlier, it was no very rare experience for footpads to track the steps and lighten the purses of travellers hastening to catch the early boat to Burntisland or Pettycur, and the few streets in North Leith 'straddled their way in irregular lines in front and in rear, very much in the style of a Portuguese or Spanish town of the present day.' But things had already changed very much for the better before our young minister

entered on his pastorate, in the midst of a population that more than once doubled itself before his work was ended.

He was accustomed to be in his study every morning at six o'clock, kindling his own fire, in respect to which he was accustomed playfully to boast, that he was 'quite an expert in the art of fire-raising;' and the first two hours were spent in devotional exercises and reading the Scriptures, his Hebrew Bible and his Greek New Testament being always open at his side. Many an artisan passing in the cold winter mornings to his work, knew by the lighted window that the earnest student was at his labours before him. This practice was continued without interruption for a period of more than sixty years, when at length 'the keepers of the house began to tremble.' It will be remembered that Doddridge pursued a similar custom; and we have his own strong testimony that, practically, it added ten years to his life, putting it in his power to do an amount of work as an author, which must otherwise have been left undone; and that one outcome of it was his valuable *Family Expositor*, the whole of which was written in the silent morning hours. To much of Mr Harper's success as a Christian minister, and of his influence and usefulness as a public man, we have the key in this one life habit. It gave him opportunity for secret prayer and calm reading and meditation when his faculties had been freshened by the night's rest, and when he knew that for two precious hours he was fenced round and secured from those interruptions against which no minister in a large town is safe in later hours of the day. And it afforded him leisure to sketch the programme of his day's duties, accounting for the fact which many noticed but could not explain,

that while he was always one of the busiest workers, he never seemed driven, or in haste.

A large portion of every week was conscientiously devoted to the preparation of discourses for his Sabbath ministry; for he held it as a sacred conviction that no minister serves his flock as he might, who does not give them the best sermon that his powers of composition, and of careful adaptation to their case, will enable him to produce. His texts for the following Sabbath were usually selected, and his course of thought planned and sketched, on the previous Sabbath evening, in order that he might have ample time to ruminate on his subject during the intervening days, gathering material and illustration alike from nature and art, in company and solitude, and not least in pastoral intercourse with his people. His constant aim was to have his written preparations finished on the Friday evening, in order to secure the Saturday not only for physical rest, but for bringing his mind into full sympathy with the Divine messages and lessons which he was to bear to his pulpit on the Lord's day. He sought to enter his pulpit, not from the heat and hurry of composition, but with his mind unruffled and settled as the high priest's robes. He did not believe that the proper frame for preaching and presiding in the worship of the Church, could be put on, as a thing of course, along with his gown and bands.

But all the while, during every week, he was pursuing separate courses of study in Theology and Biblical Exegesis, appreciating the more, the longer he lived, the maxim of Dr Arnold, that the mind which is constantly giving out, needs, like the running lake, to be constantly receiving. His custom was to select an important subject for study, and to treat it exhaust-

ively. The results of his reading and meditation were recorded and preserved in a condensed form, in a succession of portable common-place books written in shorthand, one of which he always carried about with him. One topic after another was in this way matured and mastered, and a reference to one of these books, which were carefully indexed, refreshed his memory and gave him back in a few minutes the results of the reading of many days or weeks. We have before us a page of one of these manuscript books, which evidently contains the gathered fruits of weeks of investigation in reference to the opinions of the early Christian fathers on the Divinity of Christ. The whole of these condensed jottings, which range over a very wide and varied field, if printed, would fill at least a dozen octavo volumes. In another set of books, he was accustomed to note the comments of eminent biblical scholars, especially those of foreign Universities and Churches, on important or difficult passages of Scripture, occasionally intermingling with these an independent exegesis of his own. The following specimens are selected from a few of his note-books :—

CHURCH HISTORY.

CENTURY I.—The Sabians, a sect who professed to be disciples of John Baptist, setting him before Jesus Christ. Agreed in many points with the Gnostics. Particularly concerning this sect, see Michaelis' Introduction.

CENTURY II.—Irenæus' account of LXX. translation as quoted by Eusebius, lib. v. cap. 8.

Care and fidelity of the primitive Christians in transcribing sacred books. Irenæus' solemn adjuration on this subject, Euseb. lib. v. cap. 13. Early Unitarians, not only the Ebionites of the second century, but Artemon, Theodotus, etc. An early work against them.

quoted by Eusebius, replies to their pretensions, and shows that the apostolical and primitive faith of the Church was according to Trinitarian views, by affirming that the writings of Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, and Clement repeatedly declare that Christ is God. Same work accuses these heretics of abridging the tone of Scripture and of corrupting it in many places, Euseb. lib. v. cap. 27.

EXEGETICAL NOTES.

- 1 COR. III. 22.—‘*All are yours,*’ belong to you, as they minister to your good. You belong to Christ, as He hath bought you with a price. Christ is God’s, as the Mediator or medium through whom all things are made yours. It is as being Christ’s that all things are made yours.
- 1st COR. VIII. 7.—The heathen worship idols as the shrines of Deity, ‘*with conscience of the idol.*’ This probably describes a belief or acknowledgment of some spirit-power residing in the idol to whom the worship is paid, and to whom the person would feel committed by sitting at meat in the idol’s temple. This view appears to be confirmed by ver. 6. It is the one God and one Lord of whom the persons spoken of had not the knowledge. Does not this plainly imply that the ‘*conscience of the idol*’ was a lingering belief that it was the shrine of some invisible power?
- 2 COR. XI. 17-28.—Paul defends himself against the charge of being a pretender and a fool. If any of you consider me in this character, then give me the indulgence which I claim, while I plead for myself in this capacity. What I am going to say in the way of confident boasting, is in this character; not *κατὰ Κύριον*, as a servant of Christ, but in the assumed character of a fool (ver. 16), as indeed on the carnal ground of which many boast, I may glory also (ver. 18). In seeking this indulgence, I ask no more than you extend to others who are fools and pretenders indeed, ver. 20. Then follows a description of these men, skilfully put so as to expose the folly of the Corinthians in becoming their dupes. I speak in relation to the reproach thrown on me, as if I were a

weak and witless person, unable to make good my claims; but in whatsoever thing any is bold, hear what I can say for myself on the same, and on better grounds. In vers. 21, 22, he reminds them that he speaks in the character which his enemies imputed to him, and which, for the sake of argument, he for the moment assumes, to show them that, on their own principles, his claims were beyond theirs. In the latter part he shows that, as a servant of Christ, his claims were also superior in respect of the labours which he underwent and was still enduring.

GAL. II. 20.—‘*Dead to the law*’ in the previous verse, explained by ‘*crucified with Christ*’ in this. Nevertheless I live, because living unto God. Christ is the author and sustenance of this life by His Word and Spirit; and the principle and practice of it is explained thus: The life which I now live in the flesh I live because He lives, I live as He lives. I am under another power, I have entered on a new existence, and all this through my union to Christ and participation in His benefits.

Nor was Mr Harper’s knowledge always gathered from books. He sought to make conversation tributary. Whenever he met with a man who was reputed as a master in some particular subject, he took eager advantage of his opportunity; and with apt questions, assuming the posture of a disciple, enriched himself from the stores which were readily laid open to so acute a questioner. But woe to the man who, in such circumstances, was discovered to be pretentious and superficial, as sometimes happened. The humiliation was terrible, to have the poverty discovered and the reputed wealth shown to be all in the windows, and the extemporized pupil revealed as knowing a great deal more on the very ‘*speciality*,’ than the master.

In much the same exhaustive manner in which our minister studied theological questions, did he give him-

self to the study of some of the popular sciences, such as astronomy, geology, and physiology, endeavouring to keep pace, as far as possible, with the rapid march of modern discovery, and sometimes presenting the results of this, or of the reading of some instructive book of travels, in week-day lectures to his people, whose interests were always near to his heart. In our own rich English literature, though no stranger to the great books of any of its great periods, he was particularly at home with the best writers of the age of Queen Anne, familiarity with whose writings no doubt helped to give to his style that classic purity and elegance, as well as Saxon energy, which were its marked qualities. *The Spectator* was a life companion; and, belonging to a following age, Cowper's poems, and yet more his letters, which, with their simplicity, felicity, playful humour, and sweet reflection of pure and placid domestic life, were associated with his early recollections, and held him to the last, spell-bound. He liked the old wine of our literature, though he was very far indeed from despising the new.

No modern publication was waited for by him with greater expectation, or read with keener zest in his younger ministry, than the earlier numbers of the *Edinburgh Review*. Not that he had any sympathy with its sneers at Methodism, or with its slighting references to missions to the heathen and kindred subjects; but that he enjoyed its hearty aspirations after liberty, the extraordinary vigour and freshness of many of its papers, its tremendous castigations of dull and stagnant common-place, and its fearless exposures of official corruption and exclusiveness in high places. The *Edinburgh Review* did much to make him a con-

firmed Liberal in politics for life. We remember his telling us, not many years since, in proof of his enthusiasm in this direction, of his having obtained, in the first years of his ministry, the privilege of reading the proof-sheets of the *Review* as it was passing through the press. Still, it was theology and the preparation of his weekly discourses for his pulpit that engrossed by far the greater part of every week; and of the spirit in which these congenial labours and studies were pursued, we cannot present a more accurate description than is to be found in his counsels to his students in this very matter, after he had become a Professor of Theology. His advices to them had, many a time before, been addressed to himself in his self-communings and often-renewed resolutions.

How the sense of peace with God helps the student and the minister.—‘ Among the influences calculated, if not to distract the attention, certainly to depress the inquirer, may be mentioned as none of the least, the inquietness and the despondency of being more fearful than believing respecting our state before God. I assume that the case is one in which the individual has made this matter the subject of earnest consideration. What means your profession of faith in the Gospel—your profession of following Christ—your profession of giving yourselves to the study of Divine truth for the benefit of others, if these things do not imply that the care of your own salvation has been a matter of concern with you? If this concern has ended happily, if you have found joy and peace in believing, then remark the cheering and healthful influence of such tranquillity on the studies in which you are to be engaged. You are in the joyful circumstances of one who has got a burden off his mind.

Thus freed, the mind acquires its firmest tone. So far as itself is concerned, its most momentous business is in a sense settled. Its prospect is bright. It enjoys the sunshine and the light of God's favour. Whatever stimulus therefore can be found in present joy and in the prospect of a far higher blessedness, animates you in your course. There is in it the pleasantness of an employment in which you feel at home, and to the accomplishment of which you can apply your mind with the uninterrupted bent of its faculties.

‘This does not imply that, having found good hope through grace, you may withdraw your attention from personal improvement and give yourselves up wholly to care for the things of others. In the calm and undivided contemplation of Divine things, when you study for others, you study for yourselves. The same truth instructs both. The clear views of the objects of faith which qualify for impressing the conscience of a hearer, are not lost to him who holds that truth up to view. It has been performing its office in his own mind, before he brings it out of his treasure for his brother's good. And the advantage which he has when his heart is at rest in the faith of the Gospel, is, that whether for others' good or his own, he can engross himself with such topics in the peaceful contemplation of them, which another cannot do whose soul is yet groping in the twilight and is harassed with many fears.’

Connection between doing the will of God and knowing the mind of God.—‘Thus the tone of mind which is acquired in a state of grace, constitutes a relish for the things known, and a thirst for a fuller apprehension of them. It is here that, in a peculiar sense, we see the effect of that congeniality which has

been remarked upon in other departments of study and of action. Without this congeniality no man can excel. The mind in a state of alienation from truth, or of forced allegiance to study, wants ability to learn. It is but partially the eyes are open. The understanding is sluggish and lacks discernment. The memory retains not what is given. All this is owing to mental aversion. But where there is relish there is mental capacity. Taste is power. The faculties acquire an edge when in a state of pleasurable activity. He "that is spiritual judgeth all things." Receiving the Spirit of God, he knows the things that are freely given to him of God.

' Now, to every child of God the Spirit is given in that state and disposition of mind which the believer cultivates. Possessed of this divinely implanted faculty, to what measures of attainment may not the student of sacred mysteries aspire ! The capacity with which he is now endowed surmounts many obstacles to a spiritual understanding of things, and creates none to its own discouragement and hindrance. A mind otherwise disposed is an impediment to itself. It finds, or makes endless obstructions to successful inquiry. Pride of understanding, popular errors, a captious intellect, worldly-mindedness, and sensual propensities are all so many sources from which the mind, in an unsubdued and ungracious moral condition, draws objections to the truth and raises difficulties in searching after it. To say that the spiritual mind is not liable to such difficulties, at least in their prevailing form, is just to say that he who learns of the Spirit is spiritual.

' How pleasant, then, to find among self-evident truths, that a pious student of the Divine Word pos-

sesses in the frame of his mind a faculty of progress—a faculty to excel. The affinities and sympathies of the mind are so many active forces which assail the barriers of depraved reason—appetite, habit, sophistry; and in the vigour with which it clears them away, it indicates a preparedness and disposition—a positive power for pursuing researches into the field of sacred knowledge with perseverance and success. “If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” Limited as is the view he can take, he is not by this cast down or discouraged. There is the gratification of sanctified taste in what he does know, and there is the pleasure of acquisition in learning more; yea, and there is the pleasure of exalted efforts to widen the boundaries of discovery. He would look into these things now, rejoicing to believe that though here “he knows but in part, he shall hereafter know even as he is known.” Every additional view of Divine things is delightful to him as a glimpse of the glory that shall in due season be revealed. How different this sentiment of holy aspiration from the cold indifference that would say, Let these things alone for the present, as we shall by and by know all about them with so much less trouble? This is the frigid apathy of unbelief, not meek submission to unavoidable disadvantages. Far from this is the zeal of the believing spirit as it glows with delight in the things themselves, rejoices in strenuous effort to see them more clearly, while according to promise he looks for the perfect day. And what he looks for, he even now in some measure attains, for the frame of mind—the moral capacity—which I speak of, has a present earnest in the promise annexed to it, of receiving enlarged discoveries.’¹

¹ MS. Lecture to Students.

How much Divine philosophy there is in these elevating sentences ! Were ministers of the Gospel in general rising to their grand apostolic level, we should speedily witness over all the Churches ‘times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.’

CHAPTER V.

IN THE PULPIT.

Public Estimate—An Appreciating Hearer—Irving—Prophecy about Carlyle—Elements of Power—Thinking before Writing—Qualities of Style—Countenance—Fervour of Delivery—Themes—Sketch by a Stranger—Revival Meeting—A Reminiscence—Various Effects of Ministry—The Three Farm-Servants—Preaching to the Times—Too little of this—Bible Classes—Fruits—Contemporaries.

THE people of Leith soon began to discover that a preacher had come among them of no common gifts and promise. He adopted, from the first, a high standard of preparation for the pulpit, and although he never rose to his ideal, he came greatly nearer to it than if he had been easily satisfied. It is at once the penalty and the advantage of high excellence, that it is severely and sensitively critical on its own work. We suppose that many a common sign-board painter is better pleased with his large brush and his coarse performances, than Landseer or Millais have ever been with their greatest masterpieces.

Our young minister thought much before he wrote or spoke, and therefore one effect of his discourses was to make others think. The consequence was that, within a few years after his settlement in North Leith, he had many hearers besides his own members, not a few of whom found their way to his church through many a street and lane from a great distance, some even from remote parts of Edinburgh. Among these

was one who, being resident in Edinburgh for a winter, was frequently found among Mr Harper's forenoon hearers, and who was destined in due time to occupy a foremost place among pulpit orators, and to draw towards him in London many of England's greatest statesmen and men of letters,—Edward Irving. When Mr Irving was asked to explain what were the qualities in the young Leith minister which so powerfully attracted him, his answer was that Mr Harper's manner of preaching approached nearer to the conception he had formed of the speeches of the ancient Greek orators, than anything else that he had ever heard. A life friendship between the two men was the consequence of all this, which was renewed by Mr Harper's visits to Mr Irving as often as public duty called him up to London. On one of those visits, a third person was present, whose countenance once seen it was not easy to forget, who was introduced to Mr Harper as Thomas Carlyle, but who soon after left the apartment. 'That man,' said Irving, immediately after his withdrawal, 'will leave his deep mark upon the thinking of his age.'

We must look to the union of various elements, for the explanation of Mr Harper's power and sustained eminence as a preacher. He never handled any subject in the pulpit which he only took up at random, or had only half studied. He delayed speaking on it until he had mastered it. His reverence for Divine truth, and his respect for his people and for himself secured this. And his hearers were not slow to discover the fact, and, in their turn, to venerate a preacher who lighted the temple lamps with the pure beaten oil. Then, with an extraordinary measure of natural perspicacity and vigour of thought, he was able to

present a truth, or an aspect of truth, with corresponding clearness of statement—shaking it free, as it were, from all misconception or exaggeration, and causing it to shine before his hearers with such a luminousness as made them feel that they understood it better than they had ever done before. He had the art of rapidly breaking through the shell, and getting at the kernel of a Divine lesson.

We have been struck, moreover, with his power of freshening and giving novelty and interest to what seemed, when it was announced, to be a hackneyed topic. Aaron's rod budded in his hand. This effect, no doubt, arose from his power of vigorous and independent thought. The character of his style also contributed much to the effect of his preaching. It was never misty, inflated, or feeble, the outcome of that 'nebular taste,' as Whately calls it, 'which prefers gorgeous dimness to vulgar daylight.' It had a vigour and muscle about it that sometimes reminded you of South or Barrow. It abounded in epigrammatic sentences, and in felicitous strokes and sayings with hooks that laid hold of the memory, so that they could not soon be forgotten. And it cannot be doubted that his finely chiselled countenance, which a sculptor would have coveted for a model, enhanced the effect of his address; for, in his case, there was a beautiful harmony between the outward frame and the 'informing spirit.' Tholuck, who had once seen him, often spoke afterwards in admiration of his appearance.

When in middle life especially, many passages in his sermons were delivered with a fire and fervour that carried his audience by storm. It reminded us of an old Professor's description of rhetoric as 'logic boiling hot.' And, unquestionably, a great additional

momentum was given to his preaching by the conviction which his hearers had of his fearless honesty. They knew well that there was not a sin, nor a folly, nor an act of moral cowardice or unworthy compromise, which he would spare from his searching and sometimes scathing words. And yet the man who sent his hearers home, not only admiring but impressed, would often return to write in his shorthand diary most severe and depreciating criticisms on himself. Perhaps the delight of his hearers would have been enhanced yet more, had he sometimes given the rein more freely to his imagination, and allowed more of that tenderness to reveal itself in his sermons of which there was so deep a fountain in his heart.

In these notices we have mainly referred to Mr Harper's natural gifts, but, after all, the great secret of his remarkable pulpit power lay behind, in the Divine grandeur of his themes. His favourite themes were the grand old Gospel texts with the rich old Gospel brought out of them, as in the days of the Erskines, but with all the clearness and force which a trained theologian of our own age could bring to bear on them, and with all the weight of a century more of their proved fitness to bless the souls of men. At the same time, no part of the Divine Word was neglected, and there was not wanting such variety of thought as devout and anxious research could add, through cultivating outlying tracts of the boundless territory of Scripture, and bringing their fruits into the common store.

The following descriptive sketch of the Leith minister, given by an observant stranger, will help to supply some minuter features that have not been introduced into our general estimate :—

‘ Our preacher’s pulpit appearances are excellent models of propriety. He puts on no clerical airs, but occupies himself with his work. His prayers are truly savoury, and give expression to the deepest yearnings of the human soul. During singing, he keeps the psalm-book in his hand, and joins devoutly in the exercise. In preaching, he stands erect, and indicates the earnestness of his mind by significant gesture. The manner of the preacher is also particularly emphatic. He places such force on certain words that a new and full meaning appears where none appeared before. He is evidently a man utterly free from all ostentation, and one who cares very little for men’s judgment, because He whom he owns as judge is the Lord. It is said that, in the earlier part of his ministry, he was so impressed with the magnitude of the work of the pastoral office that he had thoughts of relinquishing it. Such were the earlier views of the man who has lived to occupy with honour one of the highest posts in the influential Church of which he is a minister and professor. What a contrast to the juvenile conceit too often seen in the pulpit, as well as in the pew,—conceit not followed with honour but defeat. We doubt whether the United Presbyterian Church has a professor more efficient than Dr Harper. Without pretence, without ostentation, he conveys to the minds and hearts of the students lessons which they never can forget. He is well instructed in the various branches of theological literature which come under his department, and he has ready access to the minds and to the affections of the pupils. They find in him no imperious master, no dogmatizing theologian, no austere and distant teacher, but a friend and counsellor—one on whose judgment they can rely, on

whose kindness they can count, and in whose piety they can place implicit confidence.

‘Dr Harper possesses altogether a masculine mind, capable of exploring the heights and depths of any department of study. As a matter of course, he is thoroughly versed in theology, for he could not be superficial on any subject to which he chose to turn his attention. It had been said that great heights are hazardous to weak heads; but he can calmly overlook precipices which would make hundreds of his brethren giddy, and cause them to totter and fall. Pretty and fine-spun sentiments are as foreign to his mind as birds of paradise are to Caledonia. While power is his first characteristic, proportion and symmetry are always apparent in his effusions, which make them as pleasing to the imagination as they are satisfactory to the judgment. Great heroes are represented as accomplishing their achievements without the visible manifestation of effort or great exertion, and this is in a high degree characteristic of the preacher. Ere he utters a word, the hearer, from his outward aspect, expects much; and when he commences to give forth his full and vigorous tones of voice, expectations are confirmed, and the ease and dignity with which he accomplishes his task, completely satisfy all of his claims to more than ordinary respect.

‘He appears to be somewhat above the ordinary stature, about fifty years of age, and apparently of sound and vigorous constitution. His brow is large—almost entirely divested of its natural covering—and the expression pleasing, and indicative of decision, though not what could be regarded as stern. His appearance is, in every sense, manly and dignified; and while his physical aspect commands respect, his

demeanour and disposition increase it. On first seeing him with his back turned, he reminded us of another distinguished professor, Dr Wardlaw, only his locks are not yet so snowy.’¹

Another extract supplies us with an interesting reminiscence, which carries us back through fully forty years :—‘ In many hearts,’ says his worthy successor in the Principalship, ‘ such an appeal must be ringing, as it still rings in mine, when, so far as I know, I saw and heard the minister for the first time at an evening meeting of what was then called a revival series, in Rose Street Church, to which, as a student, I had gone in the winter of 1838 or 1839. His text was Gal. ii. 16, “ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified ; ” and after he had clearly explained justification, the peroration illustrated the prodigious energy with which, in his prime, he could apply the truth. He repeated the text piecemeal, and after the first statement of the false way of justification as contrasted with the true, he said, “ There it is ; renounce it ; ” and so of the second statement, “ Again, I say renounce it ! ” and when he came to the third clause, “ For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,” with an electric energy which prostrated the whole audience, he added the burst of supreme vehemence, “ There it is yet a third time ; renounce it at once and for ever.” Would to God that such preaching, a preaching naturally, as in his case, filled with Gospel duty as well as privilege, may never fail

¹ *Our Scottish Clergy*, edited by John Smith, A. M.. Author of *Sacred Biography*.

in our denomination ! Without it, we deserve not to stand ; with it, through grace, we cannot fall.'¹

When persons propose to estimate the fruits of such a ministry, and, as it were, to sum up the total, they attempt an impossibility. It is not thus that we can deal with the facts of the spiritual world, or measure 'the unseen.' Two things are certain—first, that we should almost immeasurably under-estimate the results of a faithful Christian ministry, were we to look merely at acknowledged or discovered instances in which the whole character and current of a man's life are changed for the better in a single day, and he becomes in many important respects the opposite of his former self. As happened in the case of the subject of this memoir, so does it happen in the case of many of the young who have sat from their childhood under systematic Christian instruction and influence ; while there is a radical inward change, the exact moment of decision is unknown to the subject of it, as well as for a time imperceptible to others. We must add to these more gradual and silent but momentous issues, the restraint which an earnest ministry is constantly exercising upon those who are not Christians, and on whom the Gospel does not exert its supreme influence. General society gains immensely in this way, by the power which comes forth from a pulpit in which the doctrine and the law of Christ are proclaimed by men who are meanwhile living what they preach. Then, it must be remembered that conversion is not completed salvation. The work of the minister goes far beyond that of the mere evangelist. It is not done when he has brought his disciple through the wicket-gate and up to the shining cross ; he must be led up hills of difficulty, through valleys of humiliation, past the seductions and perils of Vanity Fair, and to the broad

¹ Funeral sermon by Dr Cairns.

river on the other side of which he shall be received and crowned by the angels.

At the same time, it is ever an occasion of special joy to a minister of Christ, when he sees his preaching made effectual in unmistakeable instances of repentance, and when the change which it produces in individual hearts is like the brier turned into the myrtle tree, or as a passing from death into life. Our preacher was not without many such tokens of blessing to cheer him in his arduous work, and out of many acknowledgments of this in letters glowing with gratitude, some of which are now before us, we introduce one remarkable and well-authenticated narrative.

Three men who were farm servants living in a bothy near the village of Arniston, beyond Dalkeith, resolved that they would walk in to Leith on a certain Sabbath morning, the distance being six or seven miles, for the purpose of amusing themselves, and gratifying their curiosity among the ships in the docks. They were lads utterly destitute even of the semblance of religion, and morally debased; their favourite reading being books which scoffed at Christianity and supplied apologies for a vicious life. At length, becoming wearied with wandering among the vessels and spelling out their names, and stumbling over ropes and anchors, they passed into some of the neighbouring streets, and soon found themselves standing before Mr Harper's church, as the people were crowding in for the afternoon service. One of their number proposed that they should enter and hear what the minister had to say; another objected; but after a little discussion they all agreed to follow the stream, and were soon seated together listening to the fervent preacher. Their attention was arrested and riveted, and before the sermon was ended, the cry of the publican was on their

lips, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' The bow drawn at a venture, guided by an unseen hand, had sent home an arrow to each heart, and the same truth that wounded, had healed. The men returned in the evening to their rude bothy at Arniston self-condemned, and yet hoping for the mercy of God through Christ. One of the first things they did was, like the Ephesian magicians of old, to take their bad books and commit them to the flames. The future lives of all the three proved the Divine reality of the change which the Gospel from the lips of the preacher, blessed by the Holy Spirit, had wrought upon them. For many a year afterwards, they walked in regularly from Arniston to North Leith to attend on the ministry of their spiritual father. Fourteen miles of travel on foot, even in wintry weather, were not grudged for the sake of the benefit that awaited them. They all died before their minister, and are now in the world of happy recognitions, part of his 'glory and joy.'

Our preacher was one of those who, in the sense in which Paley meant it, 'preached to the times.' He saw a revelation in passing providences, and tried to interpret it and turn it to the spiritual profit of his people. One of his children naïvely remarked that he 'liked to hear his father preach, after a great fire.' Disdaining all sensationalism in the pulpit, and rising far above the region of mere political factions, he was not slow, when occasion called for it, to bring the conduct of public men and parties to the standard of a moral system which condemned falsehood and dishonesty equally in political as in common life, and which had regard to a Ruler above who 'loved righteousness and hated iniquity.' He sometimes spoke as if the ministers of religion had, in this matter, abdi-

cated part of their mission, and handed it over to the public press. At all events, he would have liked to see in the modern pulpit less of tameness and reticence on the moral aspect of great public questions, legislation rebuked by it when its obvious tendency was to sanction rapacious aggression, or to lower the tone of the public conscience, and its censorship ready with denunciations of proved and flagrant evil.

Mr Harper had his pulpit in the class-room, as well as in the sanctuary; and in the narrower sphere of his Bible classes for adults of both sexes, his ministry was greatly effective. He anxiously watched the period when the blossom either forms into fruit or falls away, and therefore laboured hard in this department, preparing and printing judiciously varied courses of lessons for each session; and 'a cloud of witnesses' gathered out of two generations, could testify that the minister's class had been their 'valley of decision.' We introduce the programme of an early course of conversational lectures to his Young Men's Class, which presents a fine example of solidity, system, and edifying variety in the subjects of instruction:—

YOUNG MEN'S CLASS.

Programme.

I. HISTORY OF REVEALED RELIGION.

1. Old Testament Dispensation. Promise—Prophecy—Type.
2. New Testament Dispensation. Fulfilment.

II. HISTORICAL VIEW OF FALSE RELIGIONS.

1. Heathenism in Old Testament Times.
2. Modern Paganism—with Illustrations.
3. Pantheism.
4. Buddhism—with Illustrations.
5. Mahometanism.

III. DOCTRINES OF REVEALED RELIGION.

1. Divine Attributes.
2. Trinity.
3. Man's Fourfold State.

IV. PRACTICAL RELIGION.

1. Right use of the Scriptures.
2. Sabbath Duties.
3. Secret Prayer.
4. Acknowledgment of Providences.
5. Illustrations by Example.
6. Relative Duties of the Young.

V. SCRIPTURAL EXPOSITION—SELECT PASSAGES.

In this way did the faithful preacher fulfil his ministry for a longer period than the majority of men live, scarcely showing any change even to the end, except that, with somewhat diminished force, it became mellowed and sweetened by richer experience and fatherly benignity.

This chapter would be incomplete, were we to omit a reference to some of our preacher's contemporaries in the pulpits of Leith. Among the ministers who were advanced in life when Mr Harper entered on his pulpit labours, there were especially two who had gained a reputation as authors as well as preachers, —*Dr Colquhoun* of St John's Chapel of Ease, whose treatise *On Law and Gospel* still holds an honoured place on the book-shelves of our older ministers; and *Mr Culbertson* of the Antiburgher Church, St Andrew's Place, whose elaborate *Lectures on the Revelation of John* are marked by learning, ingenuity, accuracy, sober-mindedness, and, most of all, by an elevated devotion. At a later period, after the easy-going and respectable pastorate of Dr Ireland, *Dr James Buchanan* became minister of the Established Church in North Leith, and Mr Harper found

in him one who, in the most important qualities, was likeminded with himself. It would be difficult to say whether Dr Buchanan's power as a preacher, or his popularity as an author, or his saintly character, contributed most to that beneficent influence which he wielded for many years over a large community. But there were two brethren in the pastorate of the same denomination with himself, and who were not many years his junior, with whom Mr Harper maintained a life-long friendship and fellowship,—*Dr Smart*, a man of natural majesty, manliness, and chivalrous friendships, finding his chief joy in his ministry, shrinking from polemics, not from want of courage, but from dislike to the irritations and alienations which are too often engendered by the collisions of opinion, rich in racy anecdote and shrewd remark; and *Francis Muir*, whom Mr Harper himself described 'as a man of sound judgment, an earnest practical teacher, a diligent pastor, exemplary in all the relations of life, a public-spirited citizen, who had made up his mind on most of the public questions of the day, and spoke and acted as his sense of duty dictated; but whose downright honesty and genuine good nature were such, that he never lost a friend or made an enemy by the plainness of speech with which he expressed his convictions.' The two brethren formed, along with himself, a trio of intimate and united fellow-workers in the same field of ministerial labour. 'Two are taken,' wrote Mr Harper nearly half a century after the beginning of their intimacy, 'and the oldest is left, to find a melancholy solace in recording the cherished remembrances of an unbroken brotherly fellowship, for a space little short of fifty years.'¹

¹ Memoir of Dr Smart, prefixed to a volume of his Discourses.

CHAPTER VI.

PASTORAL AND EVANGELISTIC WORK.

Whately's Remark—Annual amount of Pastoral Visitation—District Catechizing—Why Obsolete—Ministry incomplete without Pastor's Visits—How best to do it—Extracts—Highways and Hedges—Restalrig Gardens—The Old Harbour—Mistake about Street Preaching—New-haven—In Perils—Break-neck Corner—Singing of the Fisherwomen—Gratitude—Marriage of Fishermen's Daughters.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY has somewhere remarked, that when clergymen are endowed with the gift of eloquence, and when the exercise of this valuable gift is in large request, there is some danger of their being tempted to neglect the quieter duties of their office, such as those connected with pastoral visitation. The eloquent minister whose life-story we are now relating, at no part of his busy life yielded to this temptation. When the membership of his church had increased to above eight hundred, exclusive of the children, he made a point of visiting every family once in the year; and he succeeded in his purpose. On every such visit, besides engaging in prayer with the assembled household, and addressing them in a short pastoral exhortation, there was a 'reading up' of the family history; and this last was by no means the least benefit of his visit. For the hearts of the people were relieved by telling their cares and sorrows, and the prosperous incidents in their family as well, to one who, they knew, would be ready with his sympathy alike in their griefs and joys; and

the right direction would be given to their thoughts and feelings regarding both, when all was gathered up into the pastor's prayer. The moods of mind and currents of thought which his visits revealed to him among his people, were many a time like the finger of Providence laid on the texts on which it was most seasonable for him to preach, and this was felt to compensate for the time which was thereby withdrawn from study.

In addition to this systematic 'going from house to house,' a monthly visit to the widows of his flock, and frequent calls at homes of sickness and affliction, occupied a large and, in his case, perhaps, an undue proportion of the time of every week. In the earlier period of his ministry, there was added to all this spiritual oversight, the practice of pastoral examinations, in which, according to the directions of the *First Book of Discipline*, the members of particular sections of the congregation were gathered into the church, or some other convenient place, and catechized on some prescribed subject in theology. In those days, the Westminster Confession of Faith with the Catechisms Larger and Shorter, were anxiously conned by the members for many weeks before the expected diet of catechizing, and the memory was refreshed and stored with Scripture proofs. And there were 'stalwart' theologians among the people, who delighted in these exercises, following the pastor from place to place, not only because it afforded them an opportunity of increasing their doctrinal knowledge, but, perhaps in the case of some, of 'giving an airing,' in the presence of others, to what they already knew. But the practice gradually fell into desuetude,—chiefly through the growing aversion of the people in general

to such a fiery ordeal. Its abandonment has not been all gain, for it has diminished the number of those men of strong doctrinal fibre, of whom Hugh Miller wrote admiringly. But probably the increase of Sabbath schools, and the almost universal existence of classes for adults, into which the senior scholars in the Sabbath schools are drafted, are giving to the Church many of the advantages of the old system without its drawbacks.

The primary importance which Mr Harper attached to systematic pastoral visitation, as well as his judgment on what pastoral visitation ought to be, may be gathered from the following well-weighed sentences addressed to his students after he had become a Professor of Theology :—

Necessity of Pastoral Visitation.

‘ Judging from experience, I would say that no man who neglects this duty, can adequately fulfil the injunction to “take heed to the flock.” It is necessary to come into personal intercourse with our people if we would know them as we ought. Without such intercourse, it is very possible to make ourselves acquainted with those particulars which are required to fill up a schedule of statistics. But surely this is the least part of the observation that is meant when we are commanded to take heed to the flock, in the capacity of overseers who are appointed to watch for their souls. What know we of the moral statistics, if we never come into contact, mind with mind, and heart with heart? Without this, how shall we know who give evidence of the “new man;” who are walking as members of the household of faith; what progress men make in their training for eternity, what are their

exercises of soul and conscience in their conflict with the world, and in their walk with God? how shall we know what hope, consolation, and sympathy, to administer to their case,—what of these things can we know if we meet our people only in the mass; if, instead of dividing to each his portion of meat, we deal it out wholesale; if we watch for their souls with an observation of the features which they possess in common, instead of addressing ourselves to the characteristic varieties of each?

‘Vinet, replying to certain excuses for the neglect of this duty, notices absence of taste. This, however, says he, is not a question of taste, but of duty. If taste for this part of our ministry is lacking, what kind of taste for other parts have we? If we have not a vocation to attend to the individual souls of our flock, we have not a vocation to the ministry.

How to do it.

‘Let a pastor set out on his circuit rounds of visitation, with a full and distinct impression of the nature and intent of the duty. In doing his work he must consider well what it is that requires to be done. His visit to a house in the course of pastoral ministration possesses a religious character. Civilities will pass between him and the people, but this is not his object; and neither forms of ceremony nor salutations of goodwill and respect, must be allowed to interfere with the sacred business which the pastor has in hand, nor inconveniently to delay its performance. To discharge it with deliberation and with a seriousness suited to its nature, general conversation should be shunned as far as is consistent with affability and with due respect to

the feelings of the people. I say *due respect*, for it would happen at times that if individuals had all their own way, the time which the minister had to spare would be consumed in miscellaneous conversation. The pastor, then, must be at his work betimes. If inclined, and it is very proper he should be, to gratify his people by calls for conversation, and he can find leisure for this, let him take another opportunity. If he spend unnecessarily a portion of his visiting day in general talk, though it should not degenerate into frivolity, nor lend countenance to it in others, still he is occupying the time that is meant for another purpose, and is thus forestalling the opportunities which other families have a right to claim. From this the pastor would be preserved, were he addressing himself to the business of a visitation day with a sense of its sacredness, and with a purpose that as he feels it to be serious work, others shall feel it too. The minister on his visitation is as truly on his way to preach Christ to his fellow-men, as if he were on his way to the pulpit. He goes without any great note of preparation, he goes to a fireside audience, he goes to speak of the things of Christ in an easy and familiar manner; but he goes not the less in his Master's service, and commissioned to deliver His message, and bound to exercise the same fidelity and diligence as in more public circumstances, and at more solemn times. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Master's business?" is language which he should feel the force of himself, and which others should read in his bearing and deportment when he is on his way to commend his Master from house to house.

Style of Address.

‘Not that the address which a minister is called on to deliver on such occasions, is to partake of the

elaborateness or the formality of public discourse. Nothing could be more out of place than a doctrinal discussion, for example, or the critical analysis of a text, when a minister is thus entering into the houses and privacies of his people. If instruction in a didactic form is given, it should be briefly, and in a very easy, simple style. It is chiefly practical instruction which it should be the pastor's aim at such times to communicate. The personal and relative duties of religion are the main things to be insisted on. How a man ought to conduct himself as a professor of the faith of Christ; what should be his deportment in his connection with others; what religion demands of its subjects in domestic and in civil society, as well as in the fellowship of the Church; what husbands and wives, parents and children, young and old, masters and servants, kindred and neighbours, owe to one another by the law of God and the spirit of the Gospel, are topics which, being always seasonable, we cannot too urgently enforce.'¹

Mr Harper was not content with receiving those that came to attend on his ministry. Especially in the first quarter of a century of his pastorate, he made systematic efforts, by open-air preaching and otherwise, to reach those who were living outside of all Christian instruction and influence. Many ministers who are efficient in the regular services of the pulpit, and successful in building up a church, are almost powerless when taken out of their usual sphere, and sent forth as evangelists into the lanes and alleys, the highways and hedges; but the Leith pastor united in himself both gifts. Taking his stand, on the evening of a summer or autumn Sabbath

¹ MS. Lecture to Students.

day, on an elevated place near the entrance to the old Restalrig Tea Gardens, he would do his best to arrest the attention of the stream of pleasure-seekers, while his presence acted as a check upon excesses within. A more favourite resort for his evangelistic work was some frequented place on the harbour quay at Leith, where, planting himself on a fish box or a barrel of large dimensions, with his old precentor or an elder to conduct the psalmody, he discoursed to a motley multitude,—in the midst of which there might have been seen turned to him the rough and weather-beaten countenance of many a sailor, unable, before the service was ended, to conceal his interest and emotion. The increasing solemnity and seriousness of the audience showed how the message was telling, and many a sincere ‘God bless you,’ at the end, from the dispersing crowd, proved that his labour had not been in vain. These addresses were not usually written, but they were carefully premeditated, and the kinds of illustration anxiously adapted to the character of his expected hearers.

His success in these evangelistic efforts, proved that a man does not need to be coarse, or eccentric, or extravagant, in order to command the attention of any audience. Better, indeed, to break the rules of grammar in every sentence, than to be coldly formal, or to use pedantic and unintelligible words. But let a preacher’s words be the language of popular speech; let him thoroughly understand his subject, and be in sympathy with it, and in earnest, and he will not be without appreciating hearers even on the streets. The rudest expect to be treated with respect, and affected coarseness and seeming condescension in an educated man, are sure to offend them. The best street preacher

we ever heard spoke in good Saxon English without a flaw, and he never failed to gather crowds around him.

But the most important of all his spheres of evangelism remains to be noticed. This was Newhaven, a large and well-known fishing village a mile and a half to the west of Leith, with a large colony of fishermen, whose wives and daughters in their picturesque dress, and with their musical calls ringing through its streets and squares, are familiar to every inhabitant and visitor of the northern metropolis. At the period referred to, this populous village was without any place of worship, and though it was nominally within the parochial boundaries of Leith, it did not enjoy much pastoral supervision. We believe Mr Harper was the first to institute a regular Sabbath evening service in its school-house, and generally he was himself the preacher. The most direct road to it lay along the sea-shore. Many can yet remember one place on the road, appropriately called 'Break-neck corner,' where the sea had made so great inroads that limbs had been broken, and even lives lost, in the hazardous experiment of passing it. Nothing daunted by this, or by winter frosts or storms, the eager minister, carrying in his hand a little lantern, set off on many a discouraging and scowling night for the Newhaven school-house. The fishermen, with their wives, alive to his kindness, and soon learning highly to appreciate his services, crowded the school-house. The emotional temperament of the people, as well as the splendid voices of the women, made the psalm-singing delightful. The frequent accidents among the fishermen in their perilous toils, called especially for a pastor's consoling words and ministries; and they were not withheld. And the gratitude of the fishermen for these

gratuitous ministrations showed itself in many forms ; sometimes in their coming all the way from their Newhaven homes to his house in Leith, that he might perform the rite at the marriage of their daughters. These were grand gala days in the busy fishing village. Every kinsman and kinswoman, out to the remotest links of cousinhood, was invited to come and grace the ceremony. Old stage-coaches, hired and furbished up for the occasion, crowded inside and out with female friends, blossoming with ribbons of brightest colours, were driven through North and South Leith to the minister's house at Hermitage Place, on the remoter side of the Links. Only a small fragment of the party could obtain entrance to the house, but the others waited with good-humoured patience until the ceremony was ended, and then all returned with double speed to leave the young fisherman and his glad wife at their new home.

The present Free Church at Newhaven is one of the many fruits of this fervid evangelism. The riper fruits are above.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE FAMILY.

Marriage—Equally yoked—Births and Baptisms—Special Prayers—Diary—Education by Influence—Extract—Evening Readings—The Father in the Sick-room—Sunny Sabbaths—Key-note for the Day—The Younger Children—The Catechism—Birth-day Anniversaries—Letter to a Daughter—‘*Res Angustæ Domi*’—His Father in the Synod—Removal of Parents to Edinburgh—‘Nourisher of their Old Age’—Son’s Portraits of Parents.

ON November 22, 1820, Mr Harper was married to Miss Barbara Peddie, daughter of Dr James Peddie, minister of the Associate Congregation, Bristo Street, Edinburgh. They were both, therefore, ‘children of the manse,’ the young wife coming out of one of those ‘patrician’ families of the Secession whose name has been familiar and honoured in the Church for fully three generations, and whom worldly prosperity has not tempted to despise or desert the old roof-tree of their denomination.

Scarcely did even John Newton write and speak more strongly of the helpmeet which his wife had been to him, than did Mr Harper of her who lived to be the companion of his pilgrimage for more than fifty-eight years, and who still survives in an honoured widowhood. Fifteen children, seven sons and eight daughters, were the fruit of this happy and unusually prolonged union, thirteen of whom remain; and many years before his death, groups of grandchildren vied with their parents in their efforts to honour him whom

they saw every one respect, and whom they had early learned to love and venerate.

Mr Harper was, in a degree very pronounced, a family man. Those who looked upon his finely-chiselled countenance, and marked the calm that usually rested on it, sometimes perhaps misread his character. And those who had opportunities of noticing him only in his acts of rigid conscientiousness, or of hearing him denouncing, in terms of severity, practices that were wicked, or base, or mean, thus observing him only on one side of his character, were apt to suspect him of a sternness that was utterly alien from his nature ; for public men are often so misjudged. The truth is, that he was a man of singularly strong affections, and, with a native dignity which never deserted him, sought much of his happiness in his home, unconsciously producing, by his own geniality and tenderness, much of the sunshine that he found in it.

Whenever a child was born, one of his earliest acts was, in the privacy of his study, to thank God for the new gift, and in a special service of prayer to dedicate the little one to the Lord. He could not even record the fact in his diary without the grateful notice overflowing anew in prayer. We introduce a few extracts, some of which will also show how his love descended to his grandchildren in apparently undiminished stream, and how ready he was to sorrow in the sorrows of both generations:—

‘ *August 2d.*—Birth of a son at 5 A.M. . . Dedicated the child to God in prayer.

‘ *Sept. 8th*—Lord’s day.—Baptism of my infant in the afternoon, Dr Peddie officiating. Fervent prayer, during the sermon, that God would bless the child and receive him into covenant with Himself. Gave him

up and all my other children by name, to their heavenly Father. O God, accept my dedication of them and of myself to Thee !

‘*Dec. 8th*—Lord’s day.—Children well behaved. O my God, preserve them from evil, especially from the evil of sin !’

In other years.—‘Separate and private conversation on personal religion along with prayer, with each of my children, in the evening. O God, draw their hearts to Thee ! Oh, make them Thine ! Let none of them be wanting in the day when Thou makest up Thy jewels. This is all my desire.

‘Birth of a daughter in the morning. Committed the child to God in prayer.

‘Baptism of child, and earnest dedication to God of my children by name, in mental prayer. O Lord, accept this family offering !

‘A—— leaves for London. Solemn prayer with all the children the night previous.

‘*Jan. 16th*.—Death of my dear grandchild W. R. Remarkable evidences of early piety. Sad stroke to his afflicted parents, but mingled with strong consolation.

Jan. 21st.—Another of J.’s lambs—E.—cut off by the same fell disease, diphtheria, and great apprehension for the other children. Father and mother in the deep waters. What need of divine help, and call for sympathy of friends !

‘*Feb. 3d*.—Death of darling G. A lovely child for sweetness of expression and disposition. Willing to go to be with Jesus. What desolation in that happy home ! The Lord support J. and J. under this overwhelming calamity. Their letters are beautiful specimens of hearts bowed down with their successive

bereavements, and comforted by the thought that their lambs are in the arms of the Good Shepherd.'

In the spirit of those solemn acts of consecration renewed in baptism, described in the earlier extracts, Mr Harper 'commanded his children and his household after him.' As their young minds expanded, he did not satisfy himself with endeavouring to awaken in them a mere vague religious sentiment, but sought to convey to them clear and definite conceptions of divine truths, along with their scriptural evidence, believing that it was only out of these seeds of God lodged and living in their hearts, that divine affections and holy fruits could grow. Nor did he deem it sufficient to set before his children a life of personal consistency; he endeavoured to make them feel that the whole family government under which they lived, was regulated by Christian maxims and precepts. And few fathers or ministers ever showed a finer skill in weaving the family history into the family prayers, and in recognising the sky of a paternal providence ever bending over them, and dropping its blessings.

The depth of his convictions on this subject is seen in two paragraphs, which we extract from a pastoral address to his congregation:—

'In no department of life more than in the family circle, is it incumbent on you to prove the sincerity and to exemplify the decision of your Christian character. It is there that the man of God has least excuse for neglecting, and the strongest motives for observing, all the duties of his religious profession. By precept and example, by pious conversation and by earnest prayer, it becomes him to "walk within his house with a perfect heart," that his deportment may diffuse around him those sacred influences which will

make him a blessing to the dearest objects of his affection, by promoting their well-being not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. . . .

‘The favourable influence of family prayer on all the plans you may pursue for domestic improvement and happiness, it is scarcely possible to overrate. Whether we view it as to its effect in disposing the young to obedience and docility, or whether we take into account the sacredness and authority which it throws around the parental character, its influence must be greater than it is easy to calculate, in strengthening the parent’s hold on the reverence and love of his children. Those lips which, in the hearing of the young, are in daily communication with God, are surely the best adapted to convey with authority and tenderness the words of truth and piety; while the tone of feeling which such exercises may well be expected to generate in the hearts of the young, must ever prove the best security for filial duty and for the interchange of brotherly and sisterly affection.’¹

Those were particularly happy hours, especially for the older members of the family, when, after the evening lamp was lighted, the father came forth from his study with some book of history, or travel, or biography in his hand, and, grouping them around him, read to them aloud for hours, intermingling his own comments and explanations, and welcoming with tender encouragement and interest their questions and remarks.

‘Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
 Added hours
 Of social converse and instructive ease,
 And gathering, at shortest notice, in one group,
 The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.’

¹ Pastoral address on the duty of family prayer, designed chiefly for the members of his congregation.

And on no occasions did the self-denying affection of the husband and father come out more amiably and intensely, than in times of family sickness. When the labours of the study could not be suspended, he added to these, with unwearying and cheerful readiness, the charge of helping and nursing the sufferers. Far into the midnight hours, to relieve the anxious and overburdened mother, he would carry about a sick and wakeful child in his arms. In his diary we meet with such brief notices as the following: 'Up all night, leeching.' At such times he found the benefit of his medical studies at the University, which made him ready and expert in the mixing and administering medicines. It is recorded of the well-known Mr Scott the commentator, that large portions of his Commentary were written by him when he was engaged with one foot in rocking his child's cradle. When the North Leith Congregation heard their minister pouring forth on a following Sabbath his fervid eloquence in polished sentences, they little imagined that such sermons had sometimes been excogitated when he was pacing a sick-room at midnight with a child in his arms, and that they were afterwards written with an infant on his knees.

The Sabbath was a specially busy and happy day in the home at North Leith. Those who speak without knowledge of the gloominess of our Scottish homes on the Lord's day, would have found their mistake corrected, by spending a sunny Sabbath in Bonnington Lodge, or Leith Mount. The children were not only taught and trained to observe it throughout as a sacred day, but also with the intelligent recollection that, as it was the glad memorial of our Lord's resurrection, it was to be a day of holy joy. The father looked upon

it, and he taught his family to look upon it, as the original Sabbath of the creation 'baptised into Christ.' Its law was administered not by the frequent utterance of mere prohibitions and restraints, but by keeping before their minds both the glorious facts which the day commemorated, and the glorious rest for which it was meant to prepare. The keynote for the day was struck by one of the children repeating those words in Isaiah lviii. 13, 14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' This was followed by the reading of a chapter, in one of the Gospels, which gives a narrative of our Redeemer's resurrection, after which the hymn was invariably sung by the whole bright family circle—

'Blest morning! whose first dawning rays
Beheld the Son of God
Arise, triumphant, from the grave,
And leave His dark abode.'

The younger children, to the number of five or six, usually walked with the father to the church, the youngest, as the more privileged, holding the father's hand; for while, like the good Puritan commentator, he would not 'over-drive the lambs,' he attached importance to their being trained to the habit of regular attendance on public worship, even where there could not, in every instance, be intelligent hearing; and good care was taken that, while in his discourses there

should be 'strong meat for those who were of full age,' there should also be 'milk for the babes.' He did not, however, think, as some appear to do, that 'a feast to which children are invited needs to be all crumbs.' Then the Sabbath evening catechizings gave opportunity for simplifying and explaining what had been beyond the children's comprehension. In this way, the Sabbath evenings of one whole winter were employed in conversations and catechizings, on the subject of 'gospel-sanctification.' And we have heard members of the family declare, with all the emphasis and pathos of tears, that even in their earliest days, they had never found those home Sabbaths to be a weariness, but a delight.

Many facts proved how intense and constant was Mr Harper's desire for the highest good of his children. When the anniversary of a birthday came round, or when one of them was about to leave home, his custom was to take them aside, converse and pray with them. We have been favoured with the sight of some of his letters to members of his family, and we cannot remember an instance in which, before the letter ended, he did not introduce a reference to the 'kingdom of God and His righteousness,' which they ought first to seek. The following extract from a letter written to a daughter, from Windsor where he was on a visit, illustrates this, in common with some other features of his character—

'WINDSOR, June 28.

'MY DEAR ——, I was much delighted with your letter, and will now, in reply, tell you some of the more remarkable things which I have seen since coming here. You know that this is one of the residences of Royalty. The Queen is not here at present;

but there is one advantage arising from this, that visitors are sometimes admitted to the private apartments of the palace. A—— procured an order for admission, and so we went yesterday. Everything is very grand—walls, roofs, sofas, chairs, loaded with gildings of the richest description. There is a long passage called the corridor, where are portraits of Kings and Queens of England and of other great people, together with various curiosities. Among these is a small clock of beautiful workmanship, which Henry VIII. gave to Anne Boleyn, whose head he afterwards cut off. Another is an ebony cabinet with a great deal of beautiful carving, a present from Cardinal Wolsey to the same Henry. One of the Cardinal's worst faults was pandering to the caprices and passions of his royal master, and Henry repaid him by casting him down from his high estate, so that, both in giving and in getting, Henry showed that a man may be a king and yet very much a brute.

‘It is very different now in Windsor, and in the other palaces of our Queen; but, after all, I do not doubt but that there is often more happiness in humble life than there is amidst all the grandeur of royal residences. But that home is the most blessed and that heart the happiest, where God is feared and where He desires to dwell. All such are made kings unto God, which is a nobler distinction and a richer inheritance than to wear an earthly crown.

‘. . . There is a revival here as in other places. It is what we all need, and the way to obtain it is to ask it of God, who has promised His Spirit to quicken and to renew us. Hoping that you “think of” these things, and praying that God may bless you,—I am, my dear ——, your affectionate father,

‘JAMES HARPER.’

And yet with what wisdom did his earnestness seek to gain its end. When on his visit to his daughter's summer residence at Dalnaglar Castle, he delighted to unbend, and, playing with his grandchildren at bows and arrows, to live his own child-life over again in theirs. But advantage was sure to be taken at some favouring moment for a cheerful reference, though it might only be in a word, to 'One above all others,' who loved children.

We touch upon a tender and almost sacred subject, and therefore we shall do little more than touch on it, when we say that the income of Mr Harper was at no time in adequate proportion to the number and the wants of his family. Those who believed that a family of fourteen children could be fed, and clothed, and educated,—as the children of a Christian minister, in a large town and in the neighbourhood of a larger city, ought to be—on an income which was long in reaching, and which never exceeded, £300 a year, must almost have had the faith of miracles. What must have been the stern economy, the daily self-denials, the frequent mortifications, the noble industry, and the skilful housewifery necessary to 'make ends meet' at the close of a year. Was this penance, which might have been prevented, good for either body or soul? 'It was very sure not.' The cares which grow out of the pastorate, where the minister is at all awake to his tremendous responsibilities, are heavy enough, in all conscience, without this. No doubt the chief sufferer from it was too magnanimous to complain. We have heard him say with a smile, behind which there was some sadness, when he heard a fellow-minister murmuring at some petty difficulties, 'Oh, that is nothing! Think of twenty-eight

little feet coming pattering down my stairs every morning, and a regular meal mob at the bottom of it.' But could we have followed him to his study and to his diary, we should perhaps have found him writing some such sentence as this, which more than once occurs in it, 'Much depressed in spirit, particularly on account of financial difficulties.' . . .

It is a common saying that affection descends rather than ascends, by which it is meant that the love of the parent to his child is usually stronger than that of the child to the parent. It is not easy thus to weigh human affections in balances, or to compare them. Perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that the elements in the affection are considerably different in the two cases. But from the days of Virgil's hero downwards, there have always been men in whom filial veneration was not exceeded by parental love. The subject of our memoir was one of these. Both his parents lived to a ripe old age, and the honour with which he regarded them was worthy of the days of the patriarchs. He surrounded their persons with a sentiment of sacredness, and watched over them, especially in the last years of their life, with all the tenderness of woman. After his father had become old in his ministry at Lanark, serious disturbances arose in his congregation, which ultimately found their way, by appeal, to the Synod of his Church. The old minister was blamed by some in the Synod, for what they regarded as unyielding stubbornness in a matter of conscience. Nothing could be more natural than that his son, then a comparatively young minister in Leith, should step forth in the Synod in defence of one whose troubles drew forth all his sympathy, and whose immoveable firmness in what he regarded as duty,

increased his veneration for the old man with his hoary head. Some coarsely objected to the son's being allowed to speak in a case in which it was scarcely possible that affection should not blind or bias the judgment. The objection stirred up everything that was noble and generous in his nature. 'Sir,' he said, addressing the Moderator, 'I should not deserve to stand on God's green earth, did I remain silent when I believed my father to be wronged.' And this was followed by a speech of such masterly argument and noble sentiment, mingled with flashes of withering scorn towards those who had sought to interdict his words, as carried the Synod by storm, and drew forth many prophecies of his future power and eminence.

After forty years of a laborious ministry, when he had seen his congregation recover from its divisions and troubles, the old Lanark minister and his wife removed to Edinburgh to spend their last days; where their son, rejoicing to have them near him, became, more than ever, the 'restorer of their life and the nourisher of their old age.' Their frailties, of course, increased with advancing years, and their dutiful son's busy days in Leith, were many times followed by long nights of watching by their bedsides in Edinburgh. He seemed unwilling that any hands should raise them up, or minister to them, but his own. And 'they were worthy for whom he did it.' In a biographical notice of his father, which appeared some years after his death, he thus gives scope to his affection, and records his filial impressions and recollections of both parents.

Of his father he writes: 'He took the utmost pleasure in perusing the Scriptures in the original languages. Biblical researches of this kind were, to

the last, his sweetest solace. In times of outward vexation and disquiet, it was inexpressibly interesting to witness him in his hours of retirement, with the sacred originals before him, absorbed in the study of their structure and contents, and finding in the exercise a calm and sacred enjoyment, of which no affliction could deprive him,—which no molestation could disturb.

‘To every part of Mr Harper’s official conduct a value was imparted by the character of the individual, stamped as it was by personal religion of the most decided and devoted kind. This marked him from his juvenile years. To the importance of vital godliness in the ministerial character he was tremblingly alive. In his own department, it showed itself in the profoundest veneration for things sacred, and in the fearless reproof of every approach, on the part of others, to levity in the concerns of religion. His veneration for the word of God has been noticed, his veneration for the Sabbath was equally characteristic; in the phrase of the world he was a precisian, and that of the “straitest sect.” In his personal deportment, and in all domestic arrangements, there was an exclusion of everything secular in word and action, and an entire dedication of the day to sacred exercises, of which it has never been our lot to witness another such example.

‘Mr Harper’s natural feelings were ardent and generous. Of the warmth of his domestic affections it is impossible for one who was himself the object of these, to speak without fond and melting remembrances. Nothing can be conceived more tender, gentle, and indulgent. Nor were his benevolent regards confined to his own immediate circle. He was eminently the

friend of the poor and helpless. A tale of distress he was seldom able to resist, and many were the instances in which the kindness of his heart betrayed him into almost childish credulity. His resentments, if such his sense of wrong might be called, were defensive, and never vindictive; he might repel an injury, but was incapable of requiting it by acts of retaliation. In his intercourse with his brethren and with others, his conduct was marked by a delicate and dignified abstinence from all interference with matters which did not belong to him; though, perhaps for this reason, he felt and expressed himself the more strongly when he found his own way crossed by pique and impertinence, by sneaking selfishness and sanctimonious intrigue.

‘Mr Harper predeceased by two years his partner, Mrs Janet Gilchrist, one whose estimable qualities as a wife and a mother claim no common testimony of affection and respect. She was indeed one whose domestic duties were her chief worldly care, and whose higher enjoyments were found in a life of devotion. The sacred influences of religion being united in her character with the natural graces of a singularly calm and happy temper, made her an example at all times, and most of all in affliction, of incomparable patience, meekness, and equanimity. Long-continued affliction wrought in her a sanctified weanedness from the love of life; the faith of the Gospel gave her victory over the fear of death; and now, amidst the tender regrets and affectionate remembrances of those whom she blessed by her prayers and example, she rests in hope.’

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EDITORIAL CHAIR AND THE APOCRYPHA.

1820—1830.

Public Institutions of Leith—Platform Advocacy—Ordination Sermon—Extracts—Theological Magazine—Editor and his Staff—Curious Agreement—Apocrypha Controversy—Origin—Dr Andrew Thomson—Reminiscences—New Phase—Anglicanus—Mr Harper enters the Lists—Death of Dr Thomson—Universal Sorrow—Manly Tribute—Estimate of Results—National Bible Society—‘Signs of the Times’—Extract—Anecdote.

IT was a divine command to the captive Hebrews in Babylon, to seek the good of the city in which they dwelt. In harmony with this, the public spirit and the Christian patriotism of Mr Harper soon led him to identify himself with the religious and benevolent institutions of Leith, and to give these the benefit of his powerful advocacy. Some of them in fact sprang into existence as the effect of his representations and appeals, and he was associated in the direction and management of many of them during the whole period of his ministry. It does not always happen that the man who is admired in the pulpit is equally acceptable on the platform of the public meeting; the two spheres are different, and the special gifts needed in the two cases are not the same; but in him they appeared in happy combination. He was one of those public speakers for whose appearance even impatient hearers were glad to wait, well assured that he would freshen

dulness and restore flagging interest. When a Society had secured him as a speaker at its annual meeting, it knew itself to be safe against empty benches.

It was mainly, however, when subjects of wide and national interest were stirring the heart of the whole kingdom, that he was seen in his full strength and might as a platform speaker. His sentences were not the mere utterances of a cold rhetoric got up for the occasion, but the outpourings of a heart intensely on fire with its subject, and which must speak. Give him some act of baseness to hold up to public scorn, or some course of corruption to expose, and how he would fling about his barbed epigrams, and kindle with an indignation that carried the sympathy even of the stolid. And still more, when his subject was one that appealed to the more noble and generous parts of our nature, he literally revelled in his theme. We have many a time heard the tradition that his speeches in pleading for the abolition of slavery in our West Indian Colonies, were remarkable for such fearless denunciation and fervid eloquence. His interest in this sacred cause was inherited from his father in his younger days at Mansfield, where the little family exchequer had more than once been inconveniently drained in order to help on the coming triumph of humanity and right, which, in the manner in which it was accomplished, blessed the emancipator as much as the slave.

Three years after his entrance on his public ministry, Mr Harper preached on occasion of the ordination of a 'missionary minister' to Van Diemen's Land, and at the request of his co-presbyters and the general public who had crowded the place of worship, the sermon was immediately after published. The text was 1 Cor.

iii. 13, 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' He prosecuted his subject under a very natural arrangement, namely, by considering Jesus Christ as the foundation of the Church, and pointing out the exclusive character of which this foundation is possessed. The two valuable extracts which we introduce from his first published sermon, show how soon he had reached that maturity and discrimination of thought, and perspicuity and vigour of statement, by which his whole ministry continued to be distinguished :—

The Text explained.

'When Paul speaks of a foundation, he supposes, of course, a superstructure ; and his allusion, as appears from the context, is to the House, or Temple of God. The metaphor which the apostle employs is beautifully adapted to the character of the Church, as a society constituted agreeably to the appointment of God, regulated by the laws which divine wisdom has established, and adorned by the graces of the Holy Spirit. The purposes to which this noble structure is devoted, are worthy of its author, and illustrative of its name. It is indeed the Temple of God. There His name is recorded ; His praises continually celebrated ; and the holy beauties of His image reflected with genuine lustre. The stones of which this building is composed are "lively stones;" and the sacrifices which are daily presented are "living sacrifices;"—figures which expressively denote the sincere, the willing, and active nature of the religious service which the Christian renders to the object of his worship. The labours of Paul had reared such a structure at Corinth ; and, like

a wise master-builder, he had "laid a good foundation." But though the foundation was sound and stable, it was possible that future ministers of the temple might employ improper and base materials in erecting the sacred edifice; and, therefore, the solemn caution is given, "that if any man build on this foundation, wood, hay, or stubble, his work shall be burnt." The abuse of which the apostle had so many fears, and the apprehension of which prompted such anxious precaution, was not the propagation of tenets inconsistent with the truths of the Gospel,—a common, but obviously mistaken view of the passage;—for it is evident that believers in Christ are the materials of which the spiritual house is formed, "Ye are God's building,"—"Ye are the temple of God;" and of consequence, the corruption against which the apostle's warning provides, is admission into the Church, of persons manifestly unqualified for its pure and spiritual services. When individuals are in communion with the Church, whose principles are known to be erroneous, and their lives immoral, it becomes a patched and unseemly edifice—a mingling of "gold, and silver, and precious stones, with wood, hay, and stubble." Such a combination cannot last; it cannot endure the trial; and the "workman" who has been, through design or negligence, instrumental in forming it, will have some "need to be ashamed," and surely cannot be very safe, when the fire of persecution, as *may* be, shall waste his mock temple of wood and straw, and when the tempest of judgment, as *must* be, shall lay it in shivers at his feet.'

Jesus Christ is the Foundation of the Church's Unity.

'And why then is the Church divided? Whence the common spectacle of unnumbered parties, baptising

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, while they provoke one another with acrimonious railing, and pitch themselves in battle array, as if they were enlisted in opposite services, and had conflicting interests to defend. Is Christ divided? Is the good foundation split? And have the different sects found each a fragment on which to erect their banner and consolidate their hopes? Or is there but one of the countless divisions of the Christian world the Church of the living God, and have all the rest some sand in their foundation, and some stuff in their superstructure, which the day of trial shall make manifest, and the fire of judgment burn? In neither of these ways do we explain the diversity of professions and names, in consistency with the unity of the Church. But thus:—That all who hold the great and essential point that Jesus Christ is the only hope of the sinner, are to be viewed as building on the right foundation; and so long as they concur most cordially in their adherence to the Saviour, and differ only in matters of inferior moment, they are not *Churches* “as of many” foundations, but the *Church* “as of one.” Such divisions and sections may be regarded as so many compartments in the great edifice of the Church;—they rest on a common basis, and therefore have not an opposite character, though they are called by a separate name.

‘The true Church, then, is the mystical body of Christ—the elect of God in every country under heaven, and in whatever part of the visible Church they are found. This is precisely what every Christian experiences to be true, when the heats of party contention do not disorder his judgment, and blight the better feelings of his heart. When he contemplates seriously the religious aspect of the world, he acknowledges

that there is a bond of union among all who trust in the righteousness of Christ, such as no secular connection and no party-badge can supply. Let any two persons, who are like-minded in the business of salvation, mutually elicit their sentiments, and how will their hearts leap within them to find that they are brethren,—that though they never met before, they are truly one,—having the same Rock for their confidence, and the same heaven for their home! What would be felt between two individuals in the situation supposed, exists throughout the whole body of the redeemed, though lands and seas divide them. Who that has built for himself on the good foundation, can travel in fancy to burning India, or to the great Pacific, and observe the reclaimed heathen fixing his hopes on Jesus, without recognising a brother, and hailing the fraternal tie? On this ground, all that call on the name of Jesus meet; here they make a near and affectionate approach to one another, and, having this one foundation, they grow up one spiritual house to the glory and praise of God.’

In January 1826, seven years after his ordination and settlement in Leith, a new and important trust was committed to the young minister’s hands, by his appointment as editor of the *Edinburgh Theological Magazine*. It was a new religious periodical; and though not formally or authoritatively, yet both in fact and by general public recognition, it was the organ of the United Secession Church. The two bodies, the Burgher and the Antiburgher, which, after seventy-three years of severance, had been happily re-united in 1822, had each possessed their separate periodical, both of them serials of solid excellence, *The Christian*

Repository, and *The Christian Monitor*. But at the Union, both were withdrawn from the scene, and four years after that event which brought with it unmixed good, the feeling became general that a magazine was needed for the Church, with its now doubled numbers and more than doubled strength, which should abound in articles fitted for general religious edification, discuss public questions that were of special interest to the denomination, and be the medium of ecclesiastical and missionary intelligence. *The Theological Magazine*, and the appointment of Mr Harper as its editor, were the outcome of all this.

We have now before us the old faded Minute-book which contains the terms of agreement with the publisher, Mr John Lothian, who certainly was not chargeable with over-caution or grasping in his terms; and also the names of the ministers with whom the undertaking originated, and who engaged each to make a quarterly contribution to the magazine, and to 'have it in the editor's hands in good time, with the view of having his portfolio always well supplied.' Nearly all the names are those of old Selkirk students; not one of them remains 'unto this present,'—

'The flowers o' the Forest are a' wede away,'

but the memory of every one of them is still honoured and fragrant throughout their Church, and beyond it. John Mackerrow, Bridge of Teith; Archibald Baird, Auchtermuchty; James Anderson, Dunblane; Andrew Elliot, Ford; John Smart, Leith; William Johnstone, Limekilns; David Smith, Biggar; William Nicol, Jedburgh; John MacGilchrist, Edinburgh; and Henry Angus, Aberdeen; the '*fratres Theologici*,' as they delighted to call themselves, were the staff of contri-

butors who 'subscribed with their hands' and engaged to rally around their gifted and energetic editor. Such men of eminence as Dr Heugh and Dr Belfrage of Falkirk, appear in later years as occasional writers.

There was one resolution by which these worthy 'fratres' unanimously agreed to bind themselves, which reads curiously in these days when pens are eager for employment, and, in the higher class even of religious magazines, every page is paid with gold. While no security is provided for the payment of an article, 'any brother failing to send his paper before the expiration of each quarter of the year, shall pay as a penalty the sum of five shillings, and one shilling extra for each week he may be deficient, after the time appointed has expired.' The terrors of this law do not appear to have been sufficient to stimulate some laggard contributors, who, when the time for their communications had come, did not find that the opportunity or the inspiration had come with it; in which case the fines were rigidly exacted and as honourably paid. But unknown contributors more than made up their lack of service, and, on the whole, the editor's work went on with gratifying acceptance and without an excess of care.

It is interesting and suggestive to look into the earlier volumes of the *Theological*, now more than half a century old, and to mark the gradual changes that have come over the sentiment and practice of the Church during the interval. In an early number, Dr Marshall's famous sermon, with its ten articles of indictment, is reviewed, in which the first shot was fired at civil establishments of religion. In others, the question of temperance societies is timidly discussed, and the broader basis of total abstinence as timidly

suggested; improvements in psalmody are spoken of with an admission of their necessity, but also with a salutary hint here and there, that change is not always improvement; and grave defences, which in these days would sound very unduly apologetic, are advanced in vindication of ministers who repeat the same sermon when preaching to different audiences! The great German wave had not yet begun to roll over the Scottish Churches, and those questions, in which every book of revelation and every truth of Scripture are now passing through a second fire, had scarcely begun to agitate men's minds. There were little ripples upon the lake, and this was all. Ministers dwelt snugly in their quiet country manse, living frugally but with contentment, on slender stipends, and shedding good influences around them by their ministry and their lives.

There was indeed a partial exception to this tranquillity in the Apoerypha controversy, into which in its later stages Mr Harper was unwillingly drawn.

This controversy, by which all Scotland was agitated for a series of years, originated, in its earlier form, in the divergency of the British and Foreign Bible Society from the terms of its original platform, in which it engaged to print, publish, sell, and circulate the Word of God in different languages, without note or comment. It was found that, in later years, its directors had allowed the Apoeryphal books to be bound up and circulated along with certain of its editions of the Bible, especially on the continent of Europe; thereby, to uninformed readers, confounding uninspired books with the canon of inspired Scripture. It was pleaded by the directors, in defence of this practice, when many began to lift up their voice against it, that they were only conforming to continental usages, and that unless the

Apocrypha were either intermingled with the Bible or appended to it, its sale would be seriously hindered. Supposing this statement to be admitted, it could not compensate for the compromise which it was used to defend. The general voice of the Scottish Churches demanded a return to the original constitution and position of the Society, even as a matter of good faith.

The distinguished man who, beyond all others, had done most to awaken and extend this agitation, was Dr Andrew Thomson of St George's Church, Edinburgh, a man of great mental strength and overpowering eloquence, who had done much, along with Dr Chalmers, to make evangelical doctrine once more popular in the Established Church, especially among the higher classes;—with few rivals and no equal in the debates of Church Courts, even when he measured arms with senators and judges, who had always shown himself to be on the popular side in the polity of his Church, and who, in one memorable speech which rings yet in the ears of old men, when pleading for immediate instead of gradual emancipation to our West Indian slaves, had turned an unfriendly audience, consisting of the 'flower and chivalry' of Edinburgh life, from opposition to undivided and enthusiastic support. His agitation against the circulation of 'apocryphized' copies of the Scriptures, at length became national, so far as the Scottish Churches were concerned: multitudes in England joined in it and swelled the torrent, and even the directors of the great Society, becoming convinced that they had done wrong, publicly acknowledged their error, and pledged themselves to return to the circulation of the divine Word pure and simple. It cannot be doubted that, in addition to correcting and purifying the action of the British and Foreign Bible Society,

the agitation, thus far at least, did much good in another form, by making the line broad and clear between the Scriptures and all other books, and once more presenting the Bible before the people of Scotland, in its unique and rightful position of supreme authority in all matters of religious faith and practice.

But Dr Thomson was not satisfied with this concession. He demanded as necessary to the restoration of public confidence, that the office-bearers of the Society who had been active in the case of the 'apocryphized' Scriptures, should be censured and dismissed. In this new demand he failed to carry with him the universal sympathy. Many, who, like the Leith minister, had gone along with him up to this point, now renounced his leadership. The greater number of the ministers and members of the Dissenting Churches, satisfied with the confession of error made by the directors, believing in their good faith, and seeking the reformation of the great world-Society, but most averse to its destruction, proclaimed their restored confidence. The controversy became intense and embittered. The *Christian Instructor*, of which Dr Thomson was editor, became a powerful engine of monthly assault upon the London Society and its directors; and its Scottish defenders and auxiliaries were specially exposed to the 'pelting of the pitiless storm.' Dr Thomson, carrying with him his great name and influence, held numerous public meetings all over Scotland, subjecting those who dared to oppose him, to his unsparing ridicule and withering invective. In many instances Auxiliary Societies were exploded by a single speech. The Edinburgh Bible Society grew out of this agitation.

One of the most vivid recollections of our student days, is a speech which he delivered to an audience of

four thousand, in one of the largest places of worship in Glasgow. For four hours, the densely-packed multitude sat or stood, listening with unflagging interest. The variety in his address was wonderful. Every quality was in it but tenderness—nervous argument, masculine eloquence, skilfully arranged facts, clever anecdote admirably told, playful humour, wit that never missed fire, with the more questionable ingredients of bold assertion and reckless personality. His aim seemed to be, that his opponent should not only be worsted but worried. One lady, with the well-remembered pseudonym of ‘Anglicanus,’ mingled much in the controversy, and, with her mastery of facts, clever satire, keen logic, and imperturbable calmness, made the word-warrior wince. And he found in Mr Harper another antagonist who, more than once, made him reel on the battle-ground, and whom he saw it would be dangerous to despise. A very temperate annual report of the Leith Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which Mr Harper, being its secretary, had written, and in which some things were said in defence of the London institution, was reviewed by Dr Thomson as if a personal wrong had been inflicted on him. The reply that soon followed made the great controversialist feel that one had come on the field who did not fear him, and who did not need to fear him. Without one sentence of personality, and written in a high moral tone, it went on turning the sophisms of his practised assailant inside out, proving by document that some of his most telling assertions were not only exaggerated but groundless, and dealing out his hooked epigrams and clever defences with a dexterity and ease which made men begin to think that the wrestlers were, at length, equally matched.

The feeling of the veteran controversialist may be imagined to have resembled that of the practised knight in the days of chivalry, who had so often unseated his antagonists in the tournament; that he had come at length to look upon victory as almost a thing of course, but who now discovered that one had entered the lists, whose skill in fence and thrust made it necessary that he should look well to his armour. After an unwonted delay of three months, the repeatedly promised answer came, in which Dr Thomson acknowledged the proved inaccuracy of one of his severest charges, which had often been hurled with effect against the London directors. One passage in Mr Harper's answer, which soon followed, showed with what keen-sighted eagerness the two men sought for the slightest openings in each other's coat-of-mail. Dr Thomson had charged him with an unscholarly use of the word 'incorporate,' as applied to the mere joining together of the inspired and apocryphal books so as to form one volume, implying that the expression would only be appropriate when the Apocrypha was interspersed, but not when it was appended. To this Mr Harper replied,—

'Nor has Dr Thomson succeeded in showing the impropriety of the word in this application of it. We maintain that it expresses *union* as well as *mixture*, joining together in one body as well as mingling in one mass, and the subject to which it is applied will determine the shade of acceptation. Dr Thomson, in another part of his ramble, has conducted us to the field of Waterloo to show his liking to "martial metaphor." We accompany him with pleasure, to teach him a lesson in the king's English. Will he tell us if the Brunswick troops on that memorable day were incorporated or not with the British army? They were;

but, according to his interpretation of words, this could not take place unless every Black Brunswicker had been scattered through the English ranks like the books of an interspersed Apocrypha.'

Had the combatants foreseen how near the angel of death, with his cold hand, was to one of them, they would probably both have written somewhat differently. In two weeks after the appearance of the last-quoted paper, Dr Thomson, on returning from a meeting of his Presbytery, in which he had spoken with his wonted mastery and vigour, fell on the step of his own door in Melville Street, and instantly expired. Imperfections and angry words were forgiven and forgotten in the universal sorrow of all Scotland, at the death of one of her greatest sons. How were the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !

In a review of some of the funeral sermons which were preached on the occasion, Mr Harper expressed in terms of generous appreciation his high estimate of the great gifts and eminent services of the departed 'prince in Israel,' placing him, where the voice of his country had already placed him, in the front rank in an age of great Scotchmen ; and adding in impressive words, which were the echoes of equally solemn thoughts, ' Let us not forget the lessons which Dr Thomson's death so impressively teaches us, that no greatness of talent, no activity of mind, no zeal for truth or victory, can exempt from descent to the grave. But the suddenness of it was the most impressive of all. There was no preceding sickness, no timeous warning. It was an immediate summons. He being dead, yet speaketh. A sound comes forth from his grave, and it ought to impress us as deeply as if we heard the tones of his well-known and powerful voice. " There-

fore, be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”’ In merited rebuke of one of the preachers who had failed to interpret the providence, and even sought to use it to prolong the conflict, he added, ‘ We protest against this attempt to revive animosities which, we trust, are now buried in the grave, to kindle the torch of discord at the funeral pile, and intrude this unhallowed strife on the sacredness of a country’s sorrow.’

It illustrates, however, the injurious effects of such side-controversies as the Apocrypha conflict had latterly become, when they draw away men’s thoughts from immediate and continuous duties, that, for twenty years after this controversy had ceased, comparatively little was done in Scotland in the great cause of Bible circulation. It is long before the crater of an extinct volcano shows any signs of vegetable life. But during the second twenty years that have intervened, Scotland’s divided energies and sectional societies have been united on a broad and unsectarian basis, under the banner of the National Bible Society of Scotland, which is already entitled to the third place among the Bible Societies of the world. Its income has quadrupled. Its annual circulation has increased from 86,821 to 429,837 copies of the Word of God. Previously to 1861, the work of the Bible Societies of Scotland was almost wholly confined to home. Now, the Society’s system of foreign colportage embraces every country in Europe, with the exception of two of the smaller States. Altogether, not fewer than 250 agents in 17 countries out of Scotland, are engaged in the service of the Society. And all these operations are conducted in unbroken harmony and co-operation with the great Society in London, which spreads its

beneficent shadow, and drops its golden fruit over the world.

While the Apocrypha controversy was hushing itself to rest, Mr Harper was induced to publish a sermon, which had awakened much interest when preached, on ‘*The Signs of the Times*’ (Matt. xvi. 1-3). It had been composed, as he explained, solely with the view of applying the remarkable events and features of the times, to the purpose of impressing on his hearers the duty of habitually recognising a Divine providence in all changes and events,—a habit which he conceived to be essentially connected with the life and progress of personal religion. At the same time, he disclaimed a practice, into which many who write on the ‘signs of the times’ have shown a tendency to fall. ‘The place of wisdom,’ he remarked, ‘is sometimes usurped by presumptuous curiosity and wild fanaticism. There are those who set themselves forth to prophesy before they have learned to interpret, and who overlook or misreckon the signs of the present, in their eagerness to search into the secrets of the future. From such presumption and extravagance the meek, whom God guides in judgment, may hope to be graciously protected.’

The whole sermon, which is marked by keen observation, abounds in fresh and vigorous thoughts arrayed in ‘good words fitly spoken,’ as is shown in the following extract:—

‘The signs of the times are not unfrequently those events which men are most apt to overlook. There is on this subject a want of observation and discernment. Men are taken up with the pursuit of their own personal and private interests. What nearly affects themselves, or produces a manifest impression on the state

and interests of their time and country, will indeed, for a space, forcibly engage their attention ; but, engrossed with the questions, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" they sometimes fail to observe, at least to consider, the most instructive events that are passing around them. So hasty is the glance which they take of the aspect of the age, that they fail to catch its most distinguishing features.

‘ Besides, the signs of the times are often noiseless—they are unaccompanied with pomp and ostentation. They are not always those events that draw attention by the glare of their appearance, or fill the ear with the din of their approach. They are often found to consist in those changes of opinion which, as we have remarked, are silent and gradual ;—the spread of error, for example, which, like leaven, works its insidious way till the mass is fermented ; or the dissemination of truth, which, spreading from heart to heart, and from house to house, prepares the public mind for some rapid advance in wisdom and holiness. In public history, as in the lives of individuals, seemingly trivial occurrences often prove to be the germ of mighty changes and of great events. How often, when men look back on the way by which God has led them, may they remark how a circumstance apparently indifferent at the time of its occurrence,—a slight deviation, for instance, from one’s intended path, a word advisedly or unadvisedly spoken, a trivial disappointment, or a meeting with a stranger,—has served as a pivot on which the whole machinery of their future being has been made to turn ! This applies to public events as well as to private history. Such events are often the most apt to be overlooked and the soonest to be for-

gotten. Who heard of the birth of the babe of Bethlehem, beyond the circle of Mary's acquaintances and friends? The world was too busy with other matters, to mind the virgin mother and her holy Child. Herod was parading amidst the splendours of his court, the priests were busy with intrigues of office, and the mass of the people were coming and going, and eating and drinking, in the dull monotony of vulgar life, broken now and then by a scarcity of corn, or the fall of a grandee, or a city riot. It was not till the Magi came from afar, following the beacon-star of the infant Emmanuel, that men's attention was drawn to an event which, of all the signs of the times, was the most magnificent, the most momentous. "This Child shall be set for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign to be spoken against."

But there was one noticeable occasion on which Mr Harper received an urgent request to publish a sermon, with which it was impossible to comply. The incidents were interesting, and brought into view more than one feature of his character. On one of the days connected with a sacramental occasion in his church, a minister, living at a distance, had been engaged to preach; but when the hour for commencing public worship arrived, he did not appear. Mr Harper entered the pulpit and began the devotional exercises; but when these were nearly ended, there was still no sign of the oblivious brother. The anxious minister now resolved to preach. A second psalm was sung, during which he selected a text, and marked a few jottings on a slip of paper. The sermon which followed was remarkable at once for connected thought, and eloquence sustained and increasing to its close. He appeared to have risen not only to his usual level, but above him-

self. On his descending from the pulpit into his vestry, he was met by a gentleman who entreated him to give him the use of his sermon, with a view to its immediate publication. The only answer was to hold out to him the slip of paper with the few lines of jottings on it. The gentleman was astonished. On his return home, Mrs Harper inquired of him when he had written the sermon, for she had never heard him preach better. He informed her that it had never been written. This led to the not unnatural question, 'Why should he spend so much time and toil in the preparation of his sermons, when he had shown himself able to preach so well without preparation?' His answer was, that while he had been divinely helped in a case of necessity, when there had been no time for preparation, and 'it had been given him in that hour what he should speak,' it would be presumptuous in him, were he to expect the same help when he had time to prepare. God might give aid to His servants to meet a necessity, which He would withhold from unfaithfulness or indolence. The answer was not more devout than wise and true. At the same time, his system of mental storage, to which we have already adverted, was no doubt turned by Providence to his advantage. There was something suggestive in the answer of an eminent preacher, who had also been a diligent student, to the question which one put to him, How long time it had taken him to prepare a particular sermon which he had just heard him preach? 'Twenty years'—was the calm reply.

CHAPTER IX.

REFORM—CONTROVERSIES—FRUITS.

1830-1840.

The Reform Bill—Lord Murray—The Pastor and Politics—The Asiatic Cholera—Scenes at Musselburgh—Alarm in Leith—Fast Sermon—Extracts—Dr Marshall and Civil Establishments of Religion—Voluntary Controversy—Church Extension Movement—Dr Chalmers—Dissenters ignored—Irritation—Lecture by Mr Harper—Deputations to London—Notices of Eminent Statesmen—Voluntary Lectures in England—Dr Tattershall—Extracts—Disruption—Dr Belfrage.

IN the years 1831 and 1832, we find our Leith minister taking an active part in promoting that great national measure by which the political franchise was extended, and the vast middle class of the community obtained a constitutional voice, through its representatives, in conducting the affairs of the commonwealth; we refer, of course, to the passing of the first Reform Bill. Up to that time, Leith, though one of the most important and populous seaports in Scotland, had been without a representative in Parliament; many other large and increasing towns had been similarly ‘kept out in the cold;’ and at such a crisis, Mr Harper did not hesitate to step forth from his clerical retirement, and, in addressing crowded political meetings, to give the benefit of his moral influence and eloquence in helping on to triumph this beneficent revolution. Even when he saw Leith enfranchised along with the neighbouring towns of Musselburgh and

Portobello, he did not think his work fully done, but continued his unremitting efforts in endeavouring to secure the return of a thoroughly qualified Liberal member in the person of Mr John Archibald Murray, advocate, who soon afterwards became Lord Advocate of Scotland, and latterly, as Lord Murray, was raised to the position of one of the Judges of the Court of Session. The event made the senator and the pastor fast friends, and to the end of his life, Lord Murray, with the gratitude of a generous nature, delighted to acknowledge that he largely owed the honour of his election as the first member for Leith, to the spontaneous zeal and unbought advocacy of the independent and incorruptible Secession minister.

It is not improbable that the complaint may be raised here, as at some later occasions in our narrative, that Mr Harper must sometimes have given to politics the time and energy that were due to the higher claims of his sacred office. It may be well that we now dispose of this complaint once for all. He was one of the last men that could have been rightly charged with being 'a political parson.' His Christian principle, his spirituality of mind, and even his good taste and self-respect, kept him sensitively aloof from all the petty and peddling contests of political factions for small and selfish ends. But when the axe needed to be laid at the root of some great national corruption, or some widespread wrong to be redressed, or when legislative action was threatened that would have invaded the rights of conscience or endangered the principle of religious equality, he was not the man to be silent, or to shrink from being decried as an agitator because he exposed the wrong and denounced the wrong-doer. From the beginning of his public life, he ever con-

tended that, when a man become a Christian minister, he was not at liberty, either in theory or in practice, to renounce his rights, or to vacate his duties as a citizen. On the contrary, he held the conviction, and habitually acted on it, that his very position as a minister brought him under an additional obligation to carry his religion into his politics, though not to make his politics his religion, and bravely to discharge all the duties of a free citizen in a free country. An opposite course of action springs as frequently from cowardice or indolence, as from exaggerated notions of clerical decorum.

It is accordingly pertinent to notice that, in the midst of all the political agitations and triumphs that were connected with the passing of the first Reform Bill, the heart of the faithful pastor never ceased to be turned to his congregation and to the general interests of religion in Leith. The Asiatic cholera, coming, like an angel of death, from India, had travelled over all the intervening continent, and in the neighbouring town of Musselburgh, only six miles distant from Leith, was almost decimating the population. While the judgment fell the most heavily upon the intemperate and ill-fed classes, no class was wholly exempted from its stroke, sudden as the lightning and almost as sure. Residing in Musselburgh at the time, we can well remember those terrible weeks during which 'death's shafts flew thick.' The inhabitants felt like a people doomed. Members of the same family parted from each other to go to sleep, inwardly questioning, and even much doubting, whether they should all be found alive in the morning. Especially during the hours of midnight, there was something strangely impressive in hearing the dead cart, 'with its lantern dimly burning,'

as it passed our windows, again and again, on its way to the place of graves with its heaped load of scarcely coffined dead, and in listening to the melancholy tinkle of the little bell which summoned the smitten people to bring out the latest victims of the plague. Latterly there was no time to dig graves, but the unpainted coffins were huddled into a deep pit over which a green mound still rests without a monument. A loud laugh heard in the streets at such a time, would have sounded as a cruel indiscretion, and almost as a defiant mockery. Night after night, the churches were crowded with awe-struck petitioners acknowledging the resistless Hand and the merited chastisement, and praying that a merciful Heaven might at length command the sword of judgment to return into its scabbard.

While Musselburgh was thus the centre of the desolation, the dismay was universal, and Leith, like many other places, had some droppings of the shower of death. It was quite the time for an earnest minister to seize the opportunity, and to stand forth as an interpreter of the dark providence; for the rod is a revelation as well as the Word. This was done by Mr Harper in a sermon which so deeply impressed his susceptible audience, as to make them request its immediate publication. It was entitled, 'The Duty of Fasting viewed in relation to the Present Crisis,' and was founded on Joel ii. 15, 'Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly,' etc. While remarking that fasting is not an exercise obligatory at all times, as prayer is, but grows out of occasions of affliction which are intended to lead to humiliation, penitent confession of sin, and prayer for forgiveness and deliverance; and further noticing, with special emphasis, that this afflicting of the soul is the essence

of fasting,—he proceeds to show, in a few well-weighed sentences, that bodily abstinence also enters into the scriptural conception of the duty.

‘It is founded on the principle which we acknowledge and act on in every observance in which our object is the excitement and expression of sentiments of piety. It is, for instance, the same principle as that which prompts us to a reverential posture in acts of prayer. What man of ordinary intelligence ever thinks of ascribing any degree of virtue or of sacredness to the mere position he assumes in addressing his Creator? His standing or kneeling in the presence of God, is not itself an act of worship; but it is adopted as an outward expression of reverence befitting the nature of the service, and congenial to the feelings of those who are employed in it, and therefore calculated more powerfully to excite and strengthen a sentiment of piety in the suppliant’s breast. In like manner, no enlightened worshipper imagines for a moment, that fasting in itself can possess a meritorious character,—can stand in place of spiritual service,—or can be in any respect acceptable to God, apart from the feelings which actuate the penitent as he afflicts his body with abstinence and mourning. But such corporeal service is a most apt and forcible expression of the feelings of contrition and abasement which the suppliant professes to cherish. Humbling himself amid outward tokens of shame and sorrow, a conviction of sin and a feeling of penitence will enter more deeply into his own soul; while in reference to others, a striking testimony will thus be afforded to the debasing character of sin, which lays the offender low in the dust and smites the heart with fear and trouble. The formalist will no doubt satisfy himself with the mere outward observance; he

will rend his garments, and lay a flattering unction to his heart; under an aspect of sorrow, he will nourish a self-righteous spirit; and will walk abroad a prouder man for his tears, and confessions, and fasting. But abuses of this kind are common to all religious observances whatever. Which of them may not be turned to evil account by the ignorance or ostentation of a pharisaical performer? The danger of such misapplication of fast-day observances, instead of casting discredit on the duty itself, should only serve the useful purpose of admonishing the worshipper to cultivate, with anxious care, that unfeigned contrition and that deep humility in which the essence of the duty consists. Turn ye even to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.'

After demonstrating, by a vivid and startling enumeration of national sins, the seasonableness of this duty at the present crisis, and reminding his hearers that, although many of them might not have been directly and personally involved in prevailing public delinquencies, they would not be held guiltless at the bar of God if they had not endeavoured, up to the measure of their ability, to restrain the outbreaking of depravity, and to reform the manners of the age, the eloquent preacher winds up his appeal in these characteristic words:—

'When we speak of the plague now spreading in our borders, in its connection with the sins of mankind, it is not out of place to remark that it was the demon of war which first spread the pestilence among the nations of Western Europe. In the late iniquitous war of Russia against Poland, the plague was found following

in the rear of the invading army, and was spread by them over the country wherever they carried their devastations. Now in reference to this, is it presumptuous or fanciful to add that its appearance in our country may remind us of one of the brightest and bloodiest pages of our national history? When we think of our early connection with our East India possessions,—of the intrigues and rapacity, the misrule and oppression by which the connection was marked,—well may the recollection rush on our minds with startling effect, that this, the scene of English cupidity and crime, was the birthplace of the Cholera Morbus. In that distant land the destroying angel arose, and sweeping with electric speed along the provinces of the East, broke at length into the Western kingdoms of Europe,—passed the sea,—our last hope of protection from his ravages,—and setting his foot on our native shores, shook the land with fear and trembling.’

Meanwhile, influences were at work which were to bring Mr Harper’s remarkable gifts as a controversialist into action, and to place him in unsought prominence as a leader on public questions among the unendowed churches of Scotland. Dr Marshall’s famous sermon against Civil Establishments of Religion, had fallen upon prepared minds among the ministers and members of his own and other Nonconformist Churches, and had, in fact, confirmed and formulated opinions which had long been spreading like leaven, everywhere outside the pale of the Established communion. The passing of the Reform Bill, moreover, as enfranchising the great middle class from which Dissenters were principally taken, had given them a new voice, and made them conscious of a new constitutional power; while, in addition to the tendency to look into the roots and rights of things

which recent events, in other countries as well as in our own, had produced, it is almost unavoidable that free Churches, in proportion as they increase in strength and numbers, shall begin to question the justice, or rather to assert the wrong, of being obliged, either directly or indirectly, to pay in any degree for the support of other religious denominations, while cheerfully bearing the burden of their own. In a free country, all institutions and arrangements that bear the look of exclusiveness or monopoly, are certain, at length, to raise burning questions that cannot be extinguished. The consequence of all this was, that while Dr Marshall's sermon was, for a considerable time, treated with silence by the friends of civil establishments of religion, in the hope that the excitement produced by it would ere long die out, the policy did not succeed, the newspaper press did not shrink from the discussion, the interest deepened, and some of the ablest men in the Established Church, such as Dr Inglis, at length stood forth as its defenders. These were answered by Dr Marshall, in treatises that sometimes reminded one of the pungency of South and the Saxon energy of Swift; and in the course of a few years such men as Dr Wardlaw, Dr Heugh, Dr Young of Perth, and, not least in action and controversial force, the subject of our memoir, were found mingling in the conflict. This is the historic point at which to notice these facts, because, on whatever side we may imagine the truth to be, those men were among the first sowers of seeds which have borne great fruits already, both in our colonies and in the United Kingdom, and, which the signs in the sky of providence appear to indicate, are likely to bear more of national interest, in years that are not far distant.

In 1834, a new element was introduced into the agitation, which did much to widen its range and increase its intensity. This originated in a strong representation by the popular and evangelical section of the Established Church, that the church accommodation, especially in the larger towns and cities of Scotland, had fallen greatly short of the wants of the people ; and in a proposal to the Government founded on this, that the Church itself should proceed to erect hundreds of new places of worship, out of funds supplied by the voluntary contributions of its members, on condition that both the existing chapels of ease and these newly-erected churches should be adequately endowed by the State. And to give to the proposal every likelihood of success, the man of greatest eloquence, influence, reputation, and glowing earnestness, was chosen to lead the movement, in the person of Dr Chalmers.

The Dissenting bodies were exasperated at this action. It was too much to expect that they should maintain their equanimity, when, at the very time that they were discussing the general question of the equity of ecclesiastical endowments, the endowed Church should approach the State with demands for new grants, which should come out of the common treasury into which all alike were required to pay. Moreover, it was soon discovered that the representation of the spiritual wants of the people of Scotland, was founded on the number of persons who did not attend the churches, rather than on the want of adequate accommodation in the event of their attendance, and that the large supply of church accommodation which the Dissenting Churches had been providing, in constantly increasing ratio for more than a hundred years, was usually ignored, and the accommodation

and endowment sought to be supplied on a scale of magnitude which should practically supersede, and therefore, if possible, ruin them.

The effect of all this was to arouse the spirit of Scottish Nonconformity to a sense of wrong and to resolute resistance, and to set on their defence even small congregations, in remote villages and rural districts, which had secured their independence and their popular rights by honest self-support. From 1834 to 1838, the whole land rang with the contention, and perhaps we are not mistaken in asserting that, of all the ministers who lent their energies to the movement on the side of the unendowed communities, there was no one more active than the subject of our memoir, more constant, or more trusted.

We have now before us a huge pile of letters, full of information respecting the church accommodation supplied in many parts of Scotland, which put it in his power to speak with intelligence and authority. There is also a manuscript lecture in reply to the illustrious champion of increased endowments, whom he never ceased to admire and venerate, even on those occasions when he most differed from him in judgment, and was most opposed to him in action. It was indeed one of his honourable characteristics as a controversialist, that he did full justice to the mental gifts, and spoke generously of the motives of those with whom he was thrown into conflict. The chivalry of the old tournaments, which made the combatants praise each other before they measured arms, and reluctant to contend with men whose shields were tarnished, never died out in him. The lecture was first delivered by him to enthusiastic audiences in Edinburgh and Leith, and like an old 'Andrea

Ferrara' blade, sharp and strong, bears the signs of having done service in many other scenes. He thus speaks of Chalmers,—

'In the course of lectures lately delivered by Dr Chalmers in London, the following statement is advanced:—"There are certain religionists who cannot find room in their contemplation, for the respective parts which belong to the agency of God, and the instrumentality of man, in the great work of providing for the religious education of the people. Such is the homage which these men of strong but unintelligent piety would render to the supremacy of that Being who determines all things. In the entireness of their dependence upon Him, they would themselves do nothing,—as if in things sacred, and more especially the affairs of the Church upon earth, human skill and human activity were alike uncalled for." This position is illustrated at considerable length, with all that exuberance of analogy, and epithet, and splendid iteration of the identical idea, which so peculiarly distinguish the eloquence of this great and illustrious man. But what shall we think of an argument which starts with a misstatement so glaring, and a misconception of the views of his opponents so perfect and complete, as to make the difference between us to consist in the employment on their parts, and the rejection on ours, of suitable means and of human instrumentality? Nor is it a passing thought dropping accidentally from the Doctor's pen, for it is followed up with a copious illustration in which the lecturer draws his analogies from husbandry and irrigation, from the deserts of Africa and the overflowings of the Nile, to show that human instrumentality may, and ought to be, vigorously exerted, in conjunction

with the providence of God, if we would reap the blessings provided for us by the beneficial arrangements of nature. Meanwhile, the splendid picture brightens and spreads, till we are in danger of losing sight of the false points on which the exhibition turns, —forgetting, amidst the obvious truth which claims our immediate acquiescence, the statement by which our views are misrepresented. Having fastened on certain religionists the charges of throwing aside human agency, he accuses us of such hostility to certain kinds of apparatus as to seek its total subversion. . . . So far from undervaluing means, we attach such importance to them as to insist on preserving them pure and entire, and on employing those, and more besides, which the Author of all means has promised to sanction. We surely may reject one class of means, without being justly chargeable with the absurdity of holding that human skill and activity are alike uncalled for. It does not follow because we do not employ Dr Chalmers' favourite machinery, that we have none of our own. . . . We need not an eloquent man to tell us that aqueducts are good for conveying water, and that, if you would irrigate a parched field, you must not stop the channel that communicates with the adjacent stream. All this is true, and might even be to the purpose, were it not that the question to be settled is, not whether pipes are of use in carrying water, but whether pipes of impure metal and of crooked construction are the proper sort of pipes to employ. That analogies so inapplicable should inpose on us as an argument on the point at issue, or even as a successful though brilliant illustration of his opening case, affords a very high proof of the captivating charms of genius and fancy. The reader is like

a spectator in a dioramic exhibition—everything seems real—the scene all around is so life-like and so lustrous. And yet, what is it? There is indeed motion, but it is motion in a circle. The figures, too, have outline, and colour, and high relief, but when you approach the canvas, you are left only to admire the skill of the artist in having got up so perfect a piece of pictorial illusion.’

The substance of this lecture was repeated by Mr Harper, in various forms, in almost every part of Scotland, as many a jotting in his too scanty diary makes evident.

In addition to all this, he went up to London during two successive sessions of Parliament, to supply statesmen and influential members with information regarding the case of the aggrieved Scottish Dissenters, and to do everything that argument could accomplish to prevent the threatened wrong. On the first occasion, he proceeded as a deputy from his own Secession Synod; and on the second, from the ‘Scottish Central Board of Dissenters,’ an influential association which had recently been called into existence to guard the interests of religious equality and liberty, especially as these might be affected by legislative measures, and which, by the careful and elaborate collection and arrangement of statistics, wrought most efficiently, while it lasted, in the cause of the unendowed Churches. Those who knew Mr Harper in the prime of his manhood, have often borne enthusiastic testimony to his eminent qualifications as a deputy. Even his fine intellectual countenance and his gentlemanly bearing, could not fail to bespeak the favour of educated men; while his unflinching mastery of his subject, both in its principles and details, his power of stating his case in clear and

compact sentences in which there was seldom a superfluous word, his avoidance, in this way, of that prosing which is sure to irritate men of busy lives, his skill and readiness of fence when assailed, his conscientious candour and freedom from exaggeration, commanded the respect even of those who differed from him, and rendered his services invaluable to whatever cause he espoused.

On his second visit to the Metropolis, he was associated with Drs Wardlaw, Heugh, King, French, and several laymen of note in the Dissenting communities, and it is well known that these representatives did much to lessen the hopes of those who had set their hearts upon obtaining increased largesses out of the national funds. It is evident from his notes of interviews with eminent statesmen and others, involving a month's residence in London, that he was enabled to form a very definite estimate of their character; and we shall quote a few of those extemporized judgments, from his brief reminiscences:—

O'Connell.—The whole deputation waited on Mr O'Connell, by appointment, at ten o'clock. Received us very kindly, and said he believed it was the first occasion on which a Catholic was president of a Presbyterian Synod. Had a long conversation with him, and endeavoured to impress him with our arguments against the proposed grant. He concurred with us in every particular. Gave him six copies of the Memorial, and two or three copies of the Central Board Statement, and left with him our address, that we might furnish other copies, with any information which he might require after reading what we had left him. Before leaving him, he expressed the gratification he felt at our waiting on him, and considered that we had done him a great honour.

‘*Lord Brougham.*—You need not give me the facts of the case. I know all about it. Would be prepared to resist the proposed endowments. Very kindly and complimentary to Wardlaw.

‘*Horseman.*—Clever and plausible defence of a small grant, as necessary to the good faith and consistency of Government. Strongly declared that nothing could be expected of Dissenters that would compromise their principles, but that they should not press hard upon the Liberal members of Parliament. Acknowledged in strong terms the power of the Dissenters.

‘*Lord W. Bentinck.*—In favour of the Establishment, which he thought we could not do without, for a length of time to come. Was a member of the Episcopal Establishment, and friendly to the Scottish; but acknowledged the duty of the Liberal members to protect the interests of Dissent. Declared against a grant to Edinburgh and Glasgow, but in favour of it to the Highland districts. Would vote for nothing more. Reminded him that if he did not support the direct negative, he might find the Government measure not so moderate as the one he approved of. Would it not be better to take the sound and safe ground at once? Would think of this. Very cordially invited me back again.

‘*Melbourne.*—Heugh began by quoting the petition from the Glasgow (Established) Presbytery, in which they claim the superintendence of the whole population. Read him my table of statistics. King said of the Government measure of endowment, that there were two points which we were pleased with, the refusal of anything from the public funds, and the exception of large towns from the grants that might be given. With this he was much gratified.’

We connect with this Mr Harper's brief notice of the Queen's levee, to which the deputies had been invited :—

‘The passage lined with martial men. Presentation of ticket. Armoury, a room with its battle pieces on the wall. An inner room with a greater number of paintings. Two doors right and left. By the latter, those admitted having right of *entré*. Queen standing with a chaplet of precious stones; white dress bespangled about the breast with diamonds, holding bouquet in her left hand. Those presented allowed to kiss hands. Leading members of Government on both sides, Melbourne, Durham, etc. Queen in upper end of room, with chair, and crown on back of it.’

When the increased endowments were not obtained, and this special agitation ceased, the more general controversy continued. This was partly in consequence of a course of lectures delivered in defence of Ecclesiastical Establishments by Dr Chalmers in London, that were marked by the eloquence and intensity of purpose which he brought to everything he handled, and drew around him a brilliant audience interspersed with peers and high ecclesiastics, who had begun to take alarm at the growing agitation. These were promptly replied to in a course of singularly able lectures, to which the picked men of English Nonconformity and Scottish Dissent contributed, which were delivered in Liverpool and elsewhere, and helped much to carry the fire into England. Mr Harper delivered one of the lectures in this course, by which he drew upon himself the elaborate strictures of Dr Tattershall, an earnest clergyman of the Church of England, who does not appear to have looked well to his armour

before he rushed into the battle. The subject of his lecture was 'The Voluntary Principle in relation to the Support of Religion,' and he thus argues from the proved efficiency of the voluntary system in the *extension* of religion, to the sufficiency of that system for its *support*:—

'The argument might be illustrated by reference to the circumstances of our native land. How often are we told that religion can neither be spread throughout our land nor preserved in the midst of us, but by the efficient instrumentality of an Established Church? All the efforts towards this object which the antagonist system puts forth, are derided as impotent, and their effects as transitory. But surely it ought to be enough to put to shame this idle scorning, to inquire by what instrumentality—whether by favour of State countenance, or directly in spite of it—our country came to be evangelized at first? Oh, what a fierce and withering light the fires of Smithfield throw upon the question! Was it the capricious and brutal arrogance of the eighth Henry, or the despotic bigotry of Elizabeth, or the persecuting pedantry of James, that sent the Gospel throughout the borders of our land? No! but the efforts of those whom they threatened, and banished, and slew. This view is still more strikingly corroborated by the history of the Scottish Reformation. In the face of opposition from the ruling powers, the force of truth found its way to the understandings of men, and proved mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds; till Antichrist, like another Dagon, fell by that invisible hand which works its wonders, not by weapons of man's device, but by ways and means of its own appointing. In a word, it was as a Voluntary Church that the

Church accomplished its most laborious work, its hottest warfare ; and it became a State Church after the work was well nigh done. The Voluntary Church *laboured*, and the State Church *entered into her labours*. As a Voluntary Church she was mighty to *spread* the truth, which we are told a State Church is alone able to *preserve and maintain*. As a Voluntary Church she accomplished *the more difficult undertaking*—a State Church, it is said, is alone competent to perform *the less*. It was without the “might and mastery” of State aggrandisement the battle was gained ; and yet we must bear to be told, that stripped of this might and mastery the Church would be powerless to retain what, unaided, she wrested from the hand of the enemy. Alas ! what a libel on the cause of truth—its evidence—its power—the truth of that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ? Would that we could learn to trust God more, and to estimate both human helps and human hindrances at their real value.’

Adverting in his lecture to what is said in the articles of the two Established Churches of Britain, that the magistrate, in fixing on the true religion, is to confer with, and to be advised by, the Church, Mr Harper had asked, To which hand shall the magistrate turn for advice ? Whether shall he take counsel of an Episcopal Convocation, or of a Presbyterian Synod, etc. ? And to this Dr Tattershall had answered as follows :— ‘ Would any one have supposed that *not a word of the kind* is to be found, certainly not in the Articles of the Church of England ; nor, so far as I am aware, in any formularies of the Church of Scotland ; but that the whole is a pure *invention* of Mr Harper’s fertile imagination ? Does Mr H. consider this to be honest ? ’ etc. etc.

Here was an opportunity for a thrust and triumph which our nimble controversialist was not likely to let pass. ‘Turn we now,’ he says, ‘from Dr Tattershall’s heroics to the Book of Common Prayer, wherein the reader will find the Thirty-nine Articles, with the Royal Declaration prefixed, and in said declaration he will read as follows:—“Being by God’s ordinance, according to our just title, Defender of the Faith, and supreme governor of the Church within these our dominions, we have, upon *mature deliberation*, and *with the advice of* so many of our bishops as might conveniently be called together, thought fit to make this declaration following:—That the articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God’s Word, which we do therefore ratify and confirm,” etc. “That out of our princely care that the churchmen may do the work which is proper unto them, the bishops and clergy from time to time, in convocation, upon their humble desire, shall have licence under our broad seal *to deliberate of* and to do all such things as, being *made plain by them* and *assented to by us*, shall concern the settled continuance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England,” etc. etc.

‘We have here then,’ continues Mr Harper, ‘not only the duty of the civil magistrate set forth, but that in the most palpable form, namely, an example of its performance. What Dr Tattershall makes of this I cannot say; but undoubtedly, in penning the extraordinary sentences above quoted, he must have lost either his wits or his prayer-book.

‘After this, whatever he may say of the Scotch Church Confession can excite no surprise. The thirty-first chapter declares as follows:—“Magistrates may law-

fully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons, to *consult and advise with* about matters of religion," etc. The duty of the magistrate, in conjunction with the representatives of the Church, is more fully explained in chapter twenty-third.'

But meanwhile, events were about to transpire which were to place the whole subject of civil endowments of religion on a new position, and to bring the contending parties into an entirely changed relation to each other. The spiritual independence of the Church of Scotland in its Church Courts, having been denied to it by the civil power as the issue of its famous 'Ten Years' Conflict,' more than 600 of its ministers and congregations sought independence by abandoning endowments which, if continued, could only be held on the dishonourable condition of bondage. Thus was born the Free Church of Scotland in 1843, a year to be ever afterwards memorable by that event, in the religious and ecclesiastical history of our land. It confirmed and increased to an immeasurable extent, the faith of men in the conscientiousness of Christian ministers, and proved that the martyr-spirit had not died out of Scotland. It taught great principles by great facts, which, through their very magnitude, compelled men to look at them. It held up anew before the universal Church the principle of spiritual independence; and it set in motion a series of movements by which the power of a Christian people for the support and extension of Christianity and its ordinances, independently of all State aid, was to be illustrated on a scale of liberality, which had not been equalled since the Reformation. On these grounds, the Seceders generally hailed the Disruption with joy. One of the first acts of Mr Harper and his congregation was to offer the free use of his

pulpit and his church to the disruptionists in North Leith, until their own place of worship was erected. Twenty families, who had not risen to the level of their minister and fellow-members, on this account withdrew from his ministry. But their conduct had no effect in shaking the resolution of the brave and public-spirited pastor.

This chapter has been principally devoted to the narrative of ecclesiastical movements and controversies. We shall close it by a reference to the death of one whose friendship, while he lived, had for many years been the source to Mr Harper of much high and pure enjoyment. About the time when these agitations began, Dr John Belfrage, minister of Slateford, near Edinburgh, died. He was described by those who knew him best, as having belonged to a high order of human spirits. 'By nature of a powerful, ardent, comprehensive, and acute mind, the affectionate part of his being was in fine harmony with his intellectual endowments. These natural gifts, cultivated by education and sanctified by divine influence, formed a character which it was impossible for any rightly constituted mind to contemplate closely, without reverence and love.' While a devoted minister of Christ, he had received a complete medical education, and was frequently consulted by eminent physicians in Edinburgh, on medical cases of peculiar difficulty. The consequence was, that the manse at Slateford was a favourite resort of physicians and literary men, as well as of ministers of religion. Pollok, the author of the *Course of Time*, when dying of consumption, found a home in the manse, and, with an enthusiasm quickened by gratitude, wrote from it to his friends as 'from the gates of paradise.' Though this good physician and pastor was eighteen years the senior of his fellow-pres-

byter, the friendship between them was singularly appreciating and ardent. On the part of the younger man, it was marked by not a little of the veneration with which Timothy may be imagined to have regarded Paul. And an opportunity was afforded to Mr Harper of showing the thoughtful tenderness of his affection, in a manner that made the bonds of friendship closer than ever. Dr Belfrage had an only son, who, immediately after finishing an education in medicine, was obliged to remove to Chatham for the benefit of his health. At this time, the father's own health had begun seriously to fail. His son's illness having increased soon after reaching Chatham, the anxious father hastened south to meet him. He found the young man on his death-bed, and with all a physician's skill and a father's assiduous care, tended him to the end. But when death came, Dr Belfrage's strength was so much impaired, that he was unable to accompany the body of his son to Scotland for burial. On hearing of his condition, Mr Harper at once offered to receive his son's body on its arrival at Leith, and to attend to all the sacred duties of interment. It was accordingly taken from the London trader, in which it had been brought by sea, to his house in Hermitage Place, from whence the funeral procession went, on the following day, to the beautiful churchyard of Colinton, where Dr Belfrage wished the remains of his son to be laid. It was a simple act of friendship characteristic of him who did it, and which the stricken father often mentioned afterwards with tears of gratitude; for kind natures most appreciate kindness, and the father's heart had been 'bound up in the lad.' Four years later, Dr Belfrage, after a protracted illness, died at Rothesay, and the same kind hand helped to lay his body in the grave at Colinton, where he had wished to rest beside his son.

CHAPTER X.

REVIVALS—WAR AND PEACE—UNION.

1840—1850.

Moderatorship—Deputy to Ireland—Signs of Revival—Welcome—Scenes—Discouragements—The Garden—Mental Alternatives—Agitation against Corn Laws—Active Sympathy—Public Questions—Chair of Pastoral Theology—Honorary Degree—Atonement Controversy—Dr Heugh—Irenicum—Statement by Dr Harper—Libel—Welcome Peace—Chair of Systematic Theology—Movement for Union with Relief Church—Advocated—Consummated—Tanfield Hall—Speech—Evangelical Alliance.

THE decade extending from 1840 to 1850 was perhaps the busiest and most eventful in Mr Harper's life. The measure of work which he compressed into this period of his ripened manhood, was enormous. The unceasing duties of his pulpit and his pastorate, never made light of or neglected, his active interest in whatever concerned the moral and spiritual good of Leith, his engrossment with meetings of the Church Courts and Committees of his denomination, his participation in great movements of national interest which seemed appropriate to him as a Christian minister, besides new and honourable official duties which were laid upon him by his Church, make it difficult to understand how he was not either confounded by their multitude, or crushed by their magnitude. His every week would seem to have needed ten, instead of seven days, for the work that

was done in it. His habit of early rising, to which reference has already been made, accounts for much. Then his power of ordering and arranging his work, of packing every day so well as not to lose a moment; his further power of readily concentrating the whole energy of his mind on whatever was present duty; his superior mental gifts, which enabled him in many things to accomplish with ease, what multitudes would not have accomplished at all; and underneath all this, his deep sense of responsibility to his Master in heaven for the best use of all his time and all his faculties, must go to solve the problem. And yet, in spite of what seemed a preponderating excess of occupation, instead of being mastered by his work, he seemed always to be master of it, and of himself.

At the meeting of his Synod in June 1840, he was unanimously chosen as Moderator. The same Synod appointed him, along with Drs Beattie, Young, and King, a deputation to visit the Secession Churches in Ireland, which had refused to share in the *Regium Donum*, to ascertain their state, to express the fraternal interest of their Scottish brethren, and to deliver discourses and addresses as opportunities might open to them. In the interval between this appointment and the departure for Ulster, one shadow fell upon his spirit, as appears from the following brief entry in his diary:—‘*July 21st.*—Intelligence this morning of the death of my sister. How full of generous affection, especially to me! Bitterness of my grief. Multitude of thoughts. Sense of bereavement.’ The visit to Ireland was paid in September. The work of the deputation occupied nearly a month, and in a few years bore good fruit, in a union that has borne good fruits in its turn. The diary notice is characteristically

brief, but suggestive. ‘*Oct. 8th.*—Home from Ireland. Gratitude and joy.’

About this time, an earnest and hopeful desire had shown itself, in many parts of Scotland, for a revival of religion in the Churches; and signs of awakening interest had not been wanting in Edinburgh and Leith. Mr Harper was among the first to recognise the cheering indications, and, with ministers and others likeminded, he hastened to throw himself into the movement. He knew the importance of bringing out the drooping flowers into the midst of the descending rain, to receive the blessing. The evangelistic spirit which had carried him forth to preach from extemporized pulpits on the sea-shore, and among the Leith docks, was once more in full and gladsome exercise. Such entries as the following occur, in rapid succession, in his diaries, in the earlier months of the following year:—

‘*Jan. 26th.*—Sabbath evening. United prayer in my own church, in connection with revival. Prayer meeting each evening during the week, in the Ladies’ School. Considerable impression. *Feb. 2d.*—Prayer meeting on revival, in Mr Smart’s, in the evening. *Feb. 9th.*—United prayer in Mr Muir’s. Address. *Feb. 16th.*—Sabbath evening. Revival meeting in the Kirkgate. Address on “the Way of Salvation.” *March 1st.*—Evening. Revival meeting in Mr Smart’s. Addressed parents. Meeting intimated for every evening during the week, and in the afternoons at 1 o’clock. *March 4th.*—Evening. Revival meeting in Mr Cullen’s. Gave appeal on “the Strait Gate.” *March 6th.*—Meeting in Kirkgate. Addressed on “redeeming time.” *March 8th.*—Sabbath evening. Final meeting in Kirkgate and Independent Chapel. Addressed both audiences on “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”’

Those were 'times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.' We retain a vivid remembrance of the deep earnestness and the glowing eloquence of Mr Harper's addresses, at the same period, to great audiences in Edinburgh, and the happy evenings, 'as the days of heaven upon earth,' spent by us afterwards in seeking to guide the steps of impressed inquirers, not a few of whom, as their future lives made manifest, had 'passed from death unto life.' But the blessing, though descending upon many places, never became general. It was arrested by two causes,—the extravagant doctrinal statements of some who became identified with the movement, and the indifference and timid caution of others who were the slaves of routine, ever ready to confound healthy excitement with wild enthusiasm, and who had never learned that stagnation is more to be dreaded than the tempest. That Mr Harper's own portion of the vineyard shared with their pastor in the blessing, may be concluded from the following sentences in Dr Heugh's diary, written a few months afterwards :—'Last Sabbath, in Leith. Pleasant occasion. Not a little life in the Church, under the powerful ministry of dear brother Harper.'

To us it has been pleasing to find in proximity to notices in his diary about his pastoral and evangelistic work, references to his moments of healthy relaxation, in his garden, such as the following :—'*Sept. 3d.*—About this time, first observed grapes in the hot-house beginning to soften, the white first. *Sept. 13th* and *14th.*—Pull most of the codling apples, and also a few of the late kind.' The indulgence of these natural tastes is invaluable, as an alternative to the mind of the busy mental worker. It relaxes the bow-string and saves it from breaking. Carey wrought all the longer

at his great work, because he could pass at intervals from the midst of his lexicons and grammars, to watch the growth of the English daisy, whose seed had come out in a bagful of earth from England. And George Herbert was all the better a poet, and not the less a saint, and Ralph Erskine all the more eloquent and devout a preacher, because the one had his lute, and the other his violin, to which to turn at times from protracted meditation.

There was no public movement outside of those which were strictly religious or ecclesiastical, that he espoused with so much enthusiasm, and to which he gave so large a share of his time and energy, as that, which had now begun to stir men's minds everywhere, for the abolition of the Corn Laws. He refused to admit that it was a mere question of politics, or even of political economy, but insisted that it belonged quite as much to the sphere of national morality; that the whole Corn Law system was not only a blunder, but a course of unrighteousness, in which the food of the people was taxed, or raised to artificial prices, for the enriching of a class, and that, in proportion as population increased and intelligence became more diffused, the maintenance of such laws would be the maintenance of a chronic discontent which would endanger the peace of the community. It was quite the kind of subject which, appealing strongly to the moral sense, stirred his whole heart and soul, and made it difficult for him to be silent. Nor did he like the movement the less, because it brought into public notice and action a new school of great men, not moving in the old political grooves, but with high moral tones and aims, feeling that they had a mission which, because it was righteous, must certainly approve itself

to Heaven, and determined that they would persevere until they conquered. For a succession of years, there was not a great Anti-Corn Law meeting or conference in Leith or Edinburgh, which did not receive the benefit of his counsel and fearless advocacy. At a large public meeting held in Leith, in 1845, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament to open the ports for the admission of grain and other provisions, free of duty, he defended his position in the following brave and manly sentences:—‘As a man, as a citizen, and above all, as a minister of the Gospel, I consider myself called upon to take part in the proceedings of this meeting. I feel that being here, I am not out of my place, but peculiarly in it; for do I not read in Scripture, that “he that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him”?’

Within the circle of his own denomination, there was no name, at this period, more prominent in all its principal committees which had for their object the internal improvement and strengthening of its congregations. Nor was he less prominent and active in seeking to arouse his Church to action, for the putting down of ecclesiastical monopolies, or the prevention of new abuses, or the adaptation of old and useful institutions to changed circumstances and new exigencies. As convener of the Synod’s Committee on Public Questions affecting the interests of the Church, he felt himself specially called upon to keep it awake and informed, and to follow its directions in all such matters. Among other matters of importance, we find him co-operating, for a series of years, with Dr Adam Thomson of Coldstream, in his noble efforts for the abolition of the Bible monopoly, on repeated occasions moving the Synod to petition Parliament for the abolition of

University Tests, again and again sounding the alarm against proposals to confer endowments on the Irish Roman Catholic Church, and, even at so early a period, obtaining the consent of his Synod or its Committee, to resolutions and petitions for bringing the parish schools of Scotland under a more popular management, raising the standard and widening the sphere of instruction, and making them more nearly national in fact, as well as in name. It will be observed that all this public action was of one complexion, aiming at the abolition of ecclesiastical monopolies, and at the bringing about of religious equality, so that no man should suffer in his rights and immunities as a citizen simply because of his religious opinions and manner of worship.

We pause to mention, at this point, that on occasion of the death of the venerable Professor Duncan, the Synod, at its meeting in May 1843, elected Mr Harper as his successor in the chair of Pastoral Theology. And in the same year, the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him, unsolicited, by the Senatus of Jefferson College, in the United States of America. He was fully ripe for this honour; and had the whole Synod been asked for a plebiscite on the occasion, there would not have been one '*non placet*.'

But there were especially two movements vitally affecting the interests and the internal condition of his Church, which, beyond all others at this period, engrossed the attention, and kept alive the anxiety, of the subject of our memoir. The former of these was the Atonement Controversy, which, from 1841 to 1845, in various forms agitated the Synod and disturbed the Church. It is neither our province nor our choice to

write the story of this memorable controversy, in its many changeful stages, or even to make reference to it beyond what is necessary for the purposes of our biography. The controversy had its immediate origin in the erroneous and persistent teaching of a young minister of much ability, unquestioned sincerity, and great fervour, that our Lord, in dying, bore no special relation to the elect, but was alike the substitute of the whole human race,—that His atonement was made, equally and in every sense, for all men,—that it secured no saving blessings to any, but solely removed all obstructions arising from the law and character of God to the salvation of mankind, thus rendering salvation possible to all without certainly securing it to any, etc. These and kindred views were condemned by the Synod in 1841, and Mr Morrison having refused, to the sincere regret of all, after repeated and earnest dealing with him, to acknowledge his error, ceased to be a minister in the Secession Church.

The doctrine of the Secession Church in respect to the double reference of the death of Christ, had been clearly and temperately stated by Dr Heugh, in a speech at the same Synod in which these views were condemned. ‘I believe,’ he said, ‘that Jesus Christ, in dying, sustained a relation to the elect which He did not sustain to others, as their head, their representative; that Jesus Christ, in dying, intended to secure and did secure infallibly to all the elect, all saving blessings, and these blessings, in the eternal covenant were made sure by promise to the Son, as the recompense of the travail of His soul. I also firmly believe, and believe it to be the doctrine of the Bible and of our Standards, that the death of Christ has a relation to mankind, as it has a relation to the elect; that as it has a special

relation to the latter, it has a general relation to the former. And if it is asked, What is that general relation? I answer that it is suited to all—that it is sufficient for all, but, above all, that it removes and is intended to remove all legal obstructions (by which is meant all obstructions arising from the character, the law, and the government of Jehovah) to the salvation of mankind; so that, on the ground of this all-sufficient atonement, there might go forth a free exhibition of that atonement and all its blessings as the gift of God to mankind-sinners as such, as the gift of God, not in possession, but in exhibition; as our Saviour said to the unbelieving multitudes to whom He discoursed of Himself, “I am the bread of life;” “My Father *giveth you* the true Bread from heaven.”

It seemed reasonable to hope that the controversy would then have ceased. But at the Synodical meetings of the two following years, other ministers stood forward avowing their harmony of opinion with Mr Morrison on the tenets that had been condemned; this ending also, on their declining to acknowledge their error, in their exclusion from the Church. The result, which has been so common in protracted theological controversies, followed. Men’s feelings became heated by discussion. Extreme and unguarded language was used, which led to mutual misunderstanding and suspicion. Individuals showed a tendency to become one-sided, and to range themselves on the side of one or other aspect of the Atonement, though without denying either. Insinuations began to be hinted against the doctrinal soundness of the Professors under whom the defaulting ministers had been trained. The straining and labouring ship which, for more than a hundred years, had stood the battle and the breeze,

appeared to many onlookers as on the point of going to pieces.

And yet there were not a few among the ablest ministers of the Church, who had never ceased to believe, in the midst of all the din and contention, that there was substantial harmony among the members of Synod, which candid explanation and the avoidance of dubious phrases would be sufficient to make evident; or if there were any shades of difference, that they were only such as had always existed, and always been matter of forbearance among Calvinists. These men began to ask in increasing numbers, 'If there is heresy among us, where is it? We never hear it in our pulpits. We never detect it in the published writings of our ministers.' The clear and candid statements and explanations made at the request of the Synod by Professors Balmer and Brown, showing how faithfully they had all the while been moving on the old lines, did much to dispel suspicion, and to encourage the hope of returning peace.

At this favourable juncture Dr Heugh stepped forward, almost from his sick-chamber, to do the work of the peace-maker by his admirable *Irenicum*, in which, not by pleading for compromise, but by showing, with skilful discrimination of statement, the real harmony of doctrine, which, in spite of all the war of words, existed among his brethren, and contending for the right of ministers in the Church to present the Atonement of Christ in its general as well as in its special reference, he helped much to make the storm a calm. Up to this time, Dr Harper, while labouring much in the interests of truth and peace, in committees arising out of this controversy, had taken little part in the public debates; but in the May Synod of 1845, which followed the

publication of his friend's *Irenicum*, he zealously supported him in his contention, declaring his conviction, which protracted discussion had only served to strengthen, that the ministers of the Church just stood where their Secession fathers had stood from the first, and that the time had more than come when the wearied Church should have rest. The following testimony from his lips, fell upon the Synod with a most assuring influence :—

‘The calls to believe are not confined to the elect of God; they are addressed to mankind indefinitely. Will it be doubted that the ground on which the offer is made to any, is that on which it is made to all? Whatever obstacle is made to such offer is taken away, and is not this in virtue of the atonement of the Saviour? To address the offer to all men, is now consistent with the honour of God’s law and character; what is the basis of this consistency, but the all-sufficiency and perfection of the work of the Saviour? . . . As it is in virtue of the perfect obedience and satisfaction of the Saviour that the offers of salvation are addressed to any and to all, we are accustomed to speak of the death of Christ as the foundation of the Gospel offer. Such language is no novelty in the Secession. It was common in the days of our fathers; it was the language of the Bostons and Erskines, of Adam Gib in his *Display*, of John Brown of Haddington in his *Compendious View*, of the Catechism, compiled by the Erskines and Fisher, thus showing that the distinction was not regarded as a refinement or abstract speculation, but one to be taught from the pulpit and known among the households of our people. Assuredly, if any man deny the general as well as special relations of the Atonement, he does not in this

particular hold the language which has been long, I believe all along, current in the churches of the Secession.'

The issue of a libel which had been brought by Drs Marshall and Hay against Dr Brown, and from the charges of which he was not only acquitted on every count, but, in connection with this, received the unanimous expression of the Synod's confidence in the soundness of his teaching, brought the controversy to a close, and the ministers and elders went back to their homes with disburdened and thankful hearts. Notwithstanding the years of anxiety and harassing agitation of which this controversy was the occasion, no one was more convinced than Dr Harper, that the ordeal was salutary, and left behind it, like the retiring waters of the Nile, a residue of solid and permanent benefits. It compelled both ministers and people, more thoroughly to think out the whole subject of the Atonement and related subjects, and rendered them theologically stronger and better furnished. It checked in many, a spirit of speculation which meddled rashly with the unrevealed, while it enlarged the spirit of forbearance and charity. And many a minister found himself standing on a firmer footing in proclaiming the free and universal invitations of the Gospel of Heaven's mercy to men, when he was brought to see more clearly, that this Gospel for the world rested immoveably on the basis of a divine propitiation, which, in so far as the removal of every legal obstruction between the sinner and salvation was concerned, was 'a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.' When you descended into the crater of this extinct controversy after a few years, you found its sides beginning to blossom with the fig-tree and the vine.

A few months before this tempest of the Atonement Controversy had lashed itself to rest, the chair of Systematic Theology had become vacant, through the death of the amiable and accomplished Dr Balmer, who was taken up from the midst of the strife of tongues to the world of love and peace; and it was agreed, at the Synod which witnessed the termination of the controversy, to request Professor Harper to consent to his transference to this important chair. At first, he very naturally showed a strong reluctance to the change, especially as it would entail upon him the preparation of a new and elaborate course of lectures, when his preparations for his chair of Pastoral Theology were scarcely finished. But when the consideration was strongly pressed upon him, by men who had held the most opposite positions in the recent conflict, that he was the man, beyond every other, who would carry with him the confidence of the whole Synod into this difficult trust, he consented to the transference, yielding every question of personal ease to public duty; for the change not only withdrew him more than ever from his cherished domestic life, but required that, for many years to come, he should rise to his mental work 'a great while before it was day.'

The happy termination of the Atonement Controversy helped forward the consummation of another movement, in the union of the Secession and Relief Churches. Several years before the origination of this controversy, there had been indications of a desire for union on the part of both Churches, in the form of friendly 'Minutes,' conferences, and otherwise. But during the four years of agitation, while correspondence never entirely ceased, and even when the conflict was at the highest, the brethren of 'the Relief' looked on with generous sym-

pathy, and continued to declare their unabated confidence in the doctrinal purity of the Secession Synod, the cause of union made little progress. It was impossible that the Seceders should, meanwhile, direct their thoughts to the question of incorporation with others, when they were seriously apprehensive of disintegration and disunion among themselves. But the moment that mutual confidence was restored among the brethren of the Secession, and not a living ember of the old fire remained, the movement for union between the two Churches became more general and earnest than ever. And no one was more active or eloquent in promoting it, than the subject of our memoir. Unable to espouse any cause by halves, he devoted his energies to it, with glowing intensity. He felt that the name of the good and brave Gillespie, in whose gentle breast there dwelt the soul of a martyr, would gracefully intertwine with those of the Erskines and the other Secession fathers. He saw how completely the two Churches were agreed as to the supreme rule of faith and obedience—the Word of God,—as to the symbol of their faith—the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, which both Churches received with the same modifications,—as to the ordinances of the Christian Church and the mode of their observance,—as to the form of Church government, the terms of communion, and the Church's entire independence of the secular power. He marked how similar they were in their historic origin, in their denominational sympathies, and in their denominational mission, and he felt that the question to be answered was not, Is it possible to unite? but, Would it not be sinful to remain separate? By union their usefulness was likely not simply to be doubled, but multiplied. We find him, accordingly, at one time

addressing the Relief Synod, at another, replying to deputies from the sister Synod to his own, visiting congregations for the purpose of dispelling prejudice or indifference, and taking an anxious and efficient part in preparing the Basis of Union, which should form the marriage contract, when the happy day of incorporation arrived. It took place, as the fruit of ripened conviction and unanimous desire, in Tanfield Hall, on May 13, 1847. The place in which the Free Church was born, was the scene in which, amid singing of psalms, prayers of solemn consecration, and the 'giving of the right hand of fellowship,' the Secession and Relief Churches were 'married in the Lord,' merging their old denominational names in the common designation of 'The United Presbyterian Church.' By previous appointment of their respective Synods, Professor Lindsay of the Relief Church, and Professor Harper of the Secession, addressed the immense and deeply impressed assemblage. The last article in the Basis of Union acknowledged the duty of the united Church to promote the extension of the kingdom of God over the world, and, taking his hint from this article, Dr Harper spoke on the influence which Christian union was fitted to exert over missionary enterprise, in one of the most compactly built and impressive orations that he ever uttered. We introduce a few sentences which reflect the argument and spirit of his address :—

'It is almost superfluous to advert to the utility of united movement in relation to the objects of the missionary enterprise—the heathen themselves. What their condition and wants demand, is the Gospel in its utmost simplicity,—the Gospel in the mode of exhibition and of statement which came from the lips of

inspired teachers, ere the sleight and cunning craftiness of men had multiplied errors, requiring a polemical form of propounding the truths of salvation. Where differences exist, they must be looked to and considered. Where errors prevail, they must be strenuously met by prompt exposure and solid refutation. And hence the necessity of maintaining a denominational standard as a witness for truth and for God. But why carry into foreign lands errors, whether of ancient or of modern growth, for the mere purpose of refuting them? Why make converts from heathenism polemics, before the disputer of this world has appeared? Why acquaint them with forms of error, which otherwise they might not know to exist? Who does not see the impolicy of presenting the aspect of the Church wounded and marred with schisms, when men should be called on to behold her fair as the moon, clear as the sun, the very image and perfection of beauty? But whether is this indiscretion most likely to be guarded against by a movement in mass, or by a movement of sections? The question answers itself. Alas! that the actual condition of the Church should be such as to exemplify, on so contracted a scale, the concentration of forces,—union of effort against the depravities of mankind and the works of the devil.

‘ We have this day erected the standard of Union, recording our “Secession” from the evils of a corrupt ecclesiastical system, and our “Relief” from the yoke of Erastian usurpation and ecclesiastical tyranny; and above these, as comprehending both, and therefore better than either, we now, with glad hearts, and with confederate hands, write “Union” as the name and motto of our cause. Let it be an ensign to the people,

proclaiming that Christ is our peace,—that it is as His we come together, and by His grace will keep together, knowing and testifying that God hath sent Him. Let it be our olive branch to sister Churches, bearing our proffer of cordial recognition to all who hold the Head, and our pledge of co-operation in matters of common agreement, and the expression of our hearts' desire that the circle of fraternal embrace may daily widen in our land, till the armies of the faith regain their pristine unity, and take the kingdom in the name of Him who goes forth conquering and to conquer.'

In the course of his address, Dr Harper had strongly said that such a great sight as he had that day witnessed, almost seemed to suffice for the privilege of a lifetime. But there was one honoured head which he sadly missed from the circle of fathers by whom he saw himself surrounded, on that day of holy gladness. Not quite twelve months before, when the goal of union was already within sight, Dr Heugh, his 'inner friend,' with whom he had often 'taken sweet counsel,' had finished his course; and on the funeral day, Dr Harper had addressed the great concourse of mourners in words 'worthy of the speaker, and in beautiful harmony with the occasion.'

The joy of Dr Harper at the formation of the Evangelical Alliance a few months before, and of which he had been one of the original promoters, was scarcely less than his satisfaction at the accomplished union. For while the Alliance had not for its object the incorporation of the Churches, its sublime aim was to express and manifest the essential unity of all true Christians, and to provide a broad platform on which, 'as on a delectable mountain,' they could meet, and, in spite of their denominational distinctions, recognise and exercise that Christian brotherhood which is to be perpetuated and

perfected in the world of light and love. It was a noble enterprise to attempt, even though it should fail, and in drawing towards its standard the greatest and holiest men of all the living Churches, it did not fail.

We note that during the period over which the narrative in this chapter extends, another blank was made in the inner circle of Dr Harper's friends. His father-in-law, the patriarchal Dr Peddie of Bristo Street Church, had died on 11th October 1845. He was a man who, because of his superior natural gifts, would have risen to distinction in any sphere. Not on account of any superficial attractions, but simply through the solid excellence of his ministry, he maintained his popularity as a preacher for more than fifty years. As an expositor of Scripture, he was almost without a rival, not because of any extraordinary learning, but through the sanctified wisdom and the rich Christian experience which he brought to the study of the sacred oracles. He always expressed his thoughts with force, often in sayings which had much of the point and pith of proverbs, sometimes with a quiet humour which, while not detracting from the seriousness of his utterances, gave a new zest and freshness to what he spoke. With strong attachment to his denomination, he exercised a large and genial charity to those who were beyond its pale. With much natural caution, he was never unwilling to welcome change when it seemed improvement. And when his body became old and infirm, he kept his mind young through kindly sympathy with the moving world around him. 'In his last years,' said his son-in-law, 'the hand of the Supreme Disposer was seen gradually and gently loosening the ties that bind to earth, till he departed in peace, like one resting in the arms of his Saviour.'¹

¹ Funeral Sermon by Dr Harper.

CHAPTER XI.

COMMEMORATIONS AND DEPUTATIONS.

1840—1850.

Commemoration of Westminster Assembly of Divines—Importance—Dr Chalmers—Speech—Essay by Dr Harper—Use and Abuse of Creeds and Confessions—Deputation to Prussia—John Rongé—Holy Coat of Treves—Blossoms without Fruit—Free Church of Canton de Vaud—Estimate.

IN the last chapter, we were mainly occupied in narrating the interesting movements which extended over a series of years; in this, we shall notice some events belonging to the same decade, in which the subject of our memoir took a prominent part.

One of these was the Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which, in the beginning of July 1643, exactly two centuries before, had commenced its deliberations in Henry the Seventh's Chapel; soon after, 'when the weather grew cold, removing to the Jerusalem Chamber, a fair room in the Abbey of Westminster,' where its meetings were continued for seven years. Looking at it from the point of view of the historian alone, apart from other reasons, it may be safely affirmed that such an assembly not only warranted, but demanded such a commemoration. When we consider the number, eminence, learning, eloquence, and piety of the

men, both divines and laymen, who composed that unique company, the importance of the service which they accomplished, especially in the preparation of the Confession of Faith, and of the Catechisms Larger and Shorter, their influence over political and ecclesiastical action at the time, and, through the Confession and Catechisms, over religious thought during the two intervening centuries; when we further remember that those anxiously-prepared documents continue to be the symbolical books, or Subordinate Standards, of the great Presbyterian communities over the world,—we should not hesitate to ascribe to this extraordinary assembly, an importance scarcely surpassed by that of the famous Alliance at Smalcald, when the Augsburg Confession was framed and the banner of Protestantism unfurled; and quite equal to that of the Synod of Dort, which did such valiant battle with the old Arminianism. All the Presbyterian Churches in the British Isles, with one exception, were fitly represented by chosen men in the Bi-centenary Commemoration of the Westminster Assembly, which took place at Edinburgh as the acknowledged capital of Presbyterianism, and in the already historic Canonmills Hall, on the 12th and 13th days of July 1843.

On the second of those days, at the forenoon sederunt, Dr Harper read an essay, which produced a deep impression upon a large and singularly intelligent assemblage. Dr Chalmers presided on the occasion, and gave utterance to a memorable passage, which, by its frankness, felicity, geniality, and quaint humour, produced such an electric effect upon his hearers, as we have seldom seen equalled in any meeting, whether deliberative or popular. And it had this additional value, that, having been spoken a few months after the memorable

Disruption, it indicated how experience had brought him to look with more kindness and confidence on the voluntary method of ministerial support.

‘Some years ago,’ said he, ‘we tried what Government would do in the way of an endowment for the religious instruction of the people, and, after many a weary and fruitless negotiation, got nothing for our pains. We have now made our appeal to the Christian public, and, in as few months as we have spent of years with the Government, we have obtained, at the hands of the people, the promise of towards three hundred thousand pounds. We are not going to be at all scholastic on the subject, or to speak of the distinction between Voluntaryism *ab extra* and Voluntaryism *ab intra*, however confident we are that, on the strength of this distinction, we could make out a full vindication of our whole argument. We call upon Voluntaryism to open all its fountainheads, even though it should land us in the predicament of the well-digger who succeeded so amply in his attempts to obtain water, that he made a narrow escape from drowning in the abundance of those streams which he himself had evoked from their hiding-places. Now, though my own theory should incur by it the semblance, nay, even if so be, the reality of a defeat and refutation, I for one should most heartily rejoice, if Voluntaryism, playing upon us in every direction, shall make such demonstrations of its exuberance and its power, as well nigh to submerge myself, and utterly to overwhelm my argument.’

Dr Harper followed with an essay ‘On the Uses and Value of Subordinate Standards,’ or Confessions of Faith, in which he stated the true place of such creeds or human summaries, and warned his hearers against

possible forms of their abuse, with a wisdom of statement and a beauty of illustration which evoked the glowing admiration of the 'old man eloquent' in the chair, with whom, only a few years before, he had measured arms in the great Church Extension Controversy.

Some extracts will amply justify his approving words :—

1. *General Principles on which Creeds are constructed.*

' Finding the Christian Church divided on points of faith, as well as on matters of government and order, the Assembly did, what every body of men must in some mode or other do, if they would know one another's minds, and found their visible unity on real agreement,—they took counsel together, they compared opinions, they discussed and explained points of doubtful disputation ; and, ascertaining that they were "joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" with respect to what constitutes the essence and form of Christianity, they committed to writing the conclusions at which they had arrived, and gave them to the world, in the precise and tangible shape of digested summaries. The exhibition of truth thus emitted by the Assembly was the Confession of their Faith,—their avowal to one another, to the Churches, to the world, of the things which they believed concerning God, together with the scriptural grounds on which their faith rested. No summary of theirs was designed by its framers, or accepted by the Churches, as a guide that was, in any sense, to supersede the use of sacred Scripture—the only rule of faith and practice.

Their formularies were nothing more than an attempt to set forth in systematic order, and in words which all understood alike, and which all consented to, those principles which they unitedly professed as “the truth of the gospel.”

‘In framing and adopting a summary of belief, the utility of such documents is seen. The compilers and accepters of the document know one another’s sentiments on matters the most momentous that can engage the thoughts of a responsible being; those of the same mind are made acquainted with one another as brethren in faith, and stand prepared, on the basis of a common creed, to associate in acts of fellowship; while those who entertain different sentiments, or who have still their creed to choose, are furnished with the means of discovering, without difficulty and without ambiguity, the principles of any Church by which such doctrinal summary is received and adopted.

‘Whatever gives definiteness to a statement of principles, must conduce to a good understanding among those who concur in it. If ingenuous in the profession which they make, there can be little doubt as to the sentiments which they really hold; and if any one, having subscribed the doctrinal compact, afterwards recede from it, by espousing and propagating views at variance with his federal profession, the exact and methodised form of a written summary will serve as an available test by which to discover the extent and tendency of doctrinal disagreement.’

2. *Objection answered. If we have a Supreme Rule, what need is there for any other?*

‘If we have a supreme rule, an infallible test, in the sacred Scriptures, what need for any words of human

composition? The answer is plainly this: That many of those who acknowledge the authority of Scripture, differ in their views of its meaning; and hence the mere declaration, "I receive the word of God as the rule of my faith," would leave you in a state of uncertainty with respect to the individual's opinions. Though there is one rule of faith, there are diversities of interpretation; and whatever creates such diversity, creates a necessity for creeds and confessions. To use the words of an elegant writer:¹ "Criticism hath been applied to the Word of God,—not sober and candid criticism, by which many of its obscurities have been cleared and its doctrines set in a just and natural light,—but criticism lawless and daring, invested, if I may speak so, with a transubstantiating power, which commands away the substance and leaves the accidents. Christ is still God; but this signifies only that He is a glorified man. His death was a propitiation and a sacrifice, but it did not expiate our guilt! He is a Priest, the great High Priest of our profession, and yet He is no more a priest than any ordinary Christian who offers up prayers to the Father. We are justified *by faith*, that is, we are justified *by works*. What purpose would it serve to accept from a Socinian an assent to these inspired declarations, when we know that he holds the very doctrines which they expressly condemn? What purpose would it serve but to deceive ourselves with our eyes open, and to ruin the Church while we are fully apprized of the danger? It is evident, therefore, that to preserve the purity of the truth, a subscription of the Bible will not suffice."

'If, in the words of the author quoted, and on the

¹ Dr Dick.

grounds so well expressed, subscription to the Bible will not suffice, I grant at once that this must arise out of an imperfect and even sophisticated state of things. It ought to be entirely otherwise. Given to instruct us what to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man, the inspired volume, as the Supreme Standard, ought to supersede all subordinate standards. One of the duties which God requires of man is to tremble at His Word; to do it homage, by receiving and obeying it without challenge, without reserve, without exception or qualification. Studied in this spirit of devout submission, would it not be found sufficient as well as supreme?—sufficient to guide man into the right way, and to union with one another in the discovery and pursuit of it. Who shall doubt this, who believes that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit? What is there wanting to the authority of holy writ, its perspicuity, its fulness, its “profitableness for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, for thoroughly furnishing the man of God unto all good works”? Imperfection is not in the rule, but in them who apply it. It is here the evil is to be sought and found. There is light from heaven, but man kindles his own taper, and so misses the way.

‘We grant, then, that creeds and confessions arise out of a defective and degenerate state of the visible Church, not as a natural consequence, but as a needful and salutary corrective.’

3. *Illustrative Case.*

‘Let us suppose—what in times of old might have happened—a presbyter from the banks of the Nile

making his appearance in some sequestered hamlet of Palestine or Syria, whither controversies—though they had long been raging elsewhere—had not yet found their way to disturb the faith of the village flock, and where no creeds existed, because none were called for. The stranger comes into intercourse with the native pastor, as primitive in his character and as incorrupt in his doctrine as he is obscure in his lot. They confess to each other that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, and forthwith embrace as brethren, partakers of a common hope, and followers of the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet a little while, and the Egyptian brother makes it known that a copresbyter and familiar of his, Arius by name, had recently favoured the Alexandrian Church with highly rational views of the doctrine of Scripture respecting the person of Christ—that he is the first and greatest of created beings. “Brother, what thinkest thou?” The provincial stands aghast at the question. “What, Jesus the Saviour whom I have hitherto adored and confided in as my Lord and my God, in the rank of created beings!” These truly are strange and fearful things that are brought to his ears. Alas! not to *his* ears only. The new views of Alexandria spread like a swarm of locusts over the face of the land. Speculation and debate blight the fruits of piety, as hot winds make the vines to languish on the sunny slopes of Lebanon. Does the Palestine presbyter *now* take to his bosom and to his fellowship every man who calls Jesus Lord? No. Wherefore? Is he turning bigot in his old age? Does his love wax cold! Is he narrowing instead of extending his embrace of the brotherhood? Talks he now of a creed? What, is the good man losing sight of Scripture? Does he

lightly esteem the many summaries of doctrine that are expressed in Bible words? Ah, no! He prizes them, if possible, more than ever; and it is because he does so, that now, when any one comes to him with a profession of the faith, he is careful to ascertain by due inquiry that the stranger not only uses inspired sounds, but that he uses them in their inspired sense. In a word, he frames a confession; not to lord it over other men's faith, but to protect his own. If the confession, that for a time might be oral, be further supposed to have been afterwards reduced to a written form, what then? Does it change the nature of a creed to extend its use?'

4. *Some possible Abuses of Confessions.*

'The uses and advantages of well-conceived and well-executed summaries are to my mind so obvious, that I confess myself more afraid of abuses of them by friends, than of objections to them by opponents. Of these, one of the most dangerous is, the employment of them as an authoritative test of truth and standard of religious opinion. What is this but old Popery, or young Puseyism creeping into a Church, under the disguise of a Protestant, perhaps a Presbyterian name? The existence of this evil may be detected among the holders of a creed, when they believe its articles rather because they find them in the Confession, than because they have found them in the Word of God. Is not this to make their faith stand in the wisdom of men? When in the prosecution of religious inquiry we make the question, What saith the Confession? to precede the question, What saith the Scripture? we indulge the same ignoble and slavish spirit. What, indeed, is it

but to elevate into a rule of faith a composition which, with all its merits, is the work of man, designed not to be applied as a rule, but to declare how, in the judgment of the compilers, the rule of Scripture, when rightly applied, determines the point in question. To one who, for information, investigates any matter of faith, the use of a confession is important as that of a help to inquiry. On this subject nothing can be more explicit than the testimony of the Westminster Confession itself: "All Synods and Councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err and have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as an help in both."¹

‘Further, it is not a use, but an abuse of confessions,—an example, not of their value, but of their perversion,—when men, in adopting a public creed, adhere to it in its general scope, or subscribe its propositions as articles of peace; which they may hold in whole or in part without challenge, if they do it without public offence,—that is, if they do not disturb the Church by matters of private opinion, or of unsanctioned novelty. This undoubtedly is an evil to which written confessions are liable, but it is by no means peculiarly incident to them. If I mistake not, we have already seen reason to believe that it is an evil more likely to attach to the use of an unwritten creed or oral confession. If, however, there be men—and the experience of all ages shows there are such—who will subscribe articles of faith without believing, or but half believing them, then, certainly, with regard to these men, confessions are no longer pledges of good faith and symbols of unity, but are

¹ Confession, chap. xxxi. sec. 4.

turned into a cloak of hypocrisy, under shelter of which the deceiver may deal perfidiously with conscience and with God. Sooner than that this doctrine concerning articles of peace should ever come to be understood in our Churches as a legitimate use of confessions, let decrees of councils, and creeds, and standards, from Nice to Westminster, of every age and however venerable, be torn to shreds, and scattered by the winds of heaven.'

5. *Desirableness of occasional Revision.*

'Would it not tend to obviate this evil, or at least to detect it when it occurs, were Churches on special occasions, when Providence appears in favour of the attempt, to exercise their Christian liberty in reviewing their subordinate standards? Would not this be a salutary as well as a legitimate and safe example of the liberty which the Churches of Christ have in Him,—a liberty to manage their spiritual matters without extrinsic control,—a liberty which Christ's freemen prize as their celestial birthright,—a liberty for which, as a host of witnesses have in these days arisen to testify, it is worth sacrificing all the bounties which State favour can give? In this, the Churches of Christ would leave not a shadow of foundation for the charge, that creeds become consecrated by use and time, and are placed too much on a level with canonical writ as the Church's directory of faith and worship. The allegation would not have even the colour of plausibility, were Churches, in circumstances auspicious to the undertaking, to review with calm and solemnized minds their judgment of the standards—not in the spirit of men given to change, but of men

who know, and are forward to acknowledge, that no work of human prudence, learning, or piety is perfect so as to be unimprovable—such that nothing can without injury be added, nothing without sacrilege taken away, nothing in method arranged more simply, nothing in statement expressed more clearly, nothing in the application of truth brought to bear more directly on the aspect, and spirit, and state of the times. If unknown and unsuspected differences existed, such revisal would bring them to the surface, and show them in the light. Where conscientious scruples were entertained, they would be considered in circumstances the most conducive to a satisfactory removal of them. Errors would be detected, and caught and thrown over the wall, before, like a root of bitterness, they had time to strike deep and to entrench themselves—not to be dislodged but by effort and disruption.’

‘I beg you not to forget,’ said Dr Chalmers at the close of the address, ‘the most beautiful illustration which the speaker gave, and which conducts us at once to the whole principle, and origin, and practice of confessions in Christian Churches,—I mean the illustration of the Egyptian presbyter visiting a sequestered village in Palestine with the heresy of Arius. There was no practical need of a confession until the visitor appeared among the people of that village, when a different understanding arose amongst them upon the important subject of the person of Christ. It is perfectly plain that this difference of understanding cannot have been removed by a reiteration of passages of Scripture ; because the heretic professes to acquiesce in the statement of Scripture. It is perfectly plain that the only plan of getting at the

heretical understanding of these passages is, by some philosophic method, to meet the terms in which the heresy is propounded;—in short, it is necessary that the passages of Scripture should be translated into philosophical language. None lamented the necessity of this more than the fathers of the Church—none lamented this more than Athanasius and Calvin; but there is no other way of putting down misunderstandings and heresies. You will therefore see that the introduction of confessions and human standards did not originate with the Church itself, but was forced upon it by those heretics who wandered from sound doctrine. I think the illustration is beautifully brought out, and completely embodies this sentiment. . . . For myself, I can say that I have seen nothing which makes more palpable the real origin of confessions—which shows that confessions would not be necessary if there were more moral honesty among men on religious questions—than the essay which we have just heard read. I do hope, therefore, that Dr Harper will be induced to present his essay to the world in a more enduring form.'

Dr Harper did another important service to his Church, in visits of inquiry which, at the instance of its Foreign Mission Committee, he paid to scenes of apparent religious awakening on the Continent of Europe, with Dr Eadie and Mr Alex. MacEwan of Helensburgh as his fellow-deputies. This took place in the spring of 1846. The first country visited was Prussia, which was at that time agitated by an extensive movement in resistance to the arrogant assumptions of the Roman Catholic clergy, par-

ticularly in the matter of mixed marriages. This again had come to be aggravated by the superstitious veneration, if not worship, of the famous 'Holy Coat of Treves,' to which myriads went on long pilgrimages in the belief of its miraculous virtues, and which many among the Romish priesthood, not only tacitly sanctioned, but actively encouraged. Within the pale of that Church multitudes had arisen who were denouncing a tyranny that had become intolerable, and protesting against a form of superstition which seemed dictated by rapacity and had the look of imposture. John Rongé, a Roman Catholic priest, placed himself at the head of this agitation in its new form, and in the course of time was joined by John Czerski, also a priest of the Romish communion. In its earlier phases, so much was spoken by its acknowledged leaders on the rights of conscience and the authority of the Scriptures, and so many of the errors and corruptions of that Church were not only condemned but professed to be renounced, there was so much, besides, of a Protestant and evangelical sound in the language used, that some in Germany, and multitudes outside of it, imagined that they saw in it hopeful signs of a religious revival, and the movement began to be spoken of and hailed as 'a new Reformation.' The timid and sanguine alike stood 'wondering whereunto all this would grow.'

It had become very desirable that qualified men should be sent forth, to examine, on the spot, into the nature and tendencies of this remarkable movement, and Dr Harper and his associates were commissioned for this purpose. He appears to have greatly enjoyed some parts of his journey. In a letter to one of his daughters, he speaks of himself as, after leaving Bonn,

travelling by the Royal Mail or Schnell-post, which Dr Eadie had insisted on interpreting as 'snail post,' because its average speed was only five miles an hour. In another letter, he records his satisfaction in passing through Wittembêrg, the city of Luther. 'There we visited his cell, sat on his chair, stood at his tomb, and saw the church-door where he stuck up his famous theses against the doctrine of Indulgences.' The deputies sought information from every likely quarter,—from parties to the movement, from individuals of the free-thinking school, from ministers and members of the Protestant Churches, such as the well-known Dr Krummacher at Elberfeld,—so as to have before them ample and varied material for forming an impartial and intelligent estimate of the state of things embraced in their mission of inquiry.

The result was disappointment. The movement, however high-sounding and even evangelical in its words and phrases, was, in no proper sense, a Reformation. If some of the errors of Romanism were renounced, it was only to exchange them for the icy negations of rationalism. Doubtless, in their societies there were some who had found their way to the 'faith once delivered unto the saints,' and were rejoicing in a new and divine life, but in the case of the vast majority it was not so. To give an aspect of unity to the most discordant materials, the articles which formed the basis of their fellowship, were so vaguely expressed as to include all shades of sentiment. 'Believing in Jesus our Saviour' was a formula so designedly indefinite as to embrace every variety of opinion, from the faith of His divinity to the very lowest views of His person. 'Believing in the Holy Ghost' was intended by many to declare

nothing more than the 'existence of virtuous principles, and the communion of pious hearts.' The real foundation of this new alliance was indiscriminate latitude in matters of faith, and the virtual sinking of all doctrinal differences in a spurious and unprincipled charity. Such a society could no more cohere, or stand, than the prophetic image of iron and clay. The spirit that had formed such men as Luther, and that makes martyrs, was not there. If there was motion among the dry bones, there was no approaching resurrection. In writing from Berlin to his wife, we find Dr Harper saying, 'We have seen cause materially to change our opinion of the character and tendency of the movement. Rongé is an infidel. Czerski is a man of weak, and, which is worse, of doubtful character. The great body of the people adopt the errors of their leaders; and the almost unanimous opinion entertained by the well-informed and the pious is that, instead of a new Reformation, it is a new phase of evil, and many do not scruple to say that it is a change from bad to worse.'

The deputies were indeed sad at heart. But when, passing through Saxony into Switzerland, they entered the Canton de Vaud, they met with signs which refreshed their hearts. Forty pastors, rather than submit to become the abject tools of the Government, and to be controlled by it in the discipline and administration of their churches, cast away their endowments, and, having thus purchased liberty by sacrifice, formed themselves into a Free Church in their little canton, with the illustrious Vinet at their head. They were bravely enduring poverty, and standing their ground against the oppressions and unrighteous restrictions of the magistrates, and the hootings of the mob, happy

in the testimony of a good conscience, and in the approval of God. 'They are a remnant of witnesses to the truth,' said Dr Harper to his Synod, 'who have been awakened by healthful chastening, purified by fire, and who love the truth the more that they are called to suffer for it. We fervently commend the suffering brethren of Vaud to your affectionate remembrance, to your letters of condolence, to your prayers, to your every expression of brotherhood and sympathy.'

Such visits to weak and suffering foreign Churches, which have become common in later years, are one of the most beautiful and beneficent forms of 'fulfilling the law of Christ;' and, as in the case of a lost or wandering child restored to a family, have, in more than one instance, been the means of bringing back some hidden or forgotten Church into the loving circle of an evangelical Protestantism.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROFESSOR.

Working with a Will—Two Chairs in one—Use of Paul's Pastoral Epistles—Own Experience—Exegesis of 1 Tim. iii. 6—Systematic Theology—Range of Topics—Marrow of Modern Divinity—Old Truths in New Lights—Structure and Style of Lectures—Criticisms of Students' Discourses—Special Value—Times for Faithful Wounds—Specimens—Christian Jew—The Professor at Home—Reminiscences by Old Students—Transatlantic Estimate.

WE have seen that, at its first meeting after the happy union, the United Presbyterian Synod appointed Dr Harper its Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology.

This seems the fittest time to introduce a general view of his work in this honourable sphere. It is a fact which, combined with others, helps to explain his acknowledged efficiency as a Professor, that he took to his work with a will; for men seldom do well what they do unwillingly. It was his delight to look into the countenances of ingenuous and inquiring youths, to stimulate thought while helping to guide it, and to watch the widening knowledge and the maturing strength and piety of the young theologians who came under his special training, for a series of short autumn sessions. Many brief notes in his diaries bear abundant evidence of this; and his family and nearer friends were accustomed to notice that, as the Hall session approached, his spirit became more joyous and his

countenance brighter. The autumn of the natural year, was the spring season to his heart.

Until the more recent reconstruction and wise enlargement of the Theological Hall or College, Dr Harper had virtually committed to him, what was properly the work of two chairs; and in the department of Pastoral Theology, one principal course of instruction consisted in a series of expositions on the two pastoral Epistles of Paul to Timothy. We have no doubt that in this he followed, consciously and of design, in the footsteps of his old Professor at Selkirk. And the conception was in itself a happy one. For in the practical directions for the pulpit and the pastorate, with which those Epistles abound,—in the warnings alike against error and temptation,—in the many suggestive hints on the subject of church government and church offices,—in the interesting glimpses that are given into the life of the early Christian Churches,—in the solemnity and grandeur of the motives by which it is sought to sustain and encourage the minister in his work,—and in the repeated occasions in which the young evangelist with his glowing fervour and his filial love, and the aged apostle with the prophecy of martyrdom already on his brow, are made to rise up before us,—we are favoured with a scheme of Pastoral Theology, and much more. The obvious danger to which a teacher is exposed in thus treating and adapting the Epistles, is to spend so much of his time in the mere exegesis of the paragraphs, as sometimes to lose sight of his proper work, and to give to his students a lesson in interpretation, when his more immediate design should be to guide them in managing the details of pastoral life. Perhaps it would be too much to affirm, that Dr Harper entirely succeeded, in every instance, in avoiding this

danger; but the happy conception was often as happily realized.

In addition, he addressed to his students, at intervals, a course of lectures on the structure and composition of sermons, on preaching, pastoral visitation, visitation of the sick, and kindred topics, in which he gave them the benefit of his long experience in a successful and earnest ministry, and sought to adapt his instructions to the special circumstances of the age. Many of his students, after their entrance on the Christian ministry, have borne willing testimony to the benefit which they have derived from these addresses, when they have been brought face to face with the responsibilities of the Christian pastorate. They virtually stood, at the beginning of their ministry, enriched and armed by an experience of thirty years, which they could only have gained, in other circumstances, through a succession of mortifying mistakes and blunders. While recommending, as he had so long exemplified, the adoption of a high standard of preaching, and insisting that the pulpit must ever be the 'preacher's throne,' there was one practical error against which he earnestly advised his students, that of restricting their cares and labours to the pulpit. He contended for the principle that intercourse with the people was essential to the proper 'shepherding' of a people, and to the full proof of a ministry; and that the ideal of the relation between a Christian pastor and his people, was only reached, when every member of his flock was made to recognise in him a personal friend.

We introduce a specimen of his instructions by exposition, which is also valuable on its own account:—

'Paul declares of a bishop, that care must be taken that he be "not a novice, lest being lifted up with

pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." *Μὴ νεόφυτον, ἵνα μὴ τυφωθείς εἰς κρίμα ἐμπέσῃ τοῦ διαβόλου, 1 Tim. iii. 6.*

‘In this verse, Paul specifies, in a negative form, a class of character whose unfitness for office is obvious *ipso facto*, *μὴ νεόφυτον*. The application of the word, figuratively, to the matter in hand, is plain enough. The neophyte, or novice, as here rendered, is a new convert, one newly planted in the garden of the Lord. Exposed to the peculiar trials of one who has just taken up the cross of Christ, and inexperienced in the fight of faith, by how much he is less able to confront the adversary, by so much is he liable to be assailed by the cruel mockings of the profane, the threats of worldly loss, and the importunities of the friends and associates of his previous career, to return to their society and its carnal delights. It is presumable, too, that the new convert may not be deeply grounded in the truths of the Gospel, and therefore not as yet fully skilled to defend his own position, or ripely furnished for the instruction of others. Such a one, then, must not be called to the office of a ruler, till his character has been more fully tried, and his qualifications for rule in the church more fully ascertained. Nor is it self-denial or persecution only that he has to fear for himself, and that others have to fear on his behalf. Grant that his condition outwardly is calm and safe, he has to watch over, and strive against, the spirit that is in him, in the risings of self-esteem, and in its amenableness to flattery and the praise of men. It may prove to be too giddy a height for him to be prematurely placed in a position of trust and prominence, and therefore let such preferment be avoided, *ἵνα μὴ τυφωθείς*.

‘*Τυφώω* means, literally, to surround with smoke.

Figuratively, to be wrapped up in praise; for a man's conceit darkens his understanding. Wrapped up and enveloped in a cloudy ignorance of his own defects, and of the virtues and attainments of others, he waxes great in his own esteem. And pride is the image of Satan, and the children of pride fall.

‘*Εἰς κρίμα διαβόλου. Διαβόλος*, accuser, one of the descriptive names of Satan, the blasphemer of God and the slanderer of the brethren. Whether does *κρίμα* denote the condemnation into which he fell, or the condemnation under which he brings others? The former is plainly the meaning, because the devil has no power of condemnation. It is part of his malignant policy to lead men into condemnation. For this end, he may accuse and calumniate, but he cannot pass sentence on any, not even on the rebellious like himself. He is indeed said to have the power of death, but whatever may be his agency in leading men to destruction, jurisdiction he has none—no authority to pass a judicial sentence, a *κρίμα*, upon innocent or guilty.’

Our Professor's course on Systematic Theology, ranged over the usual topics that are understood to be included under that name. Natural Theology, under which he introduced elaborate discussions on the philosophical theories of Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, and others. Divine revelation in its credentials and contents, under which he treated on the Rule of Faith, the Trinity, the Sonship of Christ, the Messiah, the Atonement, Sacrifice, Justification, Imputation, Repentance, Faith, Adoption, Sanctification; bringing also into their due prominence Predestination and Election, and the other points of Calvinism, which he regarded as standing in a relation to the other doctrines of the Christian system, similar to that of the granite formation in the outer world, to

the everlasting hills. Any one who listened with intelligence to his lectures, could not fail to notice in them the moulding influence of one book, which was his favourite companion through life, and which had also left its deep impress on the preaching, and writings, and early documents of the Fathers of the Secession,—*The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. It is one of the most masterly statements of evangelical truth that have ever been written, singularly clear in its language, glowing with statements of divine love, whose guiding star is salvation by grace, and whose aim is to humble man and glorify God; and, on account of its influence, not only on theological thought, but on ecclesiastical action, before and at the period of the Secession, it possesses to many, not only a literary, but a historic interest. Though, when we refer to its influence on Dr Harper as a theological tutor, we allude principally to its influence on his forms of thought; for in respect to the style and structure of his statements, he kept himself free of the paradoxical language in which the Marrowmen too much delighted to express their doctrines, more resembling in this respect the almost scientific precision of such men as Andrew Fuller.

In our enumeration of Dr Harper's topics of instruction, we have conveyed the impression that he moved along the 'old lines' of Scottish Divinity; but the facts in his earlier life which we have already narrated, should be sufficient to prevent the very different impression, that he bowed his mind, without earnest and independent inquiry, to the yoke which would now be described by some as an 'easy and traditional orthodoxy.' Every doctrine which he taught to his students had, long before, been the matter of his personal conviction, after many weeks and months of doubt, inquiry, and prayer.

And when he came to his chair in the fulness of his mental strength, it was to lay before his pupils sincere and deep-rooted beliefs, confirmed by a long experience of their power over his own heart and life, and which the wealth and honours of a world could not have tempted him to renounce. In the reverential spirit and firmness of grasp with which he handled his subjects, he conveyed the impression to all that heard him, that he 'believed and therefore spoke.'

But even when dealing with old and familiar truths, he often succeeded in presenting them in new and unexpected lights, and in supporting them with fresh and ingenious arguments; while his habitual fairness in stating the arguments of his opponents, commanded the respect, and secured the confidence of inquiring students.

It was his good practice never to begin the composition of his lecture until he had completely thought out and mastered his subject, and the consequence was, that he arranged and marshalled his matter in a natural and logical order, and expressed himself with a transparent clearness which made it next to impossible to mistake his meaning. One of his old students, now occupying a prominent place in the Church, thus bears his admiring testimony to these qualities of his Professor: 'Every part of his work gave evidence of his being a thinker who had the powers of his mind perfectly in training, and under control. He seems never to have allowed himself to be betrayed into either random or slovenly methods of expressing himself. There were no ragged edges of thought visible, but his lectures were, from beginning to end, marked by logical precision.' Another esteemed minister writes to us with similar admiring appreciation: 'He saw with a

clearness which no clouds could intercept, all round the horizon of his thought, and he presented all that his eye had gathered, in crystalline forms of expression.' His style was innocent of all that stale and stereotyped phraseology which is the bane of so much theological writing, and which Foster wished to have abolished by Act of Parliament. He addressed the men of the 19th century, in the language and manner of the 19th century. His sentences were sharp-edged and shining as newly-coined gold.

It was his frequent manner, after calmly stating and expanding an argument, to repeat it in a condensed and closing sentence of epigrammatic point, or happy antithesis that rang like a proverb, and surprised and delighted his hearers. Sometimes, in the beginning of a lecture, his delivery threatened to be monotonous and laboured; but as he warmed in his theme, and the *perfervidum ingenium* of the man had full play, all this disappeared, and his rapid sentences rolled out from him round and clear, his pronunciation sharp and varied in its emphasis, and sustained throughout. We think we still see him, as Mr Angus of Arbroath has vividly described him, 'walking with slow step from the ante-room to the platform, punctual to a minute, and with the serious and somewhat careworn look which was so often visible in his face, conveying the impression of one who had come to his work fresh from his study and from his closet.' We must not omit to mention that there were periods at which the Professor varied his theological instruction by the use of text-books, of which *The Elements of Theology*, by the younger Hodge of Princeton, was the most valued.

There was probably no part of his work as a Professor of Theology in which Dr Harper more excelled,

or was more thoroughly appreciated, than his criticisms on the discourses which the students were required to deliver before him, in rotation. This arose from his singular discrimination, the readiness with which he saw the good and faulty points in a discourse, and his conscientious fidelity in which, while rejoicing much when it was in his power to commend, he did not shrink from 'faithful' wounding, for the sake of a higher benefit. Certainly he was not the man merely to 'hint a fault,' or to mingle timid apologies with fault-finding, where a measure of wholesome severity was needed. It is well known that a seasonable, and perhaps even excessive, severity of criticism, helped to rouse, for the first time, into efforts worthy of themselves, two of our greatest modern poets. One circumstance which gave a special value to our Professor's critical remarks, was, that when dissatisfied with the treatment of a text, he not only pointed out the defects, but showed his students the manner in which it ought to have been handled. He not only pulled down the house, but built it anew and better. And this was often done with an impromptu felicity which carried the assent and drew down the generous applause of his students, often continuing to be the subject of talk among them for many days to come. It was a not unfrequent remark, that one such terse criticism was often worth a whole lecture.

Some who may have winced, for the moment, under the Professor's chastisements, manfully acknowledged their justice, and are, at this day, occupying some of the most honourable and prominent places in the Church. He greatly delighted in detecting latent gifts, and in encouraging and applauding the conscientious application of students who seemed less brilliantly endowed. He

was in full sympathy with Dr Arnold, who said of one such worker, 'Sir, I could have taken off my hat to that boy.' The faithful wounds were reserved for those who had evidently begun to write, without having taken due pains to understand their subject, or who displayed ability enough to show that they could have done much better, had they been less self-indulgent or procrastinating; or who expended their whole time and strength on some subsidiary point in the text, and kept shy of its grand central truth; or who substituted metaphysics, or vague sentiment, for the rich ore of Christian doctrine, which made the text itself shine like a star. In such cases, he certainly did not 'spare the rod.' We are quite aware that our Professor has sometimes been charged with an occasional excess of severity in his criticisms. But we have noticed that, when these were reported afterwards, the sense of smarting which they had produced, did not arise from the use of strong words, or cutting epithets, but from the point and terseness of his sentences, which led to their being frequently repeated, and made them difficult to forget. And we only do him justice when we add, that if there were some rare instances in which the pain inflicted exceeded the measure of the offence, the critic, when he began to suspect this, became himself a sufferer. The student was immediately invited to his study, and everything done that was consistent with fidelity, to bind up the wounds. And as he advanced in years, old age, instead of bringing with it fretfulness and impatience, mellowed him like the fruit of a ripe vintage, and brightened his whole intercourse with patriarchal benignity. We subjoin a few characteristic specimens of his critical remarks, which have lingered in the memories of his older students.

On one occasion, a student delivered a discourse which was singularly loose and unconnected in its statements. The order of the sentences might have been reversed, with little difference in the appearance of connection of thought. The Professor introduced himself to his criticism, by remarking that a sermon ought to resemble ancient Jerusalem, which was 'a city compactly built together;' and then, after showing how deficient the discourse was in this important quality, he proceeded to build up a plan of connected and compacted thought on the text, in which everything seemed to stand in its own place, and in its due proportion.

Another student began his discourse by quoting the sentence from one of our English essayists, that 'the Christian gentleman is the highest style of man.' Throughout the discourse, the young preacher found apparent difficulty in shaking himself free of this introductory sentence, but continued to ring the chimes and changes on 'the Christian gentleman,' until the monotony became ridiculous. With a few commendatory words, the Professor disposed of the discourse with the suggestion that he would have liked a little less of 'the Christian gentleman.'

One, whose sermon was marked by literary excellence, but into which the evangelical truth of which the text was full, was very sparsely transferred, was received with this remark, that what they had heard was a good literary paper, but not a good Gospel sermon. The sermon, as it was, might be compared to a waving corn-field shining in its autumn beauty; but the sermon as it should have been, would have been like the corn when reaped and gathered into the garner, and ready to be used as the staff of life.

Another student, whose discourse savoured more of pagan philosophy than of anything distinctively Christian, drew down this very solemn rebuke : ‘ Go home, my young brother, and pray that both your sermon and your own spirit may be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’

He commended one discourse as richly illustrated, but, having heard some undertones among the students during the delivery, he calmly added, ‘ I had to listen to two discourses, one from the pulpit and another from the pew.’

He remarked of another, ‘ Mr A. gave a good discourse. But were I asked if he might, or could, have given a better, I would answer affirmatively. He shows a good deal of the imaginative in his style ; but he must be careful with his tropes, and not speak of storms and tempests moving in cadence with the tones of our Lord’s voice.’

Mr B., preaching on the words, ‘ What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ’ described the vanity of gaining the world, which was rather aside from the scope of the text. ‘ The idea is that, however great the gain, the value of the soul is greater. What he said was all very true, but this is not the idea of the text, and, therefore, his first head was thrown away. The way in which he handled the second head, showed a want of unity. The more logical way would have been to take up the value of the soul as the leading thought. There were a good many things extraneous and not useful. For instance, “ Material glory is not subjective, but objective.” If such things be metaphysics, they are not common sense. Were I asked what class of hearers this kind of preaching is fitted for, I

would find it difficult to say who could profit by it. It was like bursting into a room with a galaxy of mirrors, in which everything was reflected and re-reflected. While admiring the poetical talent of Mr B., I would exhort him to be more prosaic, and more concentrated on the main subject of his text.'

It was a frequent remark of the Professor in his criticisms, that 'one great aim in style should be terseness, the thought shaping the form of expression.' And that 'one's manner in the pulpit should be as varied as in conversation.'

Near the close of one of the sessions, a young Christian Jew from Hamburg, who was about to leave the Hall, preached. The Professor's heart was touched. There was a tender chord within him for the children of God's ancient people. He spoke of him as a child of Abraham sitting at the feet of Jesus, and rejoicing in Him whom his fathers crucified. He commended the preacher for his large acquaintance with the New Testament, for combining his materials with great discrimination, and displaying an oriental imagination lighted up with sacred fire. He added, 'Our hearts are knit together with this son of Abraham, and our prayer is that he may be a polished shaft in the quiver of the Most High.'

It was the impression of some that Dr Harper was deficient in that freedom and geniality which was shown by some of the other Professors; and there was an occasional coldness and reserve in his manner, which appeared to justify the impression. But it was only those who half knew him, that could think thus of him. An evening spent with him by the students in his own house, sent them away with the knowledge that there was a loving and tender heart beating under

that calm exterior, and that that marble countenance on which they were looking, was no stranger to tears. One who had been a member of his class for three happy sessions, thus writes to us:—‘It was something of an event in the session, to go and spend an evening with Dr Harper at Leith Mount, as it was also to go out to Arthur Lodge, to Dr Brown. Eighteen or twenty of us, together with Dr Harper’s family, formed a large party. It was there we got near the Doctor, and saw him unbend, as his younger children leaped on his knee and stroked his face. The genial southern side of his nature expanded before us, so as to disarm us of all shyness, and invite our confidence and affection.’

The same brother warmly adds, ‘I always looked upon him as belonging to the peerage of our great men. There was a certain nobility in the movements of his mind, as there was in the fine presence which the mellowing hand of time rendered more and more striking. And withal, his spirit was touched to fine issues, had deeps of tenderness in it, and wells of pure affection that would flow forth in refreshing streams. He loved little children, and was beloved by them.’

Another former student closes an interesting letter of reminiscences, with these words: ‘I cannot but believe that Dr Harper was a great power in our Theological Hall, and that his influence for good is felt to-day, and will long be felt in many a ministry throughout the Church.’

We shall fitly wind up this chapter with some recollections of the Professor, by the Rev. Dr William Taylor of New York, one of the ablest and most distinguished of those many hundred ministers who have

not been slow to own the invaluable and undying benefits they had received from his tuition :—

‘He had too much to do, to do it all comfortably. But what he did, he did right well. His lectures were argumentative and closely packed with thought, so that, unless one could write shorthand, it was in vain to attempt to take notes of them, for while one wrote a sentence, he missed the connection and could rarely catch it again. But by close attention from beginning to end, one could carry away such an abstract in his mind as he could afterward reduce to writing. In those days, the *Vestiges of Creation* had just been recently published, and we remember that one of the raciest and most scathing of his anatomies was that of the famous “fire-mist” hypothesis. But it was in the department of homiletics that Dr Harper shone most brightly. It was the duty of each student in a certain class, to preach before him and the class, and afterward the discourse, alike in matter and manner, was criticized and characterized in the same public fashion by the Professor. This was as good as a lecture on sermon-making—nay, it was better far than any lecture, and it was through the criticisms given on such occasions by Dr Harper, that he did so much to mould the preaching of the Church to which he belonged. He insisted, we remember, on naturalness and unity in method, on simplicity in style and freedom in manner. But most of all, he was emphatic on the necessity of the presence of positive evangelical truth. The severest things he ever said, were said to those whose sermons had no Gospel in them. He was utterly impatient of mere essays, and he cared little for intellect, or illustration, or originality, if these were not made to give the Gospel prominence.

He seemed always to keep the cross in sight, and he would not let his students wander from it. And to-day, when so many have been enticed away from the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus, we know that many of those who sat at his feet, thank God for this pre-eminence which he taught them to give to the cross.

‘Dr Harper has left no works, but one reason for that is, that he was always a leader in public and ecclesiastical affairs. We remember well with what delight, on their first appearance, he read to a party of students in his house, Gladstone’s letters on the state of the Neapolitan prisons, and paused now and then to say, “Marvellous writing that for a Tory;” and when the other evening we read these letters again in Gladstone’s *Gleanings*, we could not help smiling as we asked where now Gladstone’s Toryism had gone.’¹

The depth of interest with which he regarded the Theological Hall, was wonderful. Again and again, we have heard him speak of it, in his hours of confiding friendship, with such warmth of emotion and strength of words as proved that his heart was bound up in it, as with the love of a father to his only son. Scarcely could we imagine the love of Samuel for the young prophets at Ramah, to have exceeded the passionate regard with which he ever thought and spoke of his students. He could have appropriated in reference to them, Paul’s fervent words, ‘Now, we live, if *ye* stand fast in the Lord.’

¹ *Christian at Work*. New York, 1879.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHURCH AND NATIONAL LIFE.

1850—1860.

United Presbyterian Magazine—Seasonable gift—Leith Hospital—Summary of Principles—Hymns and Hymn-books—A picture—University Tests—Retrospect—National Education—Action—Lord Young's Bill—Controversy with Lord Advocate—Two Professors.

PREVIOUS to the union of the Secession and Relief Churches, each Church had possessed its own recognised denominational magazine; but immediately after that wise ecclesiastical marriage, the two serials were judiciously merged into one, under the designation of the *United Presbyterian Magazine*. One would have thought that the professorship and the pastorate were sufficient for shoulders even of unusual breadth and strength; but men had come to believe in Dr Harper's marvellous power of work, and common consent put into his hands the editorial sceptre, associating with him the Rev. Mr Beckett, Rutherglen. It was a critical period; for the union, though cordial, needed to be consolidated and riveted, and the magazine did good and seasonable service in this direction. Though the increase and extraordinary circulation of popular religious serials had already begun to narrow the sphere of denominational organs, this magazine, in addition to a more miscellaneous circulation, found its way into the manses of the ministers and the houses

of the elders, and subjects of denominational interest were discussed and matured for Church action with a fulness and freedom that would have been impossible in the common Christian serial, or in the newspaper.

In the midst of these superabundant labours, Dr Harper's spirit had been refreshed by a most generous act. Through a liberal donation of £1000, by one who highly appreciated his gift, and had received much benefit from his ministry, and the additional contribution of £250 by a few members of his Church, a substantial and commodious house was purchased, and presented, free of burden, to the faithful pastor; and Leith Mount continued to be his family house, and to be associated in Leith with his familiar and honoured name, for the next thirty years. Many a minister who had attended on the Theological Hall during some part of that long period, can now look back upon his occasional evenings with the Professor at Leith Mount, when the thoughtful man unbent and showed the sunny side of his nature, as among the most pleasant interludes of his student life. The gift was received with a gush of surprise and gratitude, and as being unforced and unsolicited, and coming from those by whom he wished especially to be loved, it was like 'ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart.' Those wild meadow flowers which spring up of themselves, have a peculiar sweetness.

A little before this, a kindred event had opened to him another source of deep and continued satisfaction. Leith stood in clamant need of a fever hospital. The narrow and crowded streets clustering around its busy harbour, with the multitude of foreign sailors entering its seaport, tended both to produce and to spread the disease, and the many unwholesome and ill-ventilated

dwelling rendered recovery more unlikely. Dr Harper had set himself with characteristic fervour and energy to meet this want. So early as 1846, a gentleman resident in Mauchline, Ayrshire, who was a native of Leith, had, principally under the suggestion and influence of Dr Harper, made over to the municipal authorities a sum of £1000, for the purpose of establishing a fever hospital in that town, on condition that a like sum should be raised by the contributions of the public. The condition was readily accepted; and very much as the result of the pastor's eloquence and influence, this sum was secured. Out of this arose the Fever Hospital, which though small in the beginning, steadily extended, as the contributions of the public and the wants of the growing seaport increased. If any one man might claim, beyond every other, to be the founder of Leith Hospital, the United Presbyterian pastor of North Leith was that man. In 1848, he had seen united with it the Humane Society, the Leith Dispensary, and the Casualty Hospital, all under one roof and one management. When 1850 had come, the whole was in complete working order; and even to this day the Hospital, with its unpretentious exterior, is acknowledged to be the most beneficent institution in Leith.

The United Church scarcely took time to enjoy the usual rest proverbially allowed after nuptials, until it betook itself to the preparation of two documents, which have been very efficient in promoting the doctrinal intelligence, and quickening the Christian life of the denomination. The former of these was the 'Summary of Principles,' which was intended specially for the information and guidance of young persons, and others who might apply for admission to the

membership of the Church. Dr Harper was placed on the small committee appointed to prepare the draft of a 'Summary' which might be submitted to the Synod; and, alive to the importance of such a work, and of the evil that might arise from its being imperfectly executed, he gave himself to its preparation, along with his brethren, with most conscientious diligence and care. The narrative part, though clear and accurate, was meagre from the simple want of space. The doctrinal part, as we can well remember, was drawn up by Rev. Dr John Brown, and it bears, in many places, the unmistakable marks of his pen. But Dr Harper and other members made their contributions, and suggested additions, or omissions, or changes, and there are paragraphs which partake very much of the character of a 'Mosaic.' This became more the case, especially when it had passed through the terrible cross-fire of presbyterial criticism. The result, after interim reports had been made to a succession of Synods, was the issuing of a 'Summary' remarkable for its clearness and well-balanced statement of Christian doctrine, and singularly free alike from exaggeration or vagueness. It has been an incalculable aid to ministers in dealing with catechumens, and in explaining to strangers the doctrinal position of our Church; and ministers of other Churches, and even in other lands, have not been slow to express their high appreciation of its excellence.

The other work to which the United Church set itself in the early years of its history, was the selection of hymns and the preparation of a hymn-book for the use of its congregations; and the willing-hearted Professor, highly qualified by his literary tastes, threw himself into this work with elastic spring and energy.

It appeared to some, at the first blush of this proposal, that, as the Relief branch of the Synod had long possessed and used a hymn-book of its own, it would have been a graceful thing for the United Church to adopt it. But as hymn literature had been greatly increased and enriched since the Relief hymn-book had been prepared, it was deemed expedient to prepare a new one, in which, while all advantage was taken of the old selection, there should be gathered into it many of the choicest hymns of later birth. We remember the care and caution with which the Professor watched against compositions of dubious sentiment or of inferior literary quality. He was not one of those who, after reaching middle life, become stereotyped in their practice, and regard change as synonymous with corruption. He believed that, instead of injuriously innovating upon the practice of the Church, by the introduction of hymns into its worship, in addition to the undying Psalter of the Old Testament, their use would be a return to the practice of the apostolic churches, with 'their psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' He felt that when Divine Providence had placed a rich hymnology at the feet of the Church, it was its duty gratefully to take it up and use it. He failed to see the consistency of those who, while willing to join in uninspired prayers, scrupled to take part in uninspired praises. He therefore deemed it a work for the Synod, which lay straight before it, and which it could scarcely even delay without being undutiful, to prepare a hymn-book which, while no attempt should be made to force it upon any congregation, should be ready for the use of those who longed to employ it in what Baxter has styled the 'angelic service of song.'

Dr Harper even lived long enough to take an active part in the preparation of a second hymnal; and of the ardour and zest with which the old man gave himself to gather up and arrange the later flowers of our hymn literature, mingled with the recently opened treasures of the mediæval ages, some conception may be formed from the following vivid recollections of the Committee's convener :—

‘ No member attended more regularly or punctually. One morning he presented himself in a snowstorm, his clothes whitened, like those of a miller, with the snow-flakes that had drifted against him, as he walked along Queen Street. No member was more helpful than he with ready word or fitting advice, in our prolonged sederunts. His sayings were often edged with quiet humour, which tended to enliven the work. When we came to settle the question of punctuation, he was often amused at the keenness of our contentions. “ Astonishing,” he would remark, “ that there should be four motions about a comma. We might have had this matter settled an hour ago, were it not for the genial pugnacity of our brother Dr B.” The “ *Dies Iræ* ” did not seem to him suitable to our hymnal, and he suggested that, as it would only be read by ministers, it should be printed in the Latin original. The convener one day sang the air to M. Monod's hymn, “ O the bitter pain and sorrow,” and Dr Harper expressed the pleasure he felt in the choice of such music to its beautiful words. Very touching it was to hear the prayer he offered, on the day when the Prince of Wales' illness was at its height, for the Divine presence with the royal sufferer.’

Throughout the whole of his public life Dr Harper was an earnest promoter of the great educational in-

stitutions of his country, and the next two related facts which we proceed to mention exemplify his spirit, though the former antedates by some years the period of which we are now writing. We have already noticed that the agitation against University Tests in the case of lay professorships was one of those movements which, in earlier years, he had helped to originate; and when at length the agitation became general and active through the spread of Liberal sentiments among the educated classes, and was encouraged by some of the members of a Liberal Government, it found in him a ready sympathy and most energetic co-operation.

By correspondence with Mr Macaulay and other statesmen, as well as by motions and speeches in his Synod, Dr Harper had helped to make known the views of his Church, and indeed of almost every educated man in Scotland outside the pale of the National Communion. He regarded the existing system, which required a person on receiving an appointment to a chair of philosophy, science, or literature in any of our Scottish universities, to declare, by subscription, his adherence to the doctrinal standards of the Established Church of Scotland, as a narrow prescription, because it was possible surely that a man might be eminent in some of the sciences, or a great thinker in philosophy, or a ripe and richly-endowed classical scholar, although he was unable conscientiously to accept every statement in the Westminster Confession; and therefore, so far as honest men were concerned, the rule injuriously restricted the circle of choice. The practice, moreover, was invidious and irritating, when so large a proportion of Scotchmen had been led, by conscientious

preference, to worship outside the Established fellowship. Besides, it was utterly unfitted for its avowed purpose, which was to prevent men from occupying University chairs, who might use their 'place of vantage' for insinuating among their students dangerous opinions in religion, because it would be of no avail whatever in keeping out unscrupulous or dishonest candidates. Men who were not troubled with much tenderness of conscience, or who held a conveniently loose theory on the obligation of such subscriptions, would be quite ready to subscribe, with an adroit evasion like that of one professor who, when asked whether the Confession expressed what he believed, answered with a loud voice, 'Yes,'—adding immediately after, with a sneering 'aside,'—'and a great deal more.' The advocates of prerogative prophesied innumerable evil consequences from the abolition of University Tests, but in 1853 an Act of the Legislature had swept the barriers away, and thrown open the chairs to those who might be found best qualified to occupy and adorn them. And yet the heavens have not fallen, and the class-rooms have not become inundated with atheism. On the contrary, some of the ablest defences of the fundamental truths of religion have come from the chairs of our Professors of Science.

Another kindred matter of national interest and vital importance, in which Dr Harper had some years before sounded one of the first notes, was now coming to the front, in the form of a growing desire for a system of national education for Scotland, that should be adapted to the altered circumstances of the country, and commensurate with the wants of the whole people. Various influences contributed to the growth of this

feeling, which was strongest in the most intelligent sections of the community. A comparison with the common school systems of Germany and America, had produced a conviction that Scotland had ceased to stand honourably where it had once stood, in the van of well-educated countries. The increase of juvenile crime, which seemed often associated with the want of education, and in a great degree to grow out of it, appeared to call for such a thorough improvement of our whole educational arrangements as should make them more comprehensive and efficient. While the fact that so great a proportion of the children and families of Scotland belonged to one or other of its large unendowed Churches, had brought many to think that, whatever might have been expedient in an earlier period, it was no longer wise or right that the superintendence of the parochial schools should be restricted to the presbyteries of the Established Church, or indeed be monopolized by the ministers and presbyteries of any Church. Great public meetings held in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and important provincial centres, largely composed of men of recognised talent, social position and influence, not only gave expression to these feelings, but the principles and measures suggested in their resolutions did much to interest, as well as to mature and educate, the public mind, on the great subject of School Reform. Especially, a society formed in Edinburgh, under the name of 'The National Education Association of Scotland,' did much to keep alive the general interest, and to influence legislation in this behalf.

Dr Harper became actively identified, from the first, with this organized movement, and helped much by deliberation and discussion, extending through a

series of years, in determining what should be the changes and improvements sought, in any Education Bill for Scotland that might be introduced into Parliament. It was to be sought, among other things—

1. That the superintendence and management of the parochial schools should be transferred from the presbyteries of the Established Church to local boards elected by the parents and ratepayers in each parish or district, and that the burgh schools should be placed under a similar popular management.

2. That the standard of education in the public schools should be raised, and that with this view, the salary and status of the schoolmaster and teacher should be improved, and that no one be admitted to hold this office, who had not been examined and certified by a competent Board of Examiners.

3. That the supply of the means and facilities for education should be made co-extensive with the actual wants of the country, and that adequate measures should be taken to secure that no child in the land should be allowed to grow up uneducated.

4. That the expense of erecting school-houses and of supporting schools, should be supplied from three sources, namely : Government grants, local school rates, and the payment of fees by the parents.

Up to this point, the advocates of national education generally thought alike. But here, the religious difficulty sprang up. Many in the Free Church insisted that religious teaching in the schools, should be secured and provided for by parliamentary enactment. While Dr Harper, and those who held the voluntary principle along with him, contended that it was not within the province of the State to supply religious instruction out of its funds, and that this part of education when it

was desired by the parents, as it was likely to be in every case, should be given at a separate hour, and paid for by a separate fee. The presbyteries of the Established Church, while offering to make some concessions, showed great unwillingness to surrender their prerogative; and as even the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches did not quite see eye to eye on the one tender point of the regulation and payment of religious instruction, it is easy to understand how any legislation that was likely to produce harmony and co-operation afterwards, must be a matter of great difficulty. One Bill after another was introduced and discussed, and abandoned or defeated. Assemblies and Synods of the different Churches passed resolutions, deputations of the most able and astute men were sent to London to represent and explain their views to the Government and to educationists in Parliament, the enthusiastic deputies often jostling each other in the lobbies of the two Houses. And it was not until twenty years after the subject had awakened general public interest, that Scotland obtained, in Lord Young's Bill, an Education Act of 1872 in which almost every suggestion of the original movers was incorporated. But it was immeasurably better to have waited even thus long for a measure containing so many excellencies, than to have consented at an earlier period to an Act full of compromises, that would ever have been entailing new controversy and requiring new legislation. To one who, like Dr Harper, had been unweariedly and watchfully active, by correspondence, advocacy, and deliberation, in helping forward and in preparing the way for this national boon, it was a matter of high delight, ere he left the world, to see Scotland studded with its elegant school-houses,

with security given for the education of all, and to anticipate that, in the course of another generation, his native land should once more stand abreast with the most highly educated nations of the world.

We have now to refer to a course of action on the part of our Professor, which, while it was prompted by fidelity to conviction and an irrepressible sense of duty, perhaps more than any other occurrence in his public life, drew upon him a large measure of popular misrepresentation and severity of invective, and even, for a time, cooled and alienated the attachment of some of his sincere friends, though it never diminished their admiration and confidence. We allude to this, both because it formed an important event in his career as a public man, and because, by whatever mistakes in judgment some have supposed it to have been marred, it brought out, in a remarkable degree, his heroic moral courage and subordination of every consideration of personal ease, convenience, and interest to the paramount claims of conscience.

In the course of his canvass for the representation of the Leith Burghs, which he had already represented in one Parliament, Mr Moncreiff, who was then Lord Advocate of Scotland, and therefore a member of the Government, on being questioned by an elector at Newhaven, on the already burning question of the endowment of Maynooth College, was said to have replied in the following terms:—

‘He was less prepared than ever to vote against the Maynooth Endowment. He had no love for Maynooth—he thought it was a great mistake; and he had no love for the policy of endowing the Roman Catholic Church. He could indeed see no ground for endowing any religion, if the State, or at least the

majority composing it, saw no ground for believing it to be the true one. His view was that Ireland was more tranquil at present than it ever was before in his recollection. It had been a country torn with religious animosity to an extent hateful to contemplate: those feelings were now beginning to subside, and he would not be the minister that would throw again the brand of discord, or any religious enmity, into that country. He saw that there was no honesty in the agitation [referring to factious proceedings in Parliament]. He had therefore voted against Mr Spooner's motion, and he would vote against it to the end.'

The first act of Dr Harper, on reading these sentences, was to write to Mr Moncreiff, inquiring whether he admitted their substantial accuracy. As no answer came, in what Dr Harper considered a reasonable time, it was assumed that the general accuracy of the report was not denied; and, moreover, as the time fixed for an election was only a few days distant, delay would have been equivalent to unfaithfulness and inaction. His next act, accordingly, was at once to issue an address to his fellow-electors of the Leith District of Burghs, calling their attention to the passage, which, as it had not appeared in some of the most influential newspapers that were friendly to Mr Moncreiff's candidature, might be unknown to many of them. He showed them how, in his judgment, they both committed their candidate to the continued support of the Maynooth Endowment, and even seemed to foreshadow, in certain conceivable conditions, a much wider extension of the system of ecclesiastical bribery. And he was not slow to suggest, that the friends of religious liberty ought to withhold

their suffrages from any candidate who held such views. The following terse sentences express his understanding of the honourable candidate's words :—

‘ He (Mr Moncreiff) has no love for Maynooth : he only upholds it. He thinks it a great mistake, but it would be wrong to rectify it. He does not love the thing itself ; but he is so fond of the thing he does not love, that he will vote for it to the end. . . . But observe what follows. He could see no ground for endowing any religion, if the State, or at least the majority composing it, saw no ground for believing it the true one. This statement, in a negative form, implies that there is ground for endowing a religion when the State, or the majority composing it, believes it to be true. Although, then, his lordship has no love for the policy of endowing the Roman Catholic Church, his principle involves this consequence : unless he say that regard is not to be had to what a majority of the Irish people believe to be true, but only to what the Lord Advocate and his majority believe to be true.’

To judge aright of our Professor's action in this matter, it is necessary to bear in mind that many of the leaders of the great political party of which Mr Moncreiff himself was an ornament, had, during a series of years, used language which made it impossible to doubt that they were favourable to the endowment of the whole Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland, so soon as public opinion was ripe for it ; and the unscripturalness, injustice, and impolicy of ecclesiastical endowments of every kind, especially when taken in connection with the fact that antagonistic faiths were invited to share in the spoil, was with him not a mere insignificant crotchet, as it was sometimes found convenient to call it, but

a matter of deep, sacred, and cherished conviction. Nothing short of considerations of this kind could have induced him to stand aloof from those with whom, politically, he was most in sympathy, or to take a hostile position to a candidate whom he held in high esteem for his accomplishments and intellectual gifts, and as the bearer of an honoured hereditary name, to which he was adding fresh renown. But his sense of public duty over-mastered every other consideration, and made him break through his wonted silence at elections.

A storm of no common fury burst upon the brave champion of civil and religious liberty, on the issuing of his appeal. He seemed to be blamed by some for presuming to judge, and to express his judgment on the qualifications of a candidate for his suffrage,—a right which the humblest elector, and even non-elect, was free to exercise. He was accused by some of the organs of the press as seeking, by the exercise of spiritual power, to force the consciences of his people, and to interfere with their freedom of choice. Nay, so excited and exaggerated had political feeling become, that writers of inventive imagination had described him, as if they had heard him with their own ears and knew it all, as fulminating terrible anathemas against all in his flock who dared to vote except as he bade them; and coming as near as was possible for a Protestant pastor, to the bell, book, and candle cursings of the greater excommunication in the Papal Church.

Some of the members of his own congregation issued a protest against his action, to which his only answer was a fresh issue of his appeal, on the following morning. At length the election came, and Mr Mon-

creiff was returned, though the Maynooth episode had done much to strip his otherwise large majority of its fair proportions.

It is pleasant to record that the protestors in Dr Harper's own flock, had never allowed their political differences with their pastor to unsettle their confidence in the purity of his motives; nor were they slow, even at the time, to express their admiration of his fearless avowal of his convictions, when the tide of popular indignation was running strong against him. And it is only just to add, that in a correspondence which took place between the Lord Advocate and Dr Harper immediately after the election, and in which the working of chafed temper was still visible, such explanations were given as satisfied Dr Harper that Mr Moncreiff had never been friendly to the State support of the Roman Catholic clergy, but that he regarded the proposal, come from whom it might, as 'weak, impolitic, and indefensible.' The pamphlet itself is a favourable specimen of the dialectic powers and polished diction of both combatants, and makes evident their confidence in each other's honour and integrity. When, nearly twenty years afterwards, the home in Leith Mount lost its head, scarcely any letter touched the heart of the sorrowing household more tenderly than that which came from Mr Moncreiff, who had risen, in the interval, to the highest honours and dignities of the judicial bench:—

'15 GREAT STUART STREET,
EDINBURGH, *April* 1879.

'SIR,—I greatly regret that it is out of my power to be with you to-day, and to pay my tribute of respect to the memory of so distinguished and admirable a man.

‘ Pray accept my expression of deep sympathy for yourself and the members of his family. He lived a long and useful life, and has left the inheritance of a great and honoured name to his family and country.— Believe me, yours very sincerely,

‘ MONCREIFF.

‘ A. Harper, Esq.’

In October 1858, Dr Harper stood, sorrowing much, at the grave of his fellow professor, and one of his most attached friends, Dr John Brown of Broughton Place Church ; and on the Sabbath following, we were associated with him in preaching the funeral sermons, to an audience of between two and three thousand persons. Throughout his discourse, he was obliged to put a restraint on his emotions, lest, yielding to them, he should be unable to proceed. The two men had been united by many bonds. They had both been ‘ children of the manse.’ Their fathers had been fast friends, and frequent family intercourse had brought the boys together. They had both been Selkirk students ; in the greater part of their ministry, they had laboured in the immediate neighbourhood of each other, and for many years they had been associated in the same Hall as Theological Professors. Both of them were fine-looking men ; and as they grew older, their personal beauty became more marked and mellowed. The appearance of either in a large public assembly, never failed to draw forth the question from strangers, ‘ Who is that ?’ But though the two men had many qualities in common, they showed in other things a marked diversity of gifts. Dr Brown was a man of the study and the library, delighting in his books, and, to an extraordinary degree,

master of their contents. It was more likely than otherwise, that, if you entered his study, he would regale you with some weighty paragraph from Owen, or some barbed and glowing sentences from Baxter, or some stately argument from Howe. Now and then, he would refresh you with some of the Attic salt of Andrew Marvel, or some of the fine conceits of holy Herbert. And not the least valuable fruit that you carried away from the interview, would be his own masterly exegesis of some difficult text of the great Book, which he knew and loved best of all. But he was not a man who was formed for debate, or who was qualified to be a 'tongue warrior' in Church courts. He seldom spoke either in public meetings or in Church assemblies, except when conscience would not allow him to be silent, or when, in some great question, or at some great crisis, he was drawn to the front, and, like a great cannon, discharged.

Though Dr Harper was also a great lover of books, he knew them rather by assimilation of their essence, than by the remembrance of their words, and therefore seldom quoted them. He took a keen and practical interest in all public questions that affected human progress. He was quick in thought, and prompt in speech, an intellectual wrestler to whom it was one of the most difficult things possible to give a fall. His readiness of utterance was seen in the fact, that some of his most successful speeches, having risen from the immediate occasion, must have been impromptu utterances; and yet there was such a clearness of statement, subtlety of distinction, felicity of diction, and power of marshalling his argument, that it seemed as if they must have been the fruit of elaborate preparation and

fastidious correction. Having long enjoyed the friendship of both, we know how sincerely and deeply the two men loved and admired each other. When Dr Harper stood on that day at his friend's grave, he began to feel that the world was becoming strange !

CHAPTER XIV.

HOME WORK AND FOREIGN TRAVEL.

1860—1870.

Moderator—Tricentenary of Reformation — Extracts — Cardross Case—
Proposal for Hall Reform—Deputation to Holland—House of Dutch
farmer—Scene—A Colleague—Family Bereavement—A Son greatly
beloved—Travels in Italy—Ascent of Vesuvius—Removal to Lanark-
shire—Return to Leith Mount—Jubilee—Golden Wedding—Letter to
Children.

IN the Synod of May 1860, on the motion of his
appreciating neighbour, Dr Smart, Dr Harper
was elected to the Moderator's chair, the honour in
this appointment being somewhat exceptional, from
the fact that he had already been Moderator in the
Secession Synod.

At the same Synod, he bore a distinguished part
in an extraordinary meeting which was held by its ap-
pointment, and during its session, to commemorate the
Tricentenary of the Reformation. It is a notable fact
that, at the two previous centenaries, there had been no
such commemoration, at least by the Protestant Church
in Scotland. The dominance of antagonistic influences
on the arrival of its first centenary, and of spiritual
supineness on the arrival of the second, had hindered
its celebration at the one period, and led to its neglect
at the other. But when the third centenary had
revolved, there was found to be a readiness on the

part of all the great Presbyterian Churches, and, indeed, of all who were not the upholders and votaries of arbitrary principles, or of religious error and superstition, to signalize, by enthusiastic public meetings and otherwise, an event which was not too strongly represented by one of the speakers, as 'the greatest work of God since the days of the apostles.'

It had been originally intended that one great meeting should be held, which should be addressed by representatives carefully selected from all the Presbyterian communities. But this purpose failed, and it was, perhaps, better that it should have failed. The likelihood was great that such a joint-meeting would have unduly restrained freedom of speech, and even led to indiscriminating and unprofitable hero-worship; for much of the benefit to be derived from such a commemoration was, not only to celebrate with devoutly grateful recollection the stupendous and beneficent work accomplished by those mighty men to whose hands there had been committed the resurrection-trumpet by which to arouse slumbering nations, and to glorify God in them and their work, but also, with clear-sighted discrimination, to point out the defects of the Reformation, and to lay a firm hand on the evils that remained to be cast out. The former of these services was done with eminent ability and with unstinted praise by the various speakers, who had dutifully put forth their whole strength; but the latter was also done with respectful and energetic frankness, on those matters on which, it was believed, that even the Reformers had 'not yet attained,' especially with respect to their views on the mutual relations between the magistrate and the Church, and the hazy indistinctness which characterized the teachings of nearly

all of them, in reference to the doctrine of the two sacraments. Dr Harper spoke on the doctrinal aspect of the Scottish Reformation, particularly measuring the work of our Scottish Reformers over against the enormous difficulties with which their position brought them to contend. And the following passages will show that he did not speak on the occasion with bated breath :—

The Influence of the Reformation.

‘ To appreciate the transition which our Scottish Reformers made into marvellous light, we must remember the darkness out of which they emerged. The most celebrated scholastic divine of which Scotland at that time could boast, was John Major, under whom many of the youths of Scotland received their training in theology. In ecclesiastical politics he was of the Gallican school ; but as to reform in matters of doctrine, we may form an idea of Major’s spirit from the dedication of his work on the Gospels. It was published a year after the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton, and is inscribed to Archbishop James Beaton, under whose tender mercies the youthful martyr perished in the flames. He congratulates the Archbishop on the final destruction—*æternum exterminium*—of heresy from the land, and puns on his name as *Jacobus*, the supplanter, who had pulled up the tares, and *Betonia*, the medicine plant, who had healed the venomous bite of the Lutheran heresy. Little did he dream that, among his pupils, the names of John Knox and George Buchanan would soon belie his bloody and vainglorious boast. But the Reformers had an arduous work to accomplish. Everywhere

there met them a gigantic system of Church power and corruption. The country swarmed with priests and religious orders of every grade, from the pampered primate to the begging friar, forming a corporation that grasped at the wealth of the kingdom, arrogated to themselves absolute control over religious opinion, imprisoned and burned all in their power whom they suspected of heretical pravity, and who, while riveting the yoke of bondage on the bodies and souls of men, scandalized public decency by the worldly pomp and voluptuous lives of the higher clergy, by the jolly good cheer of the monastic kitchen, and the unutterable whoredoms that filled the land, from the episcopal palace to the convent and the cloister. With such an ostentatious spectacle of spiritual wickedness in high places,—in all ecclesiastical places, indeed, whether high or low,—it is just what we might expect, that the assault on the doctrines of Romanism would be pioneered by an exposure of practical abuses, and that the homely raillery of a Sir David Lindsay, and the classical satire of a George Buchanan, would precede and accompany Knox and the preachers, in exposing the anti-scriptural dogmas of the Popish Church. Such a course was in accordance with the state of the times, and with a wise practical policy. For it is by felt grievances that the bulk of men are roused to inquire into the merits of a system. It was needful to shake the chain in the bondsman's face, that he might feel how the iron had entered into his soul. Looking, then, at the subject from the Reformer's point of view, we might expect the doctrinal controversy to be mixed up with vehement declamations against the extortions and other outrages of the Romish priesthood; and accordingly, in the oral discussions that took place, and

in such popular literature as the age afforded, the vices of the clergy were not spared. But when we examine the Confession of 1560, we find it more free from invective, and less polemical in its form and spirit than the position of its framers might have led us to anticipate. This suggests to the reader that that performance was the work of men who loved to look at the truth more as a matter of faith, than a matter of controversy.'

Opinions on the Rule of Faith.

' On the doctrine of the Trinity, the Reformers had no controversy with the teaching of Rome, but on every other material point, they were more or less antagonistic. And, first, as to their opinions on the rule of faith. The intrinsic authority and all-sufficiency of Scripture are expressly asserted in the Confession; and if the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture is not claimed in as many words, it is implied in the denial of any infallible human interpreter. With all its arrogance, Romanism did not disavow the supreme authority of the Word of God. But what is the Word of God? Not the paper or print, but the sense or meaning. And who shall tell the meaning? Who but the privileged body of teachers to whom, as successors of the apostles, the Word was committed; who, as faithful custodiers, authenticate it as Holy Scripture; and who, having received the Spirit according to Christ's promise, give the true sense under His infallible direction, that the sacred oracles may suffer no detriment through the ignorance or perverseness of men. All this sophistry and pretension the Confession of 1560 disposes of, in the following words:—
" And as we believe and confess the Scripture of God

sufficient to instruct and make the man of God perfect, so do we affirm and avow the authority of the same to be of God, and neither to depend on men nor angels. We affirm, therefore, such as allege the Scriptures to have no authority but that which is received from the Church, to be blasphemous against God and injurious to the true Church, which always heareth and obeyeth the voice of her own spouse and pastor, but taketh not upon her to be mistress over the same" (Art. xix.). It is difficult to overrate the importance of these few words. They were the life of the Reformation movement. They aimed a blow at the very heart of the Man of Sin. They were a jubilee note to the mind of broad Scotland, to awake and be befooled no longer. They were a summons to the arch-impostor to take his place at the bar of reason and of God. Let but the protest for the authority and sufficiency of Holy Scripture, and freedom from human control in the use of it, go forth among the nations; let it be heard and understood among the nations; let it be heard and understood in priest-ridden Spain, hood-winked Ireland, down-trodden Italy; let it be heard and understood by the Puseyite in his mediæval dreams, and by womanish perverts of either sex. How speedily, then, should we see pretensions to infallibility, to dominion over men's faith, with all the ghostly terrors of excommunication and the pains of purgatory, break up and dissolve even as the wand of the wizard breaks in the grasp of common sense, and as spectres vanish at the dawn of day.'

How the Truth was rescued, and how it is to be preserved.

'When I look back on the struggles of our ancestors

for light and liberty, it appears to me to have been not without design, but advisedly and of purpose, that the framers of the proposition on which I have been called to address you, characterize the Reformation in doctrine as a "rescue." Yes, the truth of God had fallen into unfaithful hands,—hands cruel and unjust. The Word of God was held in durance, waiting for the hour when it should have free course and be glorified. Every form of wrong and outrage which the necessity of a rescue implies, had been perpetrated against the Word by those who professed to have it in their holy keeping. Its truths were either buried under a mass of human inventions, or distorted by quibbling ingenuity from the simplicity that is in Christ, or wrested from their holy use and turned to licentiousness; hardly one of them was seen in its native purity and undimmed lustre. And by what means was this rescue achieved? By the weapons that are spiritual and mighty through God. The Reformers rescued the truths of salvation, by rescuing the Bible from the grasp of spiritual despotism. The truths of salvation are rescued wherever the Bible is free. It is its own witness. In every utterance, it speaks for itself. This, its sufficiency, was as fully proclaimed by our Scottish forefathers, as if Chillingworth himself had held the pen. And what was achieved in the way of rescue, it becomes us to keep with care. I do not share in the fears which some express of a considerable relapse into the errors of Romanism. I should choose to be neither an alarmist nor a Laodicean. Our proper course lies between the opposite extremes of presumptuous security and groundless panic,—persuaded that our safety consists in our preparedness. I suspect that

those are not the best prepared to meet the sophistries of Rome, who speak most lightly of the danger. I should not care to see one of our over-confident Protestants encountering an educated Romanist on the primacy of Peter, or the unity of the Church, or the use of tradition, or any of the leading points. What if we should find the Protestant driven to the forlorn logic of the Popish lords? "We will believe as our forefathers believed." It must be gratifying to our Church to know, that this subject receives due attention in our Divinity Hall,—Dr M'Michael devoting a section of his valuable course to the history of the Popish controversy. For others, as well as for ourselves, we should stand prepared. Is it not the vocation of this Protestant country to be a witness to the nations on behalf of evangelical truth, and to give an example of the close affinity of genuine Protestantism with the rights of conscience and the interests of civil as well as religious liberty? This is the light in which our position is regarded by our Protestant brethren on the Continent, who are thinly scattered abroad. Nothing would dishearten them more than to see the friends of truth in this country lowering their protest against the errors and usurpations of Rome. We can easily understand how it should be so. Suppose for a moment there were a threat to put us in their place. Were a fellow-mortal, whether with shaven head or triple crown, to accost any of you thus: "Rash and misguided soul, you who in religious matters presume to judge for yourself, surrender to me this idol of yours that you call liberty of conscience and free inquiry. Believe as I bid you: refuse on pain of a curse." Methinks I see how your free and stout Protestant hearts would swell with an

almost frenzied indignation at this, as the most daring and insulting, the hugest and the wickedest attempt to put fetters on the human mind. Thanks be to God, these fetters were broken in 1560. Thanks be to God, we have here assembled in 1860, to renew our Covenant, and to register our vow, that as we are Protestant in name, so we shall be Protestant in spirit, and shall contend earnestly and to the end, for the "faith once delivered to the saints."

The memorable Cardross case had already begun to disturb and agitate the Free Church. Dr Harper naturally sympathized with a sister Church which he so much loved, when he saw it unwillingly brought into collision once more with the Civil Courts. But as he studied the case, he became convinced that it raised questions regarding the rights and prerogatives in which all unendowed Churches had a common interest, and that the contest was, in some degree, a fighting of the battle of the Disruption over again. And it was not in his nature to stand a cold though approving onlooker while such a battle was waging. At an early period in the conflict we find him taking part with the Free Church champions in public meetings, whose design was to instruct public opinion and vindicate the action of their Presbyteries and Assemblies.

In the Synod of 1862, he took part in introducing a proposal, the aim of which was to effect important changes in the Theological Hall of his Church, particularly in the lengthening of its annual sessions, and increasing the number of its Theological Chairs. It was in itself a wise proposal, the fruit of much observation, and experience of the imperfection of the existing system; but it was premature, as coming

upon an unprepared Synod. A committee was appointed to consider the whole matter, but when its report was presented in the following year, the Synod was found to be so divided in opinion as to render present action inadvisable. And the negotiations for union with other Churches, which were soon after initiated, promised, if successful, to solve the question in another way. But the proposal and discussion did good, by turning the thoughts of the Synod and the Church to the subject, and ten years afterwards it issued in a manner which more than satisfied all the Professor's wishes.

In the autumn of 1862 the routine of his active busy life was pleasantly broken, by his visit as a deputy from his Synod to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of the Netherlands, his fellow-deputies being Dr William Peddie and Mr John Dick Peddie, the present Member of Parliament for the Kilmarnock Burghs. This Church had seceded from the National Reformed Church of Holland in 1834, very much on the same grounds on which the fathers of the Secession had left the Established Church of Scotland a century before,—the tolerance of error without adequate censure, and the refusal of the prevailing party to be reclaimed. And so soon as this fact became known, it naturally awakened strong interest and sympathy in the elder Scottish sister, and had previously led to the sending of deputations for the purpose of congratulation, encouragement, and the interchange of brotherly greetings.

It was impossible for a nature like Dr Harper's not to seize the opportunity which his presence in Holland gave him, of paying at least a rapid visit to its scenes of special historic interest. And he did this with all

the sympathy of a well-stored mind that had 'eyes to see,' and, because everything was new to him, with all the zest of youth. He spent a day in Leyden for the purpose of seeing its University, venerable with the memories of Erasmus, Grotius, and other mighty names clinging to it, and was fortunate to witness the celebration, with great pomp and spirit, by the professors, students, and the whole body of the well-to-do citizens, of the founding of this ancient seat of learning. All the principal scenes and objects associated with the name of William of Orange, to whom England owes more even than Holland, were sought out and visited; while he yielded readily to the fascination of the city of Dort, as the place where that great historic Synod, known by distinction as the Synod of Dort, had met so many ages before; whose representatives from many lands, such as Bishop Hall and others, gave it much of the character of an Œcumenical Council; and whose articles, the result of the deliberations and debates of months, have exercised such a wide and powerful influence on theological thought, not only in the Netherlands, but over the whole of Protestant Christendom.

The place of meeting for the Synod of the Dutch Seceders was across the Zuyder Zee, at Hoogeveen, in a remote moorland district; for this Synod finds it expedient, both for explaining its principles and extending its influence, to change its ecclesiastical centre every year. We give the account of the meeting in a narrative with which Dr Peddie has kindly furnished us, only affixing the statement that, having visited the Synod in 1879, we found that its congregations had increased to nearly 400, and that some of them were very large:—

‘ I must not enlarge upon what passed at our meeting with that reverend court, or on the warmth of brotherly affection which they showed to friends from a foreign country, with whom they sympathized so keenly in their love for the great doctrines of evangelical piety and in the spirit of religious freedom. But I may state that the deputies addressed them in their order, and that Dr Harper never spoke with more animation and power, succeeding completely in arresting the attention and exciting the interest of his audience, notwithstanding the disadvantage of addressing them through an interpreter. The Synod was composed of from forty to fifty ministers and elders, seated at a long table in the midst of a spacious church. It was very odd for us to observe that the Dutch devotion to the practice of smoking was not suspended by the deliberations of the Synod. Pipes and tobacco were in general requisition, and freely used during the whole sederunt, along with the occasional refreshment of cups of coffee. But what struck us most was the extreme heartiness of the speeches, prayers, and singing of these worthy brethren. No one could doubt that they were in earnest in the cause which they had embraced, and for which, as we learned from their own lips, many of them had already suffered, at least from the contempt and mean persecution of the irreligious classes of their countrymen. Our hearts were strongly drawn out to these honest Seceders, and we left them with ardent wishes for the continued prosperity of their rapidly increasing churches. Let me not omit to say that, during our stay at Hooegeveen, we were lodged under the roof of a farmer, where we enjoyed an edifying spectacle of primitive Dutch piety. There was family

worship duly observed morning and evening ; but, in addition, at noon, when the family assembled for dinner, along with the grace before meat and the grace after meat, both of which exercises were not so short as some prayers, the "big ha' Bible," was reverently opened, and a chapter read, before the guests rose and dispersed to their employments. We learned, from the specimen afforded in this rustic household, of what stuff the men were made who had erected the standard of Secession, when the growth of Rationalism in the Established Church rendered continuance in it no longer endurable ; and we were taught the secret of the rapid expansion of the seceding body in all parts of the land. Like our own beloved Church, it has proved, and is proving, an unspeakable blessing to the Fatherland.'

Not long after his return from Holland, Dr Harper, after making known his intention to his people, asked his Presbytery to relieve him from his more active pastoral duties. Nature had not yet 'hung out signals of distress' in any signs of decaying strength, for his well-knit frame appeared to retain all its elasticity and vigour, and his mental eye-sight to be undimmed ; but his professorial duties remained, and now that he had done the work of a diligent minister of Christ, single-handed, for forty-three years, he felt that the time had come when he must exercise a prudent economy of strength, and no longer keep his energies at their full strain. It was not, however, until after some perplexing disappointments that, in October 1864, the Rev. Robert Lyon, a young licentiate of his Church, was associated with him as his colleague, in which relation he continued for the next eleven years with much acceptance to the congrega-

tion, at the end of which period he was transferred to the pastorate of the large North Congregation of Perth.

In the interval of which we are now writing, a great and almost crushing sorrow had fallen upon Dr Harper, in the death of John Dick Harper, his seventh son, at the early age of twenty-three. He had been a youth of rare gifts rarely refined, and early elevated and sanctified by religion. During his whole life, he had never needed to be reprov'd for an act of disobedience, or for anything, in word or deed, that was morally wrong. While he was quite young, he had returned from a residence in Rothesay with awakened anxieties about salvation, which had been produced by intercourse with a pious minister of the Church of Scotland. These he at once disclosed to his father, who so directed him in regard to the way of acceptance with God, that he found peace in believing, which, from that time onward, was scarcely ever shaded or disturbed. Various consequences followed from this,—especially a remarkable sensitiveness of conscience, a singular measure of religious decision, a courage, in spite of much natural bashfulness, to speak on religious subjects, a deep concern for the highest good of his brothers and sisters, and a resolution to study for the Christian ministry.

It is not difficult to understand how all this natural amiableness, and religious decision and zeal, as well as the mutual confidences between them on the most sacred of all subjects, should have strangely endeared him to his father, and made his love far exceed even the average affection of a father to his son. In his boyhood, John had been remarkable for his agility in school sports, and his fine flow of animal spirits; but as he advanced to early manhood, his wan cheeks and

feeble step revealed the working of some inward mischief, as if his active spirit had 'o'er-informed its earthly tenement.' All through the later years of his student-life, there were alternations between seasons of weakness and periods of apparently begun recovery; but in the beginning of February 1863, the wearied struggler sunk calmly into what seemed to onlookers for a time a natural sleep, but from which he was only to awake in heaven. In his conversations with his friends, he had been wont to express a hope that he would live; but documents, and especially poetical pieces like the following, found in his repositories after his departure, made it evident that he had anticipated the probability of a different issue, and that he did not fear it:—

'Let me go, let me go! for the purple dawning
Is mantling the dull dark tomb of time,
And there stealeth the ray of a blissful morning,
That blushes and burns in a deathless clime.

'I have done with sin, I have done with sorrow,
I fly to the spotless realms of light,
Where the day that is breaking shall have no to-morrow,
And the sun that is rising shall have no night.'¹

It was the heaviest bereavement that ever had fallen on the sorrowing father, and it left indelible marks upon his spirit. Though he mourned the death of a saintly son, and not of a profligate, he could often have said, 'Would God I had died for thee!' Many a time afterwards, in the midnight hours, Mrs Harper would find him agitated by a grief that shook his whole frame, and when asked for the cause of his distress, his answer ever was, 'My dear John! my dear John!'

¹ From 'In Memoriam,' by Rev. James Jeffrey, of Erskine Church, Glasgow.

With his nervous system shaken by his deep sorrow at the death of his son 'greatly beloved,' and also by the anxieties which are usually associated with the choice of a colleague in the ministry, Dr Harper began to long much for a change of scene and a season of retirement. But, with a true pastor's heart, he refused to entertain the thought of either, until he had not only obtained a colleague, but had seen the whole organisation of his church once more in full and harmonious action. At length the opportunity of absence arrived, and the greatly desired change of scene came with it, in a visit to Italy, which the kindness and companionship of a friend enabled him to make in the spring of 1866.

No land in Europe had more attractions for him, whether because of the matchless beauty of many of its scenes, its æsthetic riches, or its classic and Christian associations. Going with eyes that had a soul behind them, and with cultivated tastes that could appreciate those treasures of the mind and heart, he combined the ripe knowledge of an old man with much of the unquenched enthusiasm of youth. We remember how a friend who chanced to travel with him a part of the way, used to describe him, on descending from the Mount Cenis pass, as first looking westward along the noble range of the Cottian Alps, where Monte Viso rose like a monarch enthroned among his peers, and then looking eastward upon the lovely plains of Lombardy, and exclaiming with irrepressible rapture, after he had seemed to assure himself that it was not all a dream—'Italia! Italia!' How he delighted himself in Florence, lingering in its picture galleries with their exhaustless wealth of art, standing on one of its bridges, and looking out on the vine-clad Apennines,—

ascending to Fiesole, and gazing down upon the superb city in which art and nature, earth and sky, unite to produce a scene which lives in the memory for ever. There was a kind of awe over his spirit as he entered Rome, and thought how the history of 4000 years lingered amid its ruins, and how much, next perhaps to Jerusalem, that one spot had influenced the life of the world. Kings, consuls, and emperors, great orators, military leaders, historians and poets, Christian apostles and Christian martyrs, popes, good, bad, and indifferent, seemed to move before him in endless procession. It must be confessed that he soon became weary of ancient churches, with damp walls and dubious traditions; but how deep and insatiable was the interest with which he visited every place that was associated with the name of Paul and the lives of the early Christians, Cæsar's palace, where Nero's judgment-hall can still be verified, and where the apostle had more than once stood on his trial, and his own hired house in which he dwelt two whole years, preaching the kingdom of God, the Mamertine prison from which he was led forth to martyrdom, the Coliseum, the arch of Titus, the arch of Constantine, and the Catacombs.

And Naples, too, had its own special charms, with its sparkling bay, its lovely islands, and its picturesque villages lining its shores, which seemed, at a distance, more like the creation of a poet's dream than the work of man. And those were memorable days in which almost every half-hour's travel brought him into contact with some new object of thrilling interest,—the baths and the amphitheatre of Nero, the landing-place of Paul at Pozzuoli, Cicero's villa, and Virgil's tomb, Pompeii, whose resurrection after eighteen centuries has given so strange a revelation of ancient Roman life,

in its luxuries, and tastes, and refinements, and, alas ! also in its vices ; and Vesuvius, with its grassy vestment covering its eternal fires. We introduce his account of his adventurous and somewhat perilous ascent of Vesuvius, in a letter to a daughter :—

‘ From Naples there is first a ride for seven or eight miles, by rail or carriage. We went by a cabriolet with two horses,—another traveller having joined us in the trip. At a town called Resina, we mount on horse-back or donkey-back, and ride through plantations of vine and fig-trees towards the foot of the mountain. The way soon passes from vineyards into the region of lava. On the one hand is a lofty mountain ridge, supposed by some to be the original outer side of the volcano. Between that ridge and Vesuvius, the path winds through fields of lava, the effects of successive eruptions. The lava presents a variety of peculiar appearances,—sometimes twisted into curious convolutions like a coil of cable rope, at other times spread out in broad pieces, or moulded into huge blocks like the boulders you have seen in the Arran glens, or scattered in smaller pieces called *scoriae*, the cinders of volcanic eruption. On reaching the steep ascent, the guides assist the travellers, either pulling them with straps, or carrying them in a rude sort of palanquin. The latter conveyance is chiefly for ladies, but Mr ——— took one, and insisted I should take another, which I was thankful to have done, as it reserved my strength for something still more arduous. On arriving at the summit, we found ourselves a little way from the brim of the crater. This is an immense cavity near a thousand yards in circumference, and a hundred deep, surrounded by huge rocks of lava, some of them of sulphur. In the centre is the cone, a comparatively

small rounded knoll, resembling a hay-rick. This is the vent of the volcano, from which are discharged the smoke and lava when it is in a state of activity. The bottom of the crater is indurated lava, forming a sort of flooring over the subterraneous fires. Vapour continually issues through the crevices, showing what is going on beneath. Several parties met at the summit. It was proposed to descend the crater. A few made the venture—myself among others. Two guides took hold of me. We went down by an open space between the rocks. After a few cautious steps, we all three lost our footing, and went reeling down a little way, but quickly recovered ourselves, and in a few minutes I found myself standing at the very bottom of the crater. We then walked over the bed of lava to the cone, clambered up the rocks on one side of it, looked over the edge, and then I saw a sight I shall never forget—the lava boiling in the furnace. So near were we, that my guide, as I stood at his side, took my stick and stirred the molten mass. He took portions out on the point to stick into it coins which I gave him, intending to bring the coins and their volcanic setting home as souvenirs for you and the others, but just as he had got the second done, a rush of vapour came up with a hissing noise. The guides cried to us to make our escape. No second warning was needed. I fled a few yards, and sat down on a rock at the bidding of my guide, and presently two men walked me across the lava bed, and we made our exit from the horrible pit, in the opposite direction to that by which we entered. The ascent was most difficult. At times we were completely enveloped in vapour, and when we reached the summit, I was so exhausted by the climbing and the hot steam, that I

had to stand a few seconds before I could breathe freely enough to say a word. The way we came out was more steep, and I daresay three or four times higher, than the way we went down. When I look back on the scene, I am surprised at the perfect coolness with which I went through it all. I had no feeling of trepidation, so absorbing was the strangely novel and unimagined spectacle.' He adds this characteristic sentence, 'I hope all, by God's blessing, are well. How great the privilege to have for our portion the favour of Him at whose presence the hills are molten like wax!' . . .

At Whitsunday 1866, a month after his return from Italy, Dr Harper removed, for a time, with his family to Millburn House, in the parish of Dalsersf, Lanarkshire, not far from the fondly remembered scenes of his childhood and youth. The house was situated on an elevated point above the vale of the Clyde, and commanded beautiful views of the noble river, and the richly adorned and wooded region through which it flowed in its majesty and might. To his mind, it added another feature of attraction to the spot, that close to the river, on its opposite bank, and in full view from Millburn, stood Garion Tower, which had been the residence of Leighton when Archbishop of Glasgow, and where his ancestor, Sir John Harper, had often resided. This quiet, beautiful retreat seemed to bring a new freshness to his spirit, and to add a new lease to his life. But after two and a half years, beginning to find its distance inconvenient for attendance on public engagements which are afterwards to be noticed, he removed to Eskbank, near Dalkeith, where he remained until May 1871, when he returned to his old home in Leith Mount, to the great delight

of his people. During his absence of five years, while released from all active duty as a minister, he had never taken full advantage of the arrangement, but had occupied the pulpit on an average once every month, and had indulged himself largely in pastoral visits, especially to the afflicted and the poor; and in 1872, as soon as he was again settled in Leith Mount, though he was now beyond his 70th year, he gave full scope, once more, to his strong ministerial instincts, by visiting the entire membership of his church in the course of a single year, shunning neither dingy alley, nor dark area, nor precipitous stair, in his circuit.

But two years before his return to his old home at Leith Mount, an interesting event had taken place in his history. On the evening of 19th May 1869, his congregation had met to celebrate with thanksgivings to God, and congratulations and seemly gifts to himself, the completion of his 50th year as their pastor, and of his 25th year as a Professor of Theology. Ministers were present in great numbers, especially from the United Presbyterian and the Free Churches. Addresses flowed upon him from various public bodies, no one more admiring and appreciative than that from his own Presbytery. A silver salver, with a bank cheque for £1200, was presented to him, the united gift of his congregation, of ministers and laymen in other Churches, and not least, from merchants in Leith, who, knowing the greatness of his services to the general community, knew how to value him. At the same time an elegant timepiece was presented to Mrs Harper. It was noticed, in the course of the evening, that the congregation which had grown from a feeble infancy to a large and powerful membership, still, after the lapse of half a century, retained its full numerical

strength ; and that more than 800 students had passed under his training, many of whom, carrying with them the good influences which they received in the Hall, were now helping to extend the kingdom of God at home, in the mission fields, and in the colonies. His was a deep but chastened joy. It was impossible not to be powerfully moved with gratitude to heavenly grace, as he stood there with the humble consciousness of an untainted reputation and an honoured name, and as he saw the radiant countenances of two generations looking up to him with affectionate reverence. And yet it was equally impossible to overlook the fact which was written on the very face of the jubilee, that the 'day of his life must now be far spent.' We see the thought passing before his spirit in those words of his address, 'It is now for me to say, not only, The fathers, where are they? but contemporaries, where are *they*? Of my immediate clerical contemporaries, I know of only two who are alive.' He was like one standing in the sunlight, but who, looking westward, sees the sun descending near the horizon, and appearing already to touch the ocean-wave. He knows that night is near. But his brief night was to be succeeded by an eternal day.

Another jubilee came in November of the following year, when Dr and Mrs Harper entered on the 50th anniversary of their marriage, and their 'golden wedding' was celebrated. They saw several of their daughters living in happy marriage, and surrounded by their children, and their five sons all honourably settled in life, one of whom is a physician in Windsor, another an advocate at the Scottish bar, two hold influential positions in connection with the newspaper press in London, and one is in a mercantile house in

Liverpool. Then did the thirteen children arise with one consent and ‘bless their parents in the name of the Lord.’ Beautiful, rich, and useful gifts were not wanting to make the day memorable. And a letter of congratulation, full of reverence and pulsing with filial love, subscribed by all the children, accompanied and interpreted the gifts. The answer of the parents, which we subjoin, showed how deeply their hearts had been moved :—

‘LEITH MOUNT, *Nov.* 24, 1871.

‘OUR DEAR CHILDREN,—Your affectionate address and accompanying most beautiful, rich, and useful gifts, have deeply touched and moved us. We needed no such expression of your feelings to assure us of the warm place which we hold in your hearts. The many proofs we have had of your love and dutifulness, have all along made us thankful to God for our children, and strengthened our anxious desires to do all in our power for their good.

‘With the weighty charge of so many precious souls, so dear to us in all that concerns their welfare for time and for eternity, we have at times “great heaviness,” if not “continual sorrow, in our heart,” from a sense of having come short of what we might have done to make our children happy, by being more heedful to avoid mistakes in your upbringing, and to embrace means and opportunities to prosper your way, and to commend by example what we sought to inculcate.

‘May the God of all grace pardon our failures and shortcomings, and shed forth upon you, our dear children, the richest fruits of His love. Our hearts’ desire and daily prayer to God is, that our children, our

sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and our children's children, may all pass by the new birth into the kingdom of grace, and present, with other dear ones who have gone before, an unbroken circle before the throne of God and the Lamb, on that day "when the Lord of hosts maketh up His jewels."

'Were these our parting words, we would sum up all with this: "Finally, dear children, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss. Your parents salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor. xiii, 11. etc.)—Your affectionate parents,

'JAMES HARPER,

'BARBARA HARPER.'

CHAPTER XV.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR UNION.

1862-1873.

Sir George Sinclair—Important Declaration by Elders and Laymen—Influences tending to Union—Overtures in United Presbyterian Synod—Union Committee appointed—Similar Committees in Free Assembly, Reformed, and English Presbyterian Synods—Interest widens and deepens—First Meeting of Joint-Committee—Departed Worthies—What, and how great are the Points of Difference?—Can there be Union?—Hopeful Progress—Difficulties arise in Free Church—Agitation—Negotiations suspended—Motion and Speech of Dr Harper in Synod of 1873—Last Meeting of Joint-Committee—the Scene—Negotiations not Fruitless—Possible Future.

THE great movement for incorporating union between the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church of Scotland, stretched over the period of which we have now been writing, and even some years beyond it. The fact that Dr Harper was the acknowledged and chosen leader of this movement in his own Church, its own magnitude and importance, as well as the number of years during which active negotiations with a view to its consummation extended, have led us to reserve the subject for a brief separate notice.

So early as 1856, the venerable Sir George Sinclair of Thurso, in an exceedingly clever pamphlet, abounding in wisdom and sparkling with wit, as well as glowing with an enlightened charity, had called public attention to the subject, and unfurled the Union flag.

Besides this, the personal influence and unwearied correspondence of the Baronet, brought a considerable number of the leading ministers in the different Churches, from time to time, into friendly intercourse, and to a free comparison of views. This early action soon began to bear fruit. In the following year, 1857, a declaration, signed by 1671 of the principal elders and laymen of the two large unendowed Presbyterian Churches, was issued, in which the whole subject, in its main features, was pressed upon the attention of all Scotland, and the question freely discussed, Whether it was right and expedient for such Churches to remain apart, when they had no sufficient reason to show for their not being united? The document was written with mingled moderation and earnestness, and at once raised the subject of incorporating union into a great public question. The spirit that had been generated or strengthened by the Evangelical Alliance, continued to operate in a manner favourable to this action. And the success which had followed negotiations for union among the various Presbyterian Churches of the colonies, led many to ask, Whether the same thing ought not to be attempted on the same grounds, and to issue in similar results, in the Fatherland? Then, as the ministers and people of the different Churches mingled more freely and frequently with each other, both in social intercourse and in religious services, they became increasingly aware of their harmony of conviction on everything that was vital, and the question irresistibly pressed itself on their minds, Whether anything remained of such magnitude and practical difficulty as to justify their keeping ecclesiastically apart? And if the union was practicable, how many

reasons there were for earnestly 'striving together' after its consummation. It would remove out of the way of men of the world, the stumbling-block which severance and seeming opposition ever produce. It would not only double the strength of the united body, but multiply it. It would provide against many of the evils arising from over-churching towns and rural districts for the purpose of maintaining denominational position; and in this way it would remove one of the strongest and most common temptations to laxity in church discipline, and unholy rivalry and jealousy. It would promote economy in every department of the Church's administration. It would show before all Christendom, how a free and unendowed Church could not only effectively occupy every nook of Scotland with a vigorous evangelism, but overflow with swelling tide into the regions beyond. It would make the arm of the united Church free and strong, for helping the weak Protestant communities in foreign countries, and for paying due regard to its great commission, in hastening on the moral conquest of the world.

Considerations like these, working as silent leaven, carried conviction and awakened interest in the minds of multitudes. It was not, however, until 1863, that ecclesiastical action was taken in the matter. Overtures from presbyteries and sessions, in favour of union with the Free Church and other unendowed Presbyterian bodies, were introduced into the United Presbyterian Synod at its annual meeting in May of that year, and were discussed, in two sederunts, with a gravity, cordiality, and eloquence which showed how great was the sense of its importance, and how deep and universal was the interest it had awakened. The

result was the appointment of an unusually large and influential Committee to meet with any similar Committee that might be appointed by the Free Church, or by any other of the Churches named in the overtures, to confer together as to the relative positions of the Churches, more especially with the view of inquiring what steps might be taken for the promotion, if not for the accomplishment, of union. Of this important Committee, Dr Harper was unanimously appointed convener. At the meeting of the General Assembly of the Free Church on a later day in the same month, a similar Committee was nominated, with the same general consent and hopefulness, with Dr Buchanan, of Glasgow, as convener. Committees from the Reformed Presbyterian and the English Presbyterian Synods, soon after swelled the ranks of the negotiating Churches. And thus was launched that great question of incorporating union among all the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and England, outside the Established pale, which, for many years to come, was to occupy a place of foremost prominence and of engrossing interest, not only in the minds of the Scottish people, but in Presbyterian and other communities, in other lands. Even statesmen and politicians soon began to regard the movement with something more than curiosity, and to ask 'whereunto all this would grow.'

Dr Harper's office as convener of the United Presbyterian section of the Joint-Committee, necessarily entailed upon him a great amount of labour, which required mental gifts of no common order, as well as much time, especially in the case of one who would do nothing by halves. During several years, he attended annually twelve meetings of the Special and Joint-

Committees, and it was not unusual to prolong these over a succession of days. It was indispensable that he should have at command full information on questions that might be asked of him respecting the history and constitution of his Church. Documents of a very elaborate and complicated kind, rendering necessary a great deal of previous research, needed to be prepared by him; not to speak of the annual report of the proceedings of the Joint-Committee which it was his special duty to present, and the succession of masterly speeches by which he explained and defended them, and carried from year to year the convictions and the confidence of his Synod. But though advanced in life,—for he was already on the verge of seventy years,—the cause girded him with strength, and seemed to lighten up his old age with all the fire of his youth; for to him the union which he sought, meant strength, and life, and beauty to the Church of God, in Scotland, and blessing to those that were afar off, as well as those that were nigh.

The first meeting of the Joint-Committee, which took place soon after, was one of mingled solemnity, hope, and joy. It met in the Hall of the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh, on the Mound, which was to become hallowed as the scene of similar gatherings in the following years. A large proportion of the 'flower and chivalry' of the several negotiating Churches was present. Among the older men, not a few of those who had wrestled with each other in the controversies of earlier times, now exchanged hearty greetings with mutual esteem, rejoicing that they were now summoned to confer about union and peace. How many of those who were prominent figures in that Christian conclave, and more than one of whom has

left behind him a historic name, have already passed away! Of the Free Church, Dr Candlish, equally strong in intellect and in will, subtle, ingenious, and refined, great in the pulpit, great on the platform and in the ecclesiastical assembly, great in his closet when wrestling with the Unseen; Dr Buchanan, formed to be an ecclesiastical leader and organizer, looking at matters on all sides, with much of a statesman's comprehensiveness and breadth of view, marshalling his arguments with unfailing skill, knowing not only what to say, but how best to say it; and when exposed to irritating circumstances and baited by unreasonable men, only seeming to become the more tranquil and self-possessed; and Dr Guthrie, genial and glowing with affection, yet penetrating withal, and quick in the discernment of men's character, eloquent without effort, prodigal in wit, covering by his remarkable pictorial gift the most stale and exhausted themes with the freshness of spring, and following up argument with a power of persuasion which it was often impossible to resist. And who that mingled in those memorable conferences, can ever forget the manly forms of Drs Fairbairn and Bannerman, men of weight among the brethren, who never spoke without advancing the discussion; and Dr Alexander Duff, the great missionary, giving utterance to his apostolic zeal in words of fire, that helped to quicken the fainter life in others.

Many United Presbyterian representatives who gladly shared in those union conferences, have also, during the same brief interval, finished their course; Dr Harper, with his singularly clear intellect and extraordinary capacity for work, with finely-balanced powers fitting him for deliberation, skilful in unloosing

the tangled skeins of controversy, and in cleaving his own way and that of others through labyrinths of discussion, when all around him were hesitating and perplexed ; Dr Marshall of Coupar-Angus, a very athlete in debate, fearing no antagonist, but feared by many,—even his Doric utterance not without its charm,—to whom his brethren looked, as a ready champion, in the hour of battle, when truth or liberty was assailed, and carrying beneath his controversial armour a true and loving heart ; Professor Eadie, with his colossal learning and manly simplicity ; Drs M'Michael and Johnstone, even more at home in conferences for union than in keen edged debate ; Drs Robson and MacEwen, men of unflinching tact, practical wisdom, and charity.

Of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr Symington, a man of ripe theological learning and much natural eloquence, no longer 'continues by reason of death.'

Two of the deputies from the English Presbyterian Church did not even live to see the end of the negotiations,—Dr M'Crie, whom his brethren justly valued as a man of authority on all questions of Scottish ecclesiastical history ; and Dr James Hamilton, with his quaint originality, unflinching freshness and beauty both of thought and style, and with a heart so full of heavenly charity that heaven seemed to claim him and draw him up into itself before his time. And how many elders that had 'obtained a good degree,' swell the roll of departed worthies !

One almost thinks, as he looks back upon the many years of negotiation, that he yet hears the sound of those 'voices that are still,' rising on the wave of psalm, or mingling in those loving conferences whose one end was the 'peace of Jerusalem.'

The devotional exercises of the day on which the

Joint-Committee held its first meeting, were remarkably impressive and elevating. Several of the grand historic psalms celebrating the Church's dependence on God as its 'Refuge and Strength,' sounded with a wondrous fitness, and, along with the prayers and the passages of Scripture which were read, shed over the novel assembly a sacramental solemnity and sacredness. Entering on their deliberations under these influences, and pledged by their name and commission 'to simplicity and godly sincerity,' it was only natural to express from the first their common understanding, that in their comparison of views and conferences regarding them, nothing should be done, by compromise or otherwise, to diminish beyond its real dimensions any point of difference that might arise, but that ascertaining and admeasuring the diversity, more or less, the question should then be, Whether it should be allowed to stand as a bar to union ?

The Joint-Committee lost no time, in the early meetings which followed, in putting itself into working order. A programme of subjects for conference was prepared, including matters of doctrine, church polity, discipline, and finance. But, as it was foreseen from the first, that if any serious point of difference existed in the whole range of subjects, it was likely to be regarding the province of the civil magistrate in the matter of religion and the Church, it was resolved that this anticipated difficulty should at once be looked in the face, by taking up this head of programme first. And mutual questionings and frank explanations gradually made it evident that the difference, though real, was much less than the representatives of either Church had supposed. The negotiating Churches were nearer in fact than they had previously dared to hope. On the

one hand, it was soon placed beyond all doubt that, whatever might be the doctrine of a mere political voluntarism, the representation which had so often been given of the Christian voluntarism of United Presbyterians, in the mischievous antithesis, that 'religion had nothing to do with the civil magistrate, and that the civil magistrate had nothing to do with religion,' was false in both its parts. And quoting from the testimonies and other public documents of their denomination, it was shown to be their unchanged opinion, both that the magistrate was under obligation to regulate his conduct by the Word of Christ, and to frame his laws in accordance with the divine law, as supreme over all men in their several places and relations, to hold sacred the rights and liberties of the Church, and to 'further' the interests of religion 'in a manner consistent with its own spirit and enactments,' which excluded everything in the form of coercion and intolerance. Still they maintained that it was not within the sphere of the magistrate to endow religion, and that the Church was not warranted to lean on him for support. And they held this position not only on the principles of religious equality, but out of deference to the supreme authority of Christ as King in Zion, who appeared to them to have legislated for the direction of His Church on this matter, under all circumstances and at all times.

The Free Church, while holding in common with United Presbyterians that it was the uniform duty of the Church to support divine ordinances by the free-will offerings of its people, an obligation which must never be suspended or superseded, yet differed from them thus far, in believing that there were conceivable circumstances in which it would be lawful for the

magistrate to endow the Church out of the State funds, and in which it would not be unlawful for the Church to accept the endowment, though always with this essential reservation, that its spiritual independence must be left sacred and intact.

The result was that the Joint-Committee came forth from its devout and anxious communings, with the gratifying conviction that even on the thorny and perplexed questions relating to the province of the magistrate in the matter of religion and the Church, there was only one point of difference between the negotiating Churches, and that discussion and explanation had greatly diminished even that difference. And, on the supposition that no other important disparity should emerge in later conferences, the question began to press itself on the thoughts of the negotiating brethren more than ever, Ought this one difference to be allowed to form an insuperable barrier to union? In the Free Church, it could surely be little more than a question of theory, as they had so carefully qualified it; for the last thing to be expected was that endowments would ever be offered to them, on the only conditions on which they would feel themselves at liberty to accept them. It had never been made a term even of ministerial communion among the United Presbyterians, and might it not, with the likelihood of an equally harmonious working, be made an open question in a united body?

In the Synods of the following years, Dr Harper presented his report on the action of his own and the Joint-Committee in the direction of union; and on every succeeding year, the Committee, with its indefatigable convener, was sent back to prosecute its labours by all competent means. We notice only the

more salient steps. In 1866, the Statement of the Articles of Agreement and of Distinctive Principles in regard to the relations of the Civil Magistrate to Religion and the Church, was sent down to Presbyteries, not only to supply information, but to obtain suggestions. In 1867, the returns from Presbyteries having been received and considered, the motion was made, and carried by a majority of 389 to 39, that, in the judgment of the Synod, the distinctive principles of the negotiating Churches presented no insuperable bar to union. In the two succeeding years, the Joint-Committee was principally engaged in considering the various other articles of the programme, which had respect to doctrine, church polity, discipline, and finance; and in 1869, it was reported that the conferences on the various heads of the programme had been brought to a harmonious close, and the report was appointed to be circulated throughout the congregations; for the end sought was not a union merely of Church Courts, but of Churches. The Synod of 1870 made another great advance, when it declared, by an overwhelming majority, that the way was open to a union of the Churches on the basis of the standards which they held in common. In 1871, to make it, if possible, more evident than ever that the Committee retained the unbroken confidence of the Church, the Synod gave its cordial assent to the motion that the Committee had fairly represented the principles of the Church, both common and distinctive, under the various heads of the report, as transmitted to Presbyteries and congregations in the preceding year. A small but respected minority did not concur in this vote, in so far as the Articles of Agreement on the Province of the Civil Magistrate

were concerned ; but they were sincerely favourable to union, as their annual votes had indicated, and their hesitation mainly arose from a fear that their freedom of speech on the distinctive principles, had not been sufficiently secured. In 1872, the Synod had given its sanction to the mutual eligibility of ministers to pastoral charges in any of the negotiating Churches. All that negotiation could do, had now been done to prepare the way for union, for the Assemblies and Synods of the other Churches had, for the most part, moved *pari passu* with the United Presbyterians in all their action. The terms of the marriage-settlement were now ready, why should not the marriage at once proceed, while the Presbyterianism of all Christendom was looking on with interest, and ready to bless the banns ?

But, in the Free Church, serious obstructions had arisen. So early as 1868, soon after it had been avowed as the general opinion of the Joint-Committee, and it had also become the finding of great majorities in the Church Courts, their own included, that the distinctive principles of the negotiating Churches offered no insuperable bar to union, a few brethren had resigned their place in the Committee, and taken up a position intended to arrest the further progress of the movement. These brethren were not now prepared to make the question of endowment of religion by the State an open question, or indeed to admit of open questions of any kind. They held, on the other hand, that their ministers were bound to the principle of State endowments, by the terms of their memorable 'Claim of Right,' and that to consent to make this a question of forbearance in order to union with other Churches, was to become unfaithful to

their principles, and, as far as they could, to change the constitution of their Church. The subject began to be agitated by hostile motions in Presbyteries and General Assemblies, and, though seldom obtaining a majority in any of the Presbyteries, and never more than a minority in successive Assemblies, still the agitation was disturbing and unsettling. Pamphlets were circulated in vast numbers, and at enormous expense; a periodical was even instituted and sustained for the purpose of writing down the union and its promoters, and bringing the whole great movement to an untimely end. The soundness of the United Presbyterian Church on the extent of the Atonement was more than questioned, though no persons knew better than some of those who flung the slander at it, that ministers of their own Church were proclaiming the same views from their pulpits every week, and in the same language. Counter meetings were held by the friends of union in all the great centres of population, at which the ablest men in the negotiating Churches spoke, explaining their position, and rolling back the calumnies, but it was only to find them repeated with interest at the earliest opportunity. While the United Presbyterian Church had to bear the brunt of those evil tongues, the men singled out for severest and most unscrupulous assault, were the friends and advocates of the union, in the Free Church. Those who had been the chief leaders in the great Disruption, the moral heroes who had helped more than any others to keep up the spirit of the people in their noble struggles, were denounced as deserters, and held up to popular scorn. Among the city populations, and in the Lowlands, where the United Presbyterians were known, the misrepresenta-

tions fell comparatively harmless ; but in the Gaelic-speaking portions of Scotland, where there were few United Presbyterians, the wildest misrepresentations were readily believed. In the course of time, the bad leaven did its evil work, and while the great heart of the Free Church remained sound and true, the anti-union leaders had, in the aggregate, many followers. A middle party arose in the Free Church, who, while having no sympathy with the anti-unionists in their action, or in their ends, began to raise the question whether it was expedient to accomplish one union at the expense of another, by disruption among themselves, and whether it would not be better, in the meanwhile, to suspend the negotiations for this end. The issue will be best stated by the introduction of the motion of Dr Harper, and the speech with which it was explained and justified, at the meeting of his Synod in 1873 :—

‘That the Synod receives the report, records its conviction that the agreement between the negotiating Churches, so fully brought out, lays an adequate foundation in principle for their incorporating union, and furnishes, with the circumstances in providence, a strong call to it, and declares anew its readiness to enter into union on the ground of the standards as at present accepted by the Churches, and its unabated desire of such union. That the Synod learns with deep regret that, owing to the opposition from a section of one of the negotiating Churches, the Joint-Committee have come to apprehend that, so far at least as one of the Churches is concerned, the negotiations in which they have been for nearly ten years engaged may be suspended ; but the Synod at the same time rejoices in the good which these negotia-

tions have accomplished, and in the fraternal courtesy and kindness by which, from first to last, the meetings of the Joint-Committee have been distinguished, and cherishes the hope that the suspension of negotiations may be but temporary, and that God may soon open a way for the healing of the breaches of His Church in our land. That the Synod reappoints its Union Committee to superintend the carrying out of the different measures of co-operation which have been already adopted by this Synod, and those contained in the report of this year, as recommended by the Joint-Committee; to confer with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, should that Church see its way to continue conference as to incorporating union; and generally, to further in every way practicable the cause of Scripture union among the Churches. That the Synod, taking into consideration the solemn circumstances in which, by the present issue of these negotiations, the Churches concerned in them have been placed, enjoins upon all under its care the duty of abounding in prayer, that all misunderstandings may be cleared, all prejudices overcome, all hindrances taken out of the way, and all present troubles and agitations overruled for the furtherance of the cause of Christian union, for the edifying of the body of Christ.'

'The motion,' he said, 'cast a glance upon the past. It referred to the negotiating Churches having brought out such an amount of agreement as laid an adequate foundation, in principle, for incorporating union; and it recorded what, he presumed, would be the judgment of the Synod,—readiness to enter into union on the ground of the standards as at present accepted by the Churches, and unabated desire for such a result. In speaking of the difficulties of the

question, they would observe that the report alluded to the probable suspension of negotiations, and referred to the cause of that probable suspension as being well understood. Unhappily, the painful circumstances of their brethren in the Free Church at present were too well known. A minority of eager and unrelenting opponents of union had made themselves a stumbling-block in the way; and had succeeded so far, by their policy of agitation, as to render it expedient for the friends of the movement to suspend for a time their negotiations on the subject. The minority was but small in the Church Courts; but, though the leaders were few, they had a very considerable following. The United Presbyterians had acted in the spirit in which they had started on the subject; and the pause which was about to take place was neither attributed nor attributable to anything said or done, to anything done or left undone, by the Synod or by its Committee. Had it been otherwise,—had the United Presbyterians shifted their ground,—had they brought forward new and unexpected proposals, engendering in the minds of their friends a suspicion that, after all, there must be some serious difference between the Churches,—or had they shown coldness towards the movement, in consequence of the persistent aspersions cast upon their Church by the anti-union party, the suspension of negotiations would have had a meaning in it very different from what attached to it in the actual circumstances of the case. But a review of past proceedings would satisfy any candid person that, on their side, there had been no difficulty raised, and nothing like obstruction put in the way. In the negotiations which they had had with the other Churches, their mutual inquiries had

brought out unmistakably, on sure and good evidence, the fact that there was no ground of difference between them, such as to present a bar to incorporating union. Their inquiry, as the Synod were aware, had gone over a very large field ; they had inquired into the relations of Church and State, matters of doctrine, form of worship, modes of administration, the expediency and the practicability of actual union ; and, since then, they had done nothing to present, in the least degree, a difficulty in the way. He was bound, in this connection, to say that their friends in the negotiating Churches had kept faith with them. The Synod must remember with what strenuous earnestness the friends of union in the Free Church had combated every objection to it in the meetings of Assembly ; they must remember with what patient endurance those brethren had stood their ground under all manner of evil surmising and unbrotherly reproach ; and they must remember how their friends had advocated the principle of mutual eligibility to ministerial charges. In all these ways the brethren in question had most honourably fulfilled the conditions of the inquiry ; and it was for the Synod to make frank acknowledgment of this, as well as to make allowance for their position, and to testify sympathy with them in the strife of tongues through which they had passed. His motion indicated that a suspension of negotiations did not imply abandonment of the cause of union. It afforded him much pleasure to propose that they should express their readiness still to prosecute their negotiations for union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church.' . . .

Those words were spoken with calm majesty, tinged with sorrow. Was this the end of the earnest, anxious work of ten years, which had for its high and unselfish

aim the increased consolidation and influence of all the Free Presbyterian Churches of the land? In the parting meeting of the Joint-Committee, the confidence was expressed by many, that the action for union would, ere many years, be resumed; but the older men especially knew that, like Moses, they would not be permitted to enter and share in the promised inheritance of union. One who had stood nobly among the foremost in the ten years' negotiations, has given us a glimpse of the scene:—

‘Amidst the great and variously gifted men that mingled in that negotiation, and not all ultimately on one side, Dr Harper was at home, and the only memory that now to my mind divides the field with him is the noble, the saintly, the commanding figure of Robert Buchanan, the convener of the Free Church Committee. Well do I recall the last day of their meeting in the Joint-Committee, about this time six years ago. Dr Buchanan's look was more one of cheerfulness, which could only be due to faith, as none foresaw better the evils which must arise, and which have since arisen, from the delay of union, though, by God's great mercy, mitigated and relieved by much fruit of blessing. Dr Harper's face wore a sadder tinge, though he, too, rose in prayer and in parting words to an unwonted height of trust in God, and submission to His higher counsels. The fathers parted, and all of us with deep emotions left the historic place; and now it moves us to tears to think of these noble-hearted leaders as united in death.’¹

In a true and solid sense, the action was not a failure, even although its intended issue had not yet been reached. David's first design was to ‘build an

¹ Funeral sermon by Dr Cairns.

house for the Lord,' but it was enough of honour for one life to provide the material for the holy structure. Another generation was destined to rear the sacred fane. But 'it was good that it was in his heart to do it.' The brotherly intercourse, the formed and consecrated friendships, the better mutual understanding among good men, were priceless gains. And those deliverances which were given on the subject of the province of the civil magistrate, in their clear and exhaustive statement, probably unequalled in their distinctness and fulness, were a rich and permanent gain to theology and to political science, a work so well done as not to need to be repeated. They wait, like the hewn stones made ready beforehand for the temple, to help mightily in ecclesiastical unions, come when they may.

One valuable contribution had been made by Dr Harper to the literature of the subject, in a letter, 'On the Difficulties of the Union Question,' addressed to Dr James Buchanan, Emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology in the New College, Edinburgh. It was written with all the kindly warmth of old friendship, and with the respect due to one who had 'made valuable contributions to our common theology.'

Dr Robert Buchanan had remarked, on the occasion of Dr Harper's jubilee, that while, from an early period, he had been led to form a high estimate of his gifts, even when he had known him principally by report and at a distance, his estimate had been increased tenfold by the better opportunities of knowing him which had been afforded by correspondence and in the Union conferences. And this expressed the general feeling of ministers and elders who had been similarly situated. No matter how difficult and novel the circum-

stances in which he was sometimes placed, he always rose to the occasion. No subject baffled him, or appeared to make too great a demand upon his energies. Nor can we recollect a single instance during those ten years of conference in which, when his patience was tried, he seemed to lose his self-command, or to be betrayed into language which he needed to regret or retract. 'Swift to hear and slow to speak,' he had learned well the hard lesson of 'ruling over his own spirit.' To us he appears to have reached, at the close of the negotiations, the culmination of his mental strength and of his renown.

CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSING YEARS.

1873-1879.

Reconstruction of Divinity Hall—The first Principal—New Honorary Degree—Death of Professor Eadie—Proposed Revision of Subordinate Standards—Committee—Joint-Conveners—Declaratory Act—Prenominations—Sudden Stroke—Last sad Week—Ebbs and Flows of Hope—The End—The Funeral—Monuments—Summary Estimate.

THE Reformed Presbyterian Church, being more in accordance with the Free Church on the point of difference regarding the civil magistrate, was united to it at the General Assembly of the following year; and not long after, the congregations in England belonging to the United Presbyterian Church were magnanimously yielded up by it to be united to the English Presbyterian Church, under the new designation of 'The Presbyterian Church of England.' Meanwhile, the United Presbyterian Church, disappointed but not dispirited, or even consciously weakened, gave itself 'with a will' to the work of internal strengthening and improvement. The first of these measures was the reconstruction of its Theological Hall, a movement which, as we have noticed, Dr Harper had eleven years before recommended to an unprepared Synod, but which was now, to his great satisfaction, to be gone about with united purpose and in right earnest. So long as the negotiations for union with the Free

Church continued, it was deemed inexpedient to stir up the subject afresh, because it was anticipated that the union, if consummated, would supersede the necessity of any separate action beforehand. But the suspension of these negotiations was the signal for renewed action in order to a thorough change in the arrangements of the Church for the training of its ministry. And what many had thought expedient before the negotiations for union began, had, in the interval, come to be felt by increasing numbers in the Synod and Presbyteries, to have become a clamant necessity, the supply of which it would perhaps be hazardous, and certainly very injurious, any longer to delay.

The subject was once more formally introduced into the Synod, at its annual meeting in 1873, by overtures from some of the Presbyteries, and by a strong and earnest memorial from the students themselves. Naturally, the latter document had no little influence in swaying the judgment and shaping the action of the Synod. A large and carefully selected Committee was appointed to deliberate on the whole matter and to report in the following year, taking full advantage of all the light that might be gathered from the experience of other Churches in the theological education of candidates for the ministry, both in this and in other lands. The Committee was fully alive to its responsibility, and in many prolonged meetings and keen discussions did its work 'with a ready mind.' It was soon resolved, with one consent, to recommend that the old system of an annual session of eight weeks, should be superseded by one of five or six months. It was only by such a change as this that justice could be done either to the powers of the professors or to the capa-

cities and wants of the students, and not only the requisite amount and variety of knowledge imparted, but the necessary habits of study and mental discipline maintained and matured, among those who were aspiring to the sacred office. It was agreed, on the other hand, to recommend that if the length of the annual session was increased nearly threefold, it would no longer be necessary, or even desirable, that the curriculum of study should be extended over five years, as it had been under the former system ; and that a curriculum of three years would both afford a great increase to the actual time of academic tuition, and remove one serious difficulty by which many a promising youth had been discouraged and deterred when he had the prospect before him of a wearisome course of five years. And the longer the Committee discussed and deliberated, the more did it become convinced of the necessity of increasing the number of theological chairs, and the variety of subjects that should be embraced in the curriculum of instruction. The tendencies of modern thought, and the wider range and higher standard of general education, demanded this at least, if the religious teachers were to meet the wants of the times, or even to exceed the average scholarship of many of their hearers. And all these proposed changes and arrangements, if adopted by the Church, rendered indispensable this further change, that the professors should be separated from their pastorate and provided with ample stipends, both in order that they might 'give themselves wholly' to the work of their chairs, and have time, during the long annual recess, to pursue courses of study akin to their special subjects of instruction, with whose results, in the form of learned books and otherwise, they might, in due time, make the Church their debtor.

In harmony with these recommendations, received with unanimous approval, the Synod, at its meeting in 1876, agreed, at the suggestion of the same Committee, that it should henceforth have five theological chairs, under the following designations :—(1) Christian Apologetics and Systematic Theology ; (2) Church History ; (3) The Exegesis of the Old Testament ; (4) The Exegesis of the New Testament ; (5) Practical Training. And it was further arranged as an essential part of the scheme, that there should be a thorough system of examinations, both during the curriculum and at its close. The fifth chair, while including in it all the work of a Chair of Pastoral Theology, was intended to have a more free and comprehensive range, especially to provide that if, under the other chairs, the student should learn what to teach, he should under this be taught how best to do it. In the work of the first of these chairs, Dr Harper and Dr Cairns were associated, to the high delight of both ; while over the whole staff of professors constituted into a *Senatus*, or Professorial Court, Dr Harper, on account of his venerable age, long experience, native dignity, and eminent ability, was, with one enthusiastic acclaim, appointed to preside. The academic crown sat gracefully on his hoary head. We shall not be regarded as unduly obtruding ourselves, when we say that it was one of the gratifications of a life-long friendship, to be the first, as convener of the Committee on Hall Reform, to salute him as Principal Harper.

The Church has, during the brief interval, shown in very intelligible and gratifying forms, its approval of the re-construction of its Divinity Hall. A fund of £40,000 has been subscribed and capitalised, to assist in supplying liberal salaries for its professors. Twenty-

three additional bursaries have been founded for the assistance of students during the period of their theological course. And, at a further expense of £60,000, College buildings have been provided, containing ample accommodation for the Theological classes and the Theological Library, with a great Hall for the Synodical meetings, and spacious apartments for all the public offices of the Church. The benefit in such cases goes far beyond the immediate material results, in the discovery which it makes to a Christian people of their strength and resources, when they are united and in earnest.

In the following year, another honour descended on Dr Harper, in the conferring on him by his native University of Glasgow, of the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity; and the honour was not a little enhanced by the manner in which the proposal to confer it was conveyed to him in the following graceful letter by Principal Caird:—

‘THE UNIVERSITY,
GLASGOW, *April 18, 1877.*

‘DEAR SIR,—A friend of mine, a minister of the United Presbyterian Church, said to me the other day that he believed you had not received the degree of D.D. from any Scotch university. I can only say that had your own University been aware of this fact, we would long ere now have done ourselves the honour of recognising the claims of one so eminent in character and position. I write now to ask whether in the above statement my informant is correct, and if so, whether you will allow us to confer on you the honorary degree of D.D. at the close of the present session.—I remain, dear Sir, yours very truly,

JOHN CAIRD.

But a heavy sorrow came treading quickly in the footsteps of these honours, in the death of his distinguished colleague, Professor Eadie. He had seen the re-construction of the Theological Hall completed, and the Hall equipped with its new professors, and was preparing for entering on the new arrangements, when the great summons came. Dr Harper had loved him well. His great learning had long commanded his admiration; his simple manliness, unostentatious piety, and tried friendship had drawn towards him a large measure of his affection. On hearing of his being dangerously ill, he hastened to the house of sorrow, in the hope of seeing him in life, but found that he had died a few hours before. What a revelation of grief and thoughtful tenderness there is in the following lines, which we feel to be almost too sacred for quotation: 'He was so good to me, so tender,' says Mrs Eadie, 'on the death of my husband. He came to me that morning, he took me by the hand and kissed me like my father, hardly speaking, for his grief was so great; and he led me to the room, and when I uncovered the face of "my dead," he wept and clasped his hands, and said, "Oh my brother, to think that you should be taken before me!" and he bent over him and kissed his brow. Then he came and took me to church, for the first time.'

In June 1877, Dr Harper and his people welcomed into the co-pastorate of North Leith congregation, in the room of Mr Lyon, the Rev. Alexander Brown of Kilmarnock, a colleague who, during their brief union, ever treated him with the veneration due to his character and years, and by his energetic and efficient ministry, did much to lighten his cares.

We have now to refer to the last important ecclesi-

astical work in which Dr Harper was engaged. In the winter of 1876-77, an agitation had arisen in one or two quarters of the Church, calling for a revision of its Subordinate Standards. This found expression, at length, in an overture introduced into the Presbytery of Glasgow in April 1877, which set forth that 'the Subordinate Standards were not in harmony with the Supreme Standard,' and proposed that the Synod should be asked 'to rectify this anomaly.' While this overture scarcely received any support in the Presbytery, and it declined to adopt it, yet, recognising the right and duty of the Church, at suitable intervals, to revise its Subordinate Standards, it represented to the Synod the advisableness of considering the subject of revision, and of taking such further steps as might be suggested by their deliberations.

This overture awakened a deep and general interest in the Synod, and led to protracted discussions, which were conducted with great ability. The result was a unanimous declaration by the Synod of its stedfast adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; but at the same time, in view of the importance of the question raised by the overture, and the difficulties attending it requiring grave deliberation, the appointment of a Committee to consider the whole subject. This Committee was judiciously large, consisting of thirty ministers and ten elders, and was selected so as to represent, as far as possible, the different shades of opinion in the Church. And once more the eye of the Synod was turned to its venerable Principal, though now in his eighty-second year, as one of its conveners, at the same time wisely associating with him Dr Cairns, as joint-convener.

The Committee was soon fully at work. And, being anxious to discover how far seeming diversities affected the language, or the order, or the proportion of the several doctrines as set forth in the Standards, or whether, in any instance, they seriously affected the doctrine itself, it agreed, as the first necessary step in its action, that its members should send in a statement of those points in the Standards on which it was understood difficulty was felt, accompanied with any suggestions which they might be disposed to submit. A number of elaborate papers was sent in, and a digest of the various points noted and the various suggestions made, was prepared and arranged according to the order of the several chapters of the Confession. Three lengthened meetings of Committee followed, in which every point of difficulty and corresponding suggestion, was carefully and frankly discussed. Out of all this there gradually emerged the conviction, that there was in this representative Committee, substantial unity in doctrinal view. And the Committee was further led to the conclusion, that the idea of revising the Subordinate Standards, in the stricter sense of the word, did not need to be entertained, and that all the ends of the present agitation would be gained, and all parties satisfied, if some Declaratory Statement were framed, giving such explanations as might be found to be needful in reference to the Standards in their present form.

The next step was to entrust a Sub-Committee with the preparation of such a statement, in view of all the deliberations and discussions that had taken place. This being done, and the document laid on the Committee's table, it was subjected, in a series of lengthened meetings, to a most sifting revisal, every

paragraph and even clause being carefully examined and discussed; and at length, being finally adjusted, it was presented to the Synod at its meeting in 1878. Here it was once more subjected to the fire of keen and fearless discussion in its every part, with the result that it was adopted almost in the form in which it had left the Committee's hands. Still more completely to evoke the mind of the whole Church, it was sent down to all its presbyteries and sessions, for renewed consideration and useful suggestion. The great majority of presbyteries and sessions approved the statement; and the document, slightly modified in view of various suggestions that had come up from the inferior courts, having been laid before the Synod for its final sanction when it met in 1879, was then adopted as the Declaratory Act. As this Act, in addition to its intrinsic value, bears on every part of it the impress of Principal Harper's mind, we introduce it in full:—

DECLARATORY ACT.

ADOPTED BY SYNOD, MAY 1879.

WHEREAS the formula in which the Subordinate Standards of this Church are accepted, requires assent to them as an exhibition of the sense in which the Scriptures are understood: Whereas these Standards, being of human composition, are necessarily imperfect, and the Church has already allowed exception to be taken to their teaching, or supposed teaching, on one important subject: And whereas there are other subjects in regard to which it has been found desirable to set forth more fully and clearly the view which the Synod takes of the teaching of Holy Scripture: Therefore, the Synod hereby declares as follows:—

1. That in regard to the doctrine of redemption as taught in the Standards, and in consistency therewith, the love of God to all mankind, His gift of His Son to be the propi-

tiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction, on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice, are matters which have been and continue to be regarded by this Church as vital in the system of gospel truth, and to which due prominence ought ever to be given.

2. That the doctrine of the divine decrees, including the doctrine of election to eternal life, is held in connection and harmony with the truth that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and that He has provided a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and offered to all in the gospel; and also with the responsibility of every man for his dealing with the free and unrestricted offer of eternal life.
3. That the doctrine of man's total depravity, and of his loss of 'all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation,' is not held as implying such a condition of man's nature as would affect his responsibility under the law of God and the gospel of Christ, or that he does not experience the strivings and restraining influences of the Spirit of God, or that he cannot perform actions in any sense good; although actions which do not spring from a renewed heart are not spiritually good or holy—such as accompany salvation.
4. That while none are saved except through the mediation of Christ, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how it pleaseth Him; while the duty of sending the gospel to the heathen, who are sunk in ignorance, sin, and misery, is clear and imperative; and while the outward and ordinary means of salvation for those capable of being called by the Word are the ordinances of the gospel: in accepting the Standards, it is not required to be held that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His grace to any who are without the pale of ordinary means, as it may seem good in His sight.
5. That in regard to the doctrine of the Civil Magistrate, and his authority and duty in the sphere of religion, as taught

in the Standards, this Church holds that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of the Church, and 'Head over all things to the Church, which is His body;' disapproves of all compulsory, or persecuting and intolerant principles in religion; and declares, as hitherto, that she does not require approval of anything in her Standards that teaches, or may be supposed to teach, such principles.

6. That Christ has laid it as a permanent and universal obligation upon His Church, at once to maintain her own ordinances, and to 'preach the gospel to every creature;' and has ordained that His people provide by their free-will offerings for the fulfilment of this obligation.
7. That, in accordance with the practice hitherto observed in this Church, liberty of opinion is allowed on such points in the Standards, not entering into the substance of the faith, as the interpretation of the 'six days' in the Mosaic account of the creation: the Church guarding against the abuse of this liberty to the injury of its unity and peace.

The following question of the formula contains the terms in which the Subordinate Standards are accepted by the office-bearers of the Church:—'Do you acknowledge the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as an exhibition of the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures, this acknowledgment being made in view of the explanations contained in the Declaratory Act of Synod thereanent?'

It was matter of devout satisfaction to the members of Committee that, as the result of the many deliberations and discussions of two years, they had more than ever become conscious of their unity; and that the protracted conferences, issuing in the Act, while relaxing the pressure of honest difficulties in the case of some, had strengthened the mutual confidence of all the brethren in each other, and helped in providing a new security for the peace of the Church. And probably there was not one in the Committee who would

have refused to acknowledge in the retrospect, that he had passed through a new training in the dialectics of theology, and that his estimate of the Confession had been raised by the prolonged study of it to which he had been called,—an estimate which has been touchingly confirmed by the last written words of the late Dean of Westminster, in which, with admirable candour, he declares that in some important respects the Westminster Standard is superior to the Confessions Byzantine and English, being ‘more argumentative and theological, and flushed throughout with all the ardour of individual conviction.’

And in the case of no one was thankful gladness at the happy termination of those proceedings greater than that of our venerable Principal. The share he took in the work of the Committee, considering he had passed the rare limit of fourscore years, was matter of surprise and delight to all. He was present at almost all the meetings, and even occupied the chair during the greater part of the time. And his undimmed clearness of intellect, his force of expression, his mastery of the history of theology, and thorough acquaintance with the subjects passed in succession under discussion, shone conspicuous in the meetings to the last. It was touching to notice how ready the joint-convener was at all times, with his powerful intellect and considerate tenderness, to hold up the hands of the veteran ecclesiastic, as he laboured once more to achieve a triumph for truth and peace. And he saw the work as good as done; but when the final report was presented to the Synod, Dr Cairns was called, with a sorrow that could not be concealed and that could scarcely even be controlled, to preface it with the announcement of Dr Harper’s death.

The incidents connected with that departure we now proceed to narrate.

During the later years of this period, there had been various signs of diminishing physical strength. There was no longer the same elasticity of step. There was an occasional thickness of utterance noticeable by a keen observer. At times, even, a faint, or a brief loss of consciousness, had produced a measure of alarm in those who loved him, which they were scarcely willing to confess to each other. Still the intellect continued clear, and strong, and active, and seemed to sit unmoved on its throne, while the expression of his countenance was remarked upon by many as wonderfully mellowed and benignant, as if 'the other light' were already resting on him. Those who listened to his Introductory Lecture, at the opening of the Hall session in 1878, were struck with delighted astonishment at the mastery and ease with which he handled his subject,—the pellucid thought, the incisive style, the pointed epigram, the occasional strokes of sly humour, and, not least, his sagacious references to passing events and prevalent popular errors. Friends looked at each other as he warmed in his theme, and wondered how the veteran of more than fourscore years could thus acquit himself, as if he had scarcely yet seen more than fifty summers.

During the Hall session, he was usually able for his proportion of work as Professor, and even for the special duties of his Principalship. April had come with its buds and early blossoms, and he seemed within a few days of the haven of another recess. With his characteristic provident arrangement, he had even signed the certificates which were to be given to the students when leaving the Hall on the following

week ; and on the evening of Saturday, 5th April, he had retired to rest with a brightness in his countenance in which his family sought to read the prophecy of a yet longer lease of life. But early in the morning of the following Sabbath, when he was in the act of dressing, Mrs Harper heard him fall ; and at once discovered, to her unutterable grief, that he had been stricken down by a severe stroke of paralysis. Helpless in his attempts to raise himself, it was with much difficulty and continued effort that he was first helped into his arm-chair, and afterwards laid upon his bed. When his son, Mr Harper, advocate, speedily arrived from Edinburgh, it became evident, at once, that the prostrate sufferer was quite aware of his condition. 'It is the left side,' he said, in broken accents ; 'very sudden.' Again and again he was overheard saying to himself, 'This is death. This is death.'

When Tuesday had come, his family had gathered to the old home, and were standing, like Jacob's sons, around him. It had frequently been noticed that, for many months before, one petition had almost invariably appeared in his family prayers, for his children and grandchildren, that they might all have 'one heart, one hope, and one home in heaven.' It seems to have been his wish either to speak some special words to each of them, or to address some solemn sentences, which should be remembered as their father's last words to all. But the effort needed for this was too great, for by this time he had become incapable of continuous utterance. Disappointed in this desire, he called Mrs Harper to his side, with a strange impressiveness in his manner which seemed to indicate that he had something of supreme interest to speak, and that he had gathered up all his strength to

utter it. 'Promise, promise,' he said, 'that you will make the nature and necessity of regeneration a subject of frequent conversation in the family.' The words were indistinct, and on being slowly repeated to him, he said eagerly and as if in haste, 'Yes, yes, that is it.' 'I promise,' was the mother's answer, with her heart in full sympathy with his own. 'I trust you,' he immediately replied; 'it is my dying request.'

Finding him unable for more than the utterance of a few words at a time, his afflicted family sought to maintain spiritual sympathy with him, and also to cheer the aged and suffering pilgrim in the last stage of his journey, by singing some of his favourite hymns. Knowing his special delight in Wesley's precious hymn, which has been such an overflowing well of consolation to myriads,

'Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,'

and his fondness for Lyte's 'Abide with me,' these were frequently sung by Mrs Harper or one of her daughters, the beloved sufferer at times seizing an individual word or phrase in the current of song, and repeating it; and it seemed to light up the death-chamber with an unearthly joy.

It was a touching element in his illness, that, at a very early period, his eyes closed, never again to open upon earth; and yet there was something grand in the anticipation that his next, and not far distant sight, would be the 'King in His beauty.' One consequence of this was, that when any of his family approached his bed-side, he was only able to identify them by the sound of their voice, and as his mind began occasionally to wander, he sometimes failed

even in this. There was one affecting incident which grew, in part, out of this state of things. On his son Ebenezer taking him by the hand, he asked who it was. He was told that it was 'Eben.' He had had a brother of the same name, the beloved companion of his schoolboy days at Lanark, who had been long since dead;¹ and he asked, 'Are you my dear brother Eben?' But though he was told it was his son Eben, the old memories of boyhood had been awakened, and, in one of the old Latin colloquies in which the two brothers had been accustomed to converse at school, seventy years before, he asked of him a drink of water: 'Care frater, da mihi aquam vitæ.' When he was not attempting to exchange a word or two with his family, he was often heard saying in a low voice, 'Jesus, blessed Jesus:' and it was obvious, from the posture of his hands and other wonted signs, that he was frequently engaged in prayer, and it was noticed that his prayers were often clothed in the Latin tongue.

As the middle of the week approached, the excitement and restlessness of the suffering saint became indescribably great, and most distressing to those loving ones who were looking on, and watching for some favourable sign that might keep their hope from dying out. These periods of excitement were followed by intervals of weariness and physical prostration. On one of his daughters asking him how he felt, his answer was, 'I want to go home.' To another daughter who put the same question, his reply was, 'Weary, very weary.' Her ready and well-chosen answer was: 'Come unto Me all ye that are weary (labour) and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' It was a cup of cold water to the dying father.

¹ Died, January 25, 1847.

One of his most affecting interviews in that eventful week, was with Dr Cairns, his colleague in the Professorship, whom he regarded with high admiration, unbounded confidence, and deep affection. His colleague prayed with an emotion that almost threatened to choke utterance, and with all the devotion and unction which were so natural to such a scene. Dr Harper grasped his hand, held it up to his lips, and kissed it. It was to be the closing day of the session of the Theological Hall, and Dr Cairns asked whether he had any message to the students, as all would be anxiously inquiring and earnestly praying. His answer was such as the Master Himself might have spoken: 'Tell them to follow Christ.'

Meanwhile, as the week advanced, the interest in the venerated patient continued to deepen and widen. The good and great man who had lived and laboured in Leith, with ever-growing usefulness and honour, for more than two generations, and whose name was mingled with the joys and sorrows of so many thousands, was reported to be dying. Three times a day, bulletins were fixed to the door at Leith Mount, to answer the inquiries of the crowds of every denomination and rank, that streamed to the house of sorrow. The latent esteem and love of a great community, found unforced utterance.

The stage of excitement at length passed into one of quiet sleep, and his anxious family tried to read in this a favourable sign. But the physicians were ominously silent. When Saturday came, he had passed into a comatose state, which the physicians well knew to be the beginning of the end; and now the sad necessity had come, to communicate to the mother and the children the reluctant information

which it was vain any longer to hold back, that all hope of recovery had vanished, and that the change was near. On the forenoon of the following Sabbath, when the church bells were ringing their last notes, Principal Harper died. Like many other of God's saints who had wished for it, he was 'loosed from his bonds on the Sabbath day.'

The interment of the precious dust took place in Rosebank Cemetery on the following Friday, at two o'clock. 'The whole city was moved;' and no inconsiderable portion of its people gathered reverently and mournfully to the scene. Appropriate funeral services were conducted simultaneously in the North Leith Church, and in the desolate home at Leith Mount, after which the funeral cortege was formed and proceeded to the place of graves in the following order: The Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of Leith, in their official robes; the general Public; Edinburgh Free Church Presbytery; Ministers of various denominations; Edinburgh United Presbyterian Presbytery; Probationers and students of the United Presbyterian Church; Professors of the United Presbyterian College; North Leith United Presbyterian congregation; the HEARSE; relatives and private mourners in coaches and private carriages. The procession was fully half a mile in length. All along, the way from Leith Mount, by Queensferry Road and Bonnington Place, was thickly lined by deeply impressed spectators, hundreds uncovering the head as the cortege passed, and the ladies being dressed in mourning. Traffic was suspended, shops were closed, and every dwelling bore some mark of sorrow. A flag, half-mast high, was suspended from the Town Buildings; and the great bell of North Leith Church, tolling at

measured intervals, seemed, at its every sound, to be repeating the '*Memento Mori.*'

When the procession reached the cemetery, it was found to be covered by spectators on every available spot; and it became necessary to close the gates, in order to prevent further ingress, and the crowding and unseemly pressure that would have followed. The coffin, covered with flowers and wreaths that had been gathered and woven by loving hands, was laid upon supports on the margin of the grave. Immediately after, 200 of the Sabbath school children of North Leith congregation, being stationed on a closely-adjoining terrace, sang with thrilling pathos, the hymn 'Our Father knows.' Dr David Young of Glasgow followed with a short and solemn prayer, after which Dr George Jeffrey delivered a funeral address finely appreciative of the dead, and admirably fitted to benefit the living. Then, in the presence of the breathless multitude, the coffin was lowered into its narrow house, by the hands of sons, and sons-in-law, Dr Cairns, his colleague in the Professorship, and Mr Brown, his colleague in the ministry, also joining in the sacred service. In a few minutes, the green turf was spread over the new-made grave, and strewed with flowers by little hands, and then, once more, a hymn burst from the lips of the children, 'Shall we gather at the river?' A group of ladies in mourning caught up the strain, and in a few moments the singing became general among the many thousands that filled the cemetery, the vast congregation of the living singing the blessed hope of resurrection and reunion, over the tombs of the yet vaster congregation of the dead.

We here introduce a portion of Dr Jeffrey's address:—

“ Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men !” Our beloved father, the venerable Principal of our Theological Hall, the honoured servant of the Lord, is dead. He hath come to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season. Having served his own generation, by the will of God, he has fallen on sleep. The memory of the just is blessed. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. All who knew the venerable Principal will deeply sympathize to-day with his sorrowing widow, who has been a helpmeet for him over many years of married life, and in whom the heart of her husband could safely trust. Though bereft for a season of a loving partner, may she enjoy much of the presence and consolation of a loving Saviour, who hath said, “ I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee.” Deeply also will all who knew him sympathize with his bereaved and sorrowing family in the loss of a kind, considerate, and loving father, whose presence and wise counsels and consistent example, through divine grace, made the fireside a happy Christian home, and all its associations a motive power to faith and patient continuance in well-doing. His colleague, who, as a son with a father, served with him in the gospel, and whose kindly service was highly appreciated, as it was cheerfully given, has had now removed from his side such an one as Paul the aged, who was worthy of all honour by every servant of the Lord. His congregation has been deprived of one who was a master in Israel and mighty in the Scriptures—a man of God, and exercised unto godliness, who faithfully ministered to them in the gospel of Christ, and who watched for their souls as one who knew that he must give an account. The loss, however, extends

beyond the bosom of his family, and beyond the circle of his congregation. For half a century he has been a pillar in his own denomination, and one of those who held a chief place in her councils. As Professor and Principal, he has been a distinguished ornament of the Theological Hall, and has long held a prominent place among all the Churches of God in the land. By his death a great man and a prince has fallen in Israel. While we mourn his death, we have especial reason to give thanks to God for his long life of singular usefulness in the work of the gospel, and that now the good and faithful servant has entered on the joy of his Lord. It no less becomes us to acknowledge the Master's grace in all He made him, in all He did for him, in all He did by him, and, for the Master's sake, to testify to his character, and life, and work. No one would have more humbly said of himself, like Paul—"By the grace of God I am what I am;" or of all his abundant labours in the Master's service and for the advancement of the Master's glory—"Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." He was endowed with a sound and solid judgment, with remarkable vigour and grasp of intellect, and naturally with much kindness of heart. These gifts, received from the Master, were so cultured by divine grace as to make him admirably qualified not only for the work of God in the pulpit, but for all the responsible duties of the conspicuously eminent position he so long occupied in our Theological Hall, to which he bore all the maturity of his mental powers, all the graces of a noble Christian character, all the attainments of long and careful study of divine truth, and all the treasures of a rich Christian experience. The Church owes much to the venerable Principal in all that he did for the education and train-

ing of her ministry. His very presence in the Hall, the influence of his character, ever mellowing through grace with advancing years, was in itself a living testimony to the grace of God. And then how deeply indebted was the Church to him for many a clear and able exposition and defence of her principles, for his zealous advocacy of all her schemes of public usefulness, for his worthy representation of her in all her intercourse with other Churches, and for the readiness he ever manifested to do all that within him lay to advance the cause of gospel truth and Christian union in the land.' . . .

On the following Sabbath, funeral sermons were preached by Drs Ker and Cairns, to a crowded congregation, all dressed in the garb of mourners. These were in every respect worthy of the occasion, and of the singularly high reputation of the preachers. Since then, an elegant granite pillar of 19 feet in height, and forming by far the most prominent object in Rosebank Cemetery, has been erected by his family over the grave, which bears the following appropriate Latin inscription :—

VIR REVERENDUS
JACOBUS HARPER, S.T.D.

CHRISTI LEGATUS INSIGNIS PASTOR FIDELIS
THEOLOGIAE PROFESSOR PROFESSORUMQUE PRAEFECTUS
REBUS ECCLESIASTICIS PRAESTANS
PUBLICAE SALUTIS STUDIOsus
PROBI FAUTOR ASSIDUUS PRAVI OPPUGNATOR ARDENS
EGENORUM TRISTIUM AEGROTORUM ADJUTOR INDEFESSUS
AMICUS AMANS AMABILIS
PRAESIDIUMQUE DOMUS DULCISSIMUM.

NATUS EST A.D. IX. KAL. JUL. MDCCXCV.
OBIIT ID. APR. MDCCCLXXIX.

CUJUS QUOD MORTALE ERAT HIC SITUM EST.

A finely executed marble medallion bust, by Mr Brodie, R.S.A., has also been placed by the Congregation of North Leith in the lobby of the church, beneath which are the following words :—

IN MEMORY OF
THE REV. JAMES HARPER, D.D., S.T.P.,
PRINCIPAL OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE.

THE FIRST—AND FOR SIXTY YEARS—MINISTER OF THIS CONGREGATION.
BORN AT LANARK 23 JUNE 1795, ORDAINED AT LEITH 2 FEBRUARY 1819.
DIED AT LEITH MOUNT 13 APRIL 1879.

AN ELOQUENT PREACHER, AN ABLE THEOLOGIAN,
A FAITHFUL PASTOR, A LEARNED ECCLESIASTIC,
A LOYAL FRIEND, AND PUBLIC-SPIRITED CITIZEN.

“ HE RESTS FROM HIS LABOURS, AND HIS WORKS DO FOLLOW HIM.”

“ HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE.”

For many weeks after the death and funeral, expressions of sorrow were borne by the laden postman to the bereaved home, not only from public societies and friends at home, but from American and Continental brethren and Churches. Residing in Rome at the time of the death, we can well remember what sympathy the tidings awakened in the members of the Protestant community there, both resident and visitors. For while all recognised that it was ‘a shock of corn fully ripe’ that had been gathered into the heavenly garner, they also felt how much poorer the Church of Christ in Scotland had become, through his removal.

In looking back upon the long and distinguished course of our departed father, we can imagine a feeling of disappointment to be expressed by some, that he has not given to the Church any elaborate and matured treatise on one of our great Christian doctrines, or an expository work on some portion of the Word of

God. And this disappointment is not unlikely to have been increased, by the perusal of those extracts from his few short published writings in the form of lectures, sermons, and speeches, which we have introduced, of design, somewhat profusely into our biography. Such samples of fresh and vigorous thought expressed in clear and classic language, assure us of what he could have done in a work to which the time and strength of years were devoted. And it is a fact that, up to a comparatively late period of his life, even when he was beyond his seventieth year, he continued to cherish the design of producing something which the Church might welcome. We know that he had thought long and much, as well as read exhaustively, on the doctrine of Providence, and that he had prepared himself not only to discuss the speculative difficulties, and to expose the practical errors of Christians on this fundamental subject, but also to deal, both on philosophical and Christian grounds, with those theories of modern unbelief which are in obvious antagonism to the teaching of Christ. Those who knew him intimately, cannot fail to remember some racy specimens given by him in conversation, of the manner in which he disposed of those whom Melancthon had long before described as 'prone to think of God as a shipbuilder who, when he has completed his vessel, launches and leaves it.'

There are reasons also for thinking that he had gone some length in preparing a series of discourses on select passages in 'the Revelation of John,' not deterred by the somewhat rash saying which has been ascribed to the great Calvin, that 'the book either finds, or makes, an expositor mad.' But neither purpose ever went beyond a partial preparation. The explanation is to be found in two causes. He was fastidious

even to a fault in judging of his own compositions ; he looked at their defects through a microscope, so that at different periods of his life, large bundles of manuscript, often containing some of his best compositions, were mercilessly committed to the flames. Then, other forms of service which seemed forced upon him by Providence, led him to postpone his purpose of authorship to a time of retirement and rest of which he often dreamed, but which never came. In the case of how many does the broken pillar stand where the palace or the temple might have stood ! But although this desired service was left undone, he did such other noble work in his day, as has given his name a foremost place among the great men of his Church, and entitled him to hold high rank among the eminent men of his time.

He possessed, as the facts in our narrative have amply shown, a wonderful power of work. As if the pastorate of a large congregation were not sufficient to engross his energies, he was installed in a succession of Professorships, each of which entailed on him the preparation of a long course of lectures. The work of editing the recognised magazine of his denomination, was borne by him at intervals during a large portion of his ministry ; and we must add to all this, in our enumeration of his labours, a greater amount of public and miscellaneous service than has fallen to the lot of most men. And yet, to an onlooker, all this excess of toil seemed to rest upon him like the hair upon the head of Samson, without oppressing him. In the course of our narrative, we have already in some measure accounted for this. His extraordinary faculty of order and method, in which Wesley himself scarcely exceeded him, gives the explanation in part. So must his

conscientious and almost covetous economy of time, for, like Henry Martin, he was 'a man that never lost a minute.' But we must go farther to arrive at the full explanation. His habit of studying particular subjects until he had thoroughly mastered them, and then of storing his intellectual gains in carefully arranged and indexed note-books, made him master, for life, of whatever he had once studied, for his was not the bloodless and unprofitable erudition that satisfies itself with the perusal of multitudes of books which it never digests. And to indicate what more than any other helps to account for all, we add his spirit of unreserved self-consecration, which was produced and sustained by a living faith in 'the things which are unseen and eternal.'

The variety of his work was as remarkable as its magnitude. And whatever he did, he did well. As a preacher, he retained his popularity almost undiminished for a period of sixty years. When he betook himself with a willing heart to evangelistic work among the sailors in the docks of Leith, or among the New-haven fishermen, and he needed to 'change his voice,' he was quite as acceptable and effective as when addressing a more educated audience. And he reigned equally in his Professor's chair as in his pulpit. There was not only the power of his character and the authority of his sacred themes, but the simple mastery of mind, which made the ingenuous youths that sat under him, listen, because they felt that a superior soul was grappling with theirs. Do men in general duly estimate the influence for good which a Professor of Theology, who does his work as Principal Harper did his, puts forth upon the Church? For more than a quarter of a century, he occupied his chair, and it is

probable that during that period, a thousand students for the Christian ministry, when their minds were most impressive and expanding, must have 'passed under his rod.' These are now scattered over Scotland, England, the United States, and the British Colonies. There is not one of them, it is probable, who is not gratefully conscious at this hour, of the solid and lasting benefit which he has derived from his theological tutor. Is it then exaggeration to say, as has been said, that such a man comes, in the course of time, to exercise a beneficent influence, not over one congregation merely, but over a thousand?

Another sphere in which Dr Harper was eminently influential and useful, was in the Synods and Presbyteries of his Church. In these, from a very early period of his public life, he was a speaker to whom men listened. There was an instant hush of attention the moment he rose to speak. The judgment which Fuller pronounced on one of the divines of the Westminster Assembly was: 'Good with the trowel, but better with the sword; more happy in polemical divinity than in edifying discourse.' We could not accept this as a correct judgment, in reference to the subject of our memoir. But, unquestionably, he was strong and skilful in handling the sword of ecclesiastical polemics. He was not, indeed, an intellectual pugilist or gladiator, rushing with keen zest into the arena of debate. Certainly he was the last man to be charged with speaking when he had nothing to say. But he was always owned to be a master in discussion. Except when he was convener of some important committee, giving an account of his stewardship or seeking to give a fresh impulse to some important movement,—and then he spoke first and with conscientious preparation,—

he seldom rose early in a debate. He usually waited to hear both sides. And then it was often interesting to notice with what a mastery and ease he balanced the arguments of disputants, separated the mere accidents of a case from its essence, and placed the matter in such a form as to prepare the mind of the court for a vote. In this way he often led when he seemed to follow. The cast of his mind was eminently judicial. He shrank instinctively, both for ethical and intellectual reasons, from one-sidedness or exaggeration. Whenever he spoke, he produced an impression of fairness, even in the minds of those with whom he disagreed in judgment. One to whom he had been most opposed in sentiment and argument on the Atonement Controversy, dying soon after, left it as his special request, that he should preach his funeral sermon.

It will have been noticed, in the course of the memoir, that in the succession of great controversies into which he was drawn, especially in the middle part of his life, those with whom he waged conflict, were among the most eminent men of his age. But it is also noticeable, as in his controversies with Dr Chalmers and Lord Moncreiff, that he carried away with him, from the very heat of the battlefield, the respect and admiration of his opponents; and that there was not an instance in which both the eminence of his gifts and the sincerity of his motives, as well as the honourable manner with which he used his weapons, failed to be acknowledged. There was no stain or sinister brand upon his shield. And yet it seems to us that his enjoyment was much greater in quiet negotiations for union, than when he appeared to himself to have triumphed in the lists of controversy,—not the less when those with whom he negotiated had been the

combatants of earlier days. He was as ready to be a martyr for love, as a confessor for truth. He deeply felt, in the presence of those with whom he conferred in order to union, how great were the truths that drew them together, and how slight in comparison were the differences that divided them; and appreciated to the full the beautiful saying of one of the prolocutors in the Westminster Assembly in reference to such minor questions: 'At best they do but ruffle a little the fringe, not in any way rend the garment of Christ.' And it was in these negotiations, as we have seen, that his intellect shone in its greatest strength, as well as his heart in its widest charity. The conferences of those ten years brought before the negotiators some of the most profound and difficult questions in theology, and in explaining and comparing views with some of the ablest and most accomplished men in all the Presbyterian Churches, with 'judgments piercing and eagle-eyed,' he was never found unequal to the occasion; but there always seemed to be an unexhausted capital of mental wealth, an unmeasured reserve of power.

Nor would it be easy to over-estimate the service which he rendered not only to his Church, but to his country, in the active interest which he took in the great public questions of his times. There was scarcely any movement of national interest, for the increase of popular liberty, or the promotion of social progress, with which he did not actively identify himself, and of which he was not the fearless, and sometimes self-denying advocate, until it triumphed. He saw that it was in great public meetings that the people were educated on great public questions, and that subjects were ripened for legislation, and he believed that

Christian patriotism had its own place in the code of Christian duty. How much, for instance, did the abolition of the Corn Laws, and the reform and enlargement of our educational institutions in Scotland, owe to the persevering zeal and wise action of himself and other men who were like-minded with him ?

No man ever suspected him of being an ambitious intriguer for office or honour. Not only the spirit of his religion, which condemns all carnal wisdom, but even his natural manliness and self-respect, made him shrink from all trickery and management to compass selfish ends. His Church conferred on him the highest honour which it was in its power to bestow, when it called him by acclamation to be the first Principal of its Theological College. But when this and earlier honours fell upon him, they came unsought, and, like the first king of Israel, he needed to be searched for, in order to be crowned.

But we do not care to think of him merely in his intellectual prowess, and ecclesiastical and social honours. We delight to see him rising before us after he had passed his eightieth year, wielding a great, though silent moral power ; and, with a spotless and honoured name, holding so firm a place in the confidence and veneration of all, that if a slander had been flung at him, no one would have believed it, but it would have recoiled of itself upon the head of the slanderer. Like the last and best of Israel's judges when, old and grey-headed, he appealed to the assembled tribes, and reminding them that he had walked before them from his childhood unto that day, demanded of them, 'before the Lord,' whether they had ought to witness against him, and the universal

heart and voice of the nation bore testimony to his grand and unstained life ; so would the whole ' city of his habitation ' in which Dr Harper had lived and moved before all eyes, for sixty years, have risen as one man, to witness ' how holily, and unblameably, and unprovably he had behaved himself ' among them. Those two morning hours spent by him daily during his long life, in solitary devotion, account for much of the moral strength, seemly consistency, and sublime self-consecration which became more distinctly marked in his character the longer he lived, and which made the last message which he left as his dying legacy to his students, the fit motto of his own life : ' FOLLOW CHRIST.'

APPENDIX.

SELECTIONS FROM DR HARPER'S CORRESPONDENCE.

APPENDIX.

SELECTIONS FROM DR HARPER'S CORRESPONDENCE.

TO MRS HARPER.

LONDON, *Feb.* 22, 1838.

AFTER a tolerable ride of forty-four hours, I arrived safe this morning and breakfasted in the inn, and then started to see Mr Gillon and the Lord Advocate. I have nothing of public news to send you as yet ; but from what I have already learned, our campaign among the Members of Government and of the House will commence immediately—with what result it is hard to tell. I regret much not getting the steamer on Monday afternoon. The sea, as I saw it from the coast near Berwick, was most beautifully smooth, and I have no doubt I would have had not only an easy, but most agreeable voyage. . . . I feel greatly the bereavement of being from home. The fear of some evil befalling any of you continually preys on my mind. Oh, that we were all in Christ as our refuge, and then there would be nothing to fear ! Give my love to the children ; they are dearer to me than words can express.

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *March* 2, 1838.

. . . To-day the deputation had an interview with a number of London ministers, who espoused our cause very warmly. The result is, that we are to hold a public meeting on Wednesday next, and to give lectures on the Voluntary

principle in different places of London next week and the following. All the members of our deputation have lectures with them but myself. I do not intend to be an exception, although the preparation of a lecture will of [course] take up a large share of my time. Dr Beattie and I dine to-day with an M.P. in the rooms of the House of Commons; to-morrow we all dine with Mr Denniston, M.P. for Glasgow, and on Wednesday next with Campbell of Islay. We are in this way gay as well as busy. As to going among the Members, we have been a good deal interrupted, but we are getting on. What will be the result we cannot tell; but of this we are certain, that it will be a mere trifle the Church will get from the present Ministry, but we have reason to fear the Tories may outvote and displace them. . . .

I have just got notice of a great defeat of the ministerial party, in the election of a Tory for Mary-le-bone.

Remember me at the fireside, and above all things at the throne of grace.—I wish I had time to write to the children, but must close. Say to —— I read her letter with great pleasure, and will try to answer it soon, and that I expect —— to write next. Say to him that I trust he is keeping in mind what I said to him about his duty to the rest of the children, doing all he can to make them happy—never to get angry with them—and to help them with their lessons. Say to them all from me to love one another,—to honour their mother,—and to fear and serve God.

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *March 5, 1838.*

. . . To-day we had a most interesting interview with His Excellency Lord Durham. I am just on the wing to see another M.P., then return to prepare a lecture for Thursday evening and a speech for Wednesday. In all this bustle you must excuse me for writing short.

To-morrow will be a most eventful day in the House of Commons—it is probable there will be a change of Ministry.

In that case I shall soon be at liberty to turn my face homeward.

TO THE SAME.

22 CRAVEN STREET, STRAND,
March 9, 1838.

. . . How thankful should I be for the health you are all enjoying when so much disease still prevails in the town. It ought to be our comfort, as it is our safety, to be at all times in the hand of God, and our daily endeavour to be prepared for all His will concerning us.

I intended to write yesterday, but was prevented by an engagement to lecture in the evening on the Church question. My time was wholly taken up in preparing for the occasion. On Wednesday we had a great meeting in the City of London Tavern, at which the deputies spoke. By to-day's post I send you a *Patriot* newspaper, which contains a pretty full account of the meeting. The whole affair went off successfully, with the exception that some of the speakers used too strong language, and made the *whole* discussion turn on the great question of separation between Church and State, instead of keeping chiefly to the matter of endowments. The consequence is our parliamentary friends are displeased, and say that harm will be done. . . .

I was at another large parliamentary dinner party on Wednesday, in Mr Campbell's of Islay, and have an invitation to another of a similar kind next week. It is possible, however, that I may leave London on Monday week to visit the provinces. My own opinion is that we should stay longer, especially as a deputation from the Church are about to visit the Metropolis. Last night Lord J. Russell stated his plan to the House of Commons. It is precisely what, from previous information, I expected it to be. . . .

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, March 12, 1838.

. . . To-day the deputation had an interview with Lord Holland—a fine old nobleman, with a great deal of good

sense and sly humour. We are to be with Lord Lansdowne to-morrow, and expect to be honoured with an invitation to wait on the Duke of Sussex, who has expressed a wish to see us. On Friday last the deputations dined with Mr Campbell of Islay, with a number of M.P.s. We ate on silver plates during dinner, and our dessert plates after of solid gold. You will be ready to say after this, What will the gudeman think of his own cracked earthenware on coming home? My answer is, Home is home, and there is no place like it.

The measure proposed by Government is better than we had cause at one time to dread. For one thing it is a severe defeat to the Church party. A deputation from the Assembly arrived on Saturday, and commenced operations to-day after breakfast. It is possible that I may be induced to prolong my stay for a few days, till I find whether there is any risk of their counteracting the impressions we have made. Either next week, however, or the following I hope to be home again. . . .

TO THE SAME.

22 CRAVEN STREET, STRAND.

. . . As I wrote day before last, I have hardly anything new to communicate further than I have [been] visiting to-day, where, think you?—the Queen. There was a grand levee at St James' Palace, at which I had the honour of being presented to Her Majesty by His Excellency the Earl of Durham, and kissing hands. So were the other deputies. I took most particular notice of all that passed, that I may describe the same to you and the children when I return. The Queen's appearance, both as to face and expression, is superior to what I had supposed. She is a small figure, with a very engaging look and manner.

I have also been at a meeting in Exeter Hall on the subject of slavery, where I heard Lord Brougham. After

dinner, which is just waiting, I go to the House of Commons, so that this, though a busy day, is very much one of amusement and entertainment. A Church deputation are up from Glasgow doing all they can to counterwork us. This may probably detain me a few days longer than I at one time expected. I intend returning by Bristol and Leicester to hold public meetings. . . .

TO THE SAME.

22 CRAVEN STREET, STRAND,
March 16, 1838.

. . . We are going on as usual endeavouring to impress our sentiments on public men, with what success time will show. The plan proposed by Government does not please us, although a worse may be proposed. We are doing what we can to disseminate our own sentiments on the subject. To-day we had an interview with the Lord Advocate, which was far from satisfactory. Next week we intend leaving town, but for the reasons I formerly mentioned to you, we will be a good few days on the road. . . .

TO HIS CHILDREN.

Of same date as foregoing.

It gladdens me more than I am able to express to hear of your welfare and of your good behaviour. I often think of you, and daily pray that God may bless you, for without His blessing we cannot be happy. How thankful should we be that God is willing to give us all that is good both for the life that now is and that which is to come! Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and He will never leave you nor forsake you. Be dutiful to your mother. This is right in the Lord. Be thankful you have so good a mother to watch over you,—a mother who instructs you, and who prays for you, and who never wearies in seeking to do you good.

I have been greatly pleased with —— and ——'s letters. If you were to write a few sentences in any letter your mother sends, it would be a high gratification to me. You would learn from my last letter to your mother that I have seen the Queen. She was standing amidst the lords and ladies of her court, among others the Duke of Cambridge, one of the Royal family. The Queen is very interesting in her appearance. Her dress sparkled with diamonds, and she wore a circlet of jewels on her head. I took particular notice of everything, and hope to tell you all about it hereafter.

The weather here is becoming very agreeable. I hope it is the same with you. If I had time I would say a little to each of you, but for the present I must leave off. Adieu, my dearest children.

TO MRS HARPER.

LONDON, *March* 19, 1838.

. . . Yesterday I was hearing sermon in Mr Stretton's in the forenoon, and Wells Street in the evening. I was much pressed to preach in various places, but with the exception of one forenoon at Greenwich, I have not occupied a single pulpit since coming to London. In this respect I have had leisure enough. To-day we are to be at the Home Office, seeking further explanations of the intentions of Government. In the evening we dine with Mr Ellice, senior M.P. for Coventry, where we are to meet a number of M.P.s. To-morrow we are to have an interview with the Duke of Sussex, and in the evening to dine at Camberwell, where Mr O'Connell is to be of the party. The Church deputation are busy with their misrepresentations. We are endeavouring, where we find opportunity, to counteract their efforts. . . .

We are likely to leave London in the end of this week or beginning of next. Dr Hengh and Mr King take their journey to Birmingham to-night on their way home. . . .

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *March* 21, 1838.

. . . How thankful should we be to the God of our life, and how ready at all times to give Him thanks and praise for the care of His providence towards us. Of our obligations to His goodness in preserving us, we are reminded by what is befalling others day by day. I observe in the *Scotsman* the death of Mr Grindlay, our old neighbour in the Links. I suppose it had been sudden. What need to be always prepared, since we know not what a day may bring forth.—Our labours here are drawing towards a close. Dr Hengh and Mr King left yesterday; French is off to-day, so that only Drs Wardlaw and Beattie and myself remain. We propose to depart on Monday next; to hold a meeting at Leicester on Tuesday evening, and from that to journey homewards. We will leave at a critical juncture, and I am not sure but, if I am asked, I may remain a week or two longer, to counteract the operations of the Church deputation. Dr Wardlaw, I find, would willingly remain if I do; but, on the whole, the probability is that we shall decamp at the time I have mentioned.

To-day we had an interview with the Duke of Sussex,—a most interesting one it was. His Royal Highness is quite of our way of thinking, opposed to the endowments, and a Voluntary. He resides in Kensington Palace, where he has a library of Bibles, the largest and most complete, I suppose, in the world. He told us that he reads the Bible two hours every morning, and he appears to have done so with advantage, for among the many topics of his conversation sacred criticism was one. He gave us one or two entertaining specimens of his skill in that way. . . .

TO THE SAME.

23 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND,
March 26, 1838.

I was much afflicted to hear of Mr Smart's illness. I trust he is now better, and the danger past. . . .

—, too, is worse. This makes me very uneasy. I comfort myself with this, that if the symptoms were in any degree alarming, the doctor would not hesitate to tell. Your fatigue must be very great. I do, indeed, sympathize with you, and hope soon to be home to share more nearly in your anxieties. In the meantime, let us commit our way to the Lord, and He will bring it to pass.

I mentioned in my last that I had agreed to stay a week or two longer, but on the whole, I do not see much good we can do besides watching the proceedings of the Church deputation. Dr Beattie and I go to Leicester to-night to hold a meeting to-morrow, and return to London. We wrote to postpone the meeting, but had such remonstrances by return of post as induced us to keep our engagement.

I trust that if my last did not reach in time, you will secure, next Sabbath, intimation of the sacrament, and meeting of young people with the elders. I have written to Mr M'Kerrow to assist. . . .

. . . My love to all the children, and compliments to friends. Dr Beattie sends his kindest regards to you and the children.

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *March 29, 1838.*

After writing you last, I went with Dr Beattie to Leicester, travelling all Monday night, and returning on Tuesday night, after the public meeting was over. The meeting was an excellent one,—the large Town Hall crowded to the door,—the audience, according to some, amounting to not less than 2000 persons, and all most attentive to the account we gave them of the Church extension project, and of the aims of its supporters. The greatest ardour prevailed in our behalf, and altogether we had every cause to be gratified with our visit to that town. We were most hospitably entertained by several families of respectability, and such was the interest which the Vol. Ch.

Society of Leicester took in our cause, that they handsomely defrayed our expenses from London and back again.

Yesterday, I attended a large meeting in Exeter Hall of delegates from all parts of the kingdom, on the subject of negro emancipation. We proceeded in a body, 400 in number, to Downing Street, where we had an interview with Lords Melbourne, J. Russell, and Glenelg. Our object was stated to be the immediate emancipation of the negroes from the effects of what is called the apprenticeship clause. Their Lordships expressed themselves in a way adverse to the views of the delegation,—the business is to be discussed to-night in the House of Commons,—and a great struggle is anticipated, which will in all probability considerably affect the popularity of the Ministry.

I am not quite sure when I shall leave London—probably next week, by way of Leeds, to hold a meeting there. If not, I shall not leave till the beginning of the week following, to be home in time for the Fast Day. . . .

TO HIS FRIEND, THE REV. MR SMART.

ALBANY STREET, *Saturday*.

When I wrote to you from London little did I dream that, at the moment I was doing so, you were lying under the hand of God, in great suffering, and in great danger—though the same letter which brought me the alarming intelligence stated that, in the opinion of your medical attendants, the crisis of the disorder was past. Again and again it was my duty to beseech the Father of mercies that He would spare your precious life, and graciously answer the prayers of your partner and parents and many friends on your behalf. Most fervently do I join with them in acknowledging the divine goodness which you have so signally experienced in your recovery. I feel as if one of my most valued possessions on earth were spared me, in the preservation of one whose friendship has been to me a

constant source of solace and enjoyment, and as if my gratitude had been too small for this, as well as for other tokens of divine goodness and favour.

I trust you have found in your affliction that all things work together for good. One effect of such dispensations, as regards ministers of Christ, is to enable them to declare with greater impressiveness the value of religion as the only support of the mind when the day of trouble comes. How much do we need such lessons in our own experience, or in that of others! Everything speaks to us of instability and change,—change of circumstances, change of worlds,—and yet how prone do we find ourselves to forget what is so obvious, and practically to disown what is of all things most important. From the hurry and excitement of six weeks' occupation with matters of public concern, which hardly left time for the necessary moral discipline of the heart and mind, I return anxious, I trust, to profit by my wonted opportunities of usefulness and improvement, for truly the night cometh when no man can work. . . .

TO MRS HARPER.

LONDONDERRY, *August 18, 1839.*

. . . We have had a pleasant passage as regards weather, but I find I am in no respect improved as a sailor, having been squeamish most of the way when out of bed. On passing the rocky coast called the Giants' Causeway, the captain, at my request, landed a few of us in a boat, by which means we had a view of the scene. It is remarkable for the rows of natural pillars, some of which are so straight, and so compactly built together, as to have all the appearance of having been executed by the hand of man. A number of Irish were on the spot, eager to act as guides, and to get us to buy specimens which they had picked up among the rocks. A box of these I bought, after the following dialogue. As the captain allowed us but a few minutes, I told the boy who pressed his wares on me that

I had no time so much as to look at his curiosities; he said, 'Your honour, buy them now, and you can look at them after.' When I had taken it, another boy pressed me to take his also; I said I had got one already; he said, 'Your honour, buy another for your friends.' Such are the first specimens I met with of Irish quickness.

. . . The children, I hope, have got safely to Juniper Green. I expect to bring home some amusing news to them from Paddyland.

Let our prayers ascend daily for them and for ourselves, that we may be of the number of the families whom God has blessed. The time is approaching when we must part on earth. Oh, that we may *all* meet to part no more in heaven! . . .

TO THE SAME.

BONN, *March 2*, 1846.

I wrote you a note from Dover, the night before sailing for Belgium. We started next morning at nine, and in less than five hours set foot on continental ground. The first process was to attend at the custom-house that our luggage might be examined, in case of an attempt to smuggle things into the kingdom of Belgium without paying duty. It was both vexatious and amusing to pass through this ordeal, and to see others pass through it. Trunk, bag, and hat-box were all opened, and the contents turned over. Your nice packing of my things was turned upside down in a moment by the unceremonious hands of policemen, and happily, nothing contraband having been found, I got the whole speedily locked up again. We then started by railway for Brussels, passing by Bruges and Ghent. We arrived at Brussels about nine at night, and put up at the Hotel Bellone in the neighbourhood of the palace—itself a palace for extent and splendour. We passed next day in the city, calling on such good people as we had introductions to, and getting what information we could about the state of religion. We also

rode out to Waterloo, and went over the whole of the field of battle—traces of which are still visible on the walls of the houses, and on the very trees which have been left standing. Next morning, we travelled by railway from Brussels to Bonn, which we reached late at night, after passing through several places of great interest—Louvain, Liege, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Cologne. Bonn is a fine city on the Rhine. We are very comfortably lodged in the Hotel Grande Royale, to which I know no hotel in Edinburgh to compare for spaciousness and elegance. To-day I dined at what is called the *table d'hôte*—an account of which I intend to send for the special edification of — and —. We have been busy to-day seeking information on the subject of our mission, from professors and others, and leave to-morrow morning for Berlin by way of Hanover. We expect to reach Berlin by Monday next, where I anticipate the pleasure of letters from home. . . .

TO TWO OF HIS CHILDREN.

HALLE, *March 7, 1845.*

On Monday, I wrote your mamma from Bonn—a beautiful city on the Rhine. Since then we have had very hard travelling—chiefly by the royal mail, which is here called *schnell poste*, translated by Dr Eadie *snail* post, as it travels at the rate of five miles an hour. We were in one of these conveyances two days and a night without intermission, except stopping for food and change of horses. You would like to have it described. Well, it was nearly the size and shape of our omnibus, but differently horsed and planned. It was sometimes drawn by three horses abreast; part of our way we had five horses, three abreast and two leaders. The forepart of the carriage is lined off so as to resemble a post-chaise, holding three or four persons; the body is furnished with cross seats, like our stage coaches, and holds nine at least. The seats are springy, like our easy-chairs, and so roomy that the passengers can stretch their legs very much at their ease. I found the conveyance very agreeable

in itself, but the length of time made it wearisome, and the practice of smoking *in* the coach was at times all but unbearable. You must know that every man here, old and young, is a smoker, and that so inveterate is the custom that they smoke in journeying, in talking, in reading, and sometimes even in their sleep. Every man carries about with him cigars and a lucifer box, or a large pipe, which is often tied up with his walking-stick or umbrella. Conceive, then, the one-half of the passengers smoking together with all their might, with the windows up, and you will have an idea of the suffocation we were sometimes in. The following was our route from Bonn:—Descending the Rhine to Cologne, we proceeded from Dusseldorf by way of Elberfeld to Hanover, where we passed Thursday night, and came here yesterday by railway *via* Brunswick and Magdeburg. At Elberfeld we called on the celebrated Krummacher, author of *Elijah the Tishbite*. We passed about three-quarters of an hour in his company. He received us with much warmth, talked with interest about the object of our mission, and at parting we wrote our names in a sort of album, at the request of his wife, whom he introduced to us as his *frau*. We dined once on the way at the public table (called *table d'hôte*) of a village inn. It will amuse you to get an account of it. The table was covered much in the English fashion, with a pint bottle of wine to each guest. The dinner was served in courses—first, soup; then boiled beef with fried potatoes; next, mutton chop, with two kinds of greens; cold ham, eaten with stewed apples; pudding; small potatoes, boiled with melted butter; lastly, roast veal, followed by cheese and a great variety of sweetmeats. Each dish is brought from a side table, and handed round by the servants, making about ten or twelve courses in all. The whole charge, wine included, was about seventeen pence a head. You will now have a good idea of a German dinner, which I have been able so particularly to mention, because we have nearly the same round every day.

I will now describe a marriage. Going one day along the street, I saw a wedding party go into the church. There was a crowd entering, and I joined them. At one end of the church, there was a great table called the altar, on which was placed an image of Christ on the cross. Before this stood the minister. The bride and bridegroom, followed by two bridesmaids and two bridegroom's-men, walked up to an open place in front of the altar, the attendants standing right and left a little behind, and the relations down in the body of the church. A small bench like a sofa was placed before the young couple. It was decked all round with flowers, and upon this they kneeled while the minister pronounced on them a blessing. On rising, they kissed each other in the presence of the people, and then drove away. You sometimes ask me about the dresses people wear. All I can say of the bride's is, that it was white, and that her headgear consisted of a long piece of white cambric or lace, tied with her hair into a knot on the back of her head, and stretching down behind more than half-way to the ground in two straight and long tails, like a pair of enormous cravats. Here is another story for — and —. We came to a famous town called Aix-la-Chapelle. As the train was to stop about three-quarters of an hour, we took a nobby and rode into the town. The horse was like our own, but it had round its neck a string of what think you? Not beads, but bells; and away went we at a trot through the streets, jingling music all the way, as if all the bells of Bonnington Lodge had been ringing a chorus. We came to a large church,— several times larger than any church you have yet seen,— and on going in, we found people kneeling on the flagstones and praying to images with prayer-books in their hands. It was a pitiful sight, and might well make us thankful that we have Bibles to teach us to trust only in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to worship God alone. In walking over the cathedral, we passed over a large flat

stone, which was the grave of an emperor called Charlemagne, of whom you will by and by read a great deal in history. He was buried about ten hundred years ago, but some time after, when his tomb was opened, the skeleton was found seated on a throne of marble, clothed with his imperial robes, wearing a crown, and holding a sceptre, with a copy of the Gospels on his knee. In this way it had been his pleasure and that of his friends to bury him, vainly attempting to maintain something of the grandeur of royalty even in death. We did not see any of these things, as they have been removed to Vienna, except the marble throne. The boys and girls here amuse themselves much in the same way as at home, and look at strange things just as children do at home. Yesterday, as I was walking in the streets of an ancient city with my plaid on, I was stared at by numbers of people as I passed, and Mr McEwan heard some boys saying in German, 'There goes a cursed Frenchman.' But they offered no other insult.

If I had time, I could write something for the rest, but though I have addressed this letter to some by name, I intend it for you all. And while, my dear children, I have said these things because they may amuse you, as tending to show the sort of country I am in, I must not conclude without reminding you of those far more important things which concern the better country, whither the children of God are journeying. We are commanded to believe in Jesus, and to serve Him by walking by faith. Let us seek these things in the first place, and all other things will be added according to the promise.

We expect to be in Berlin on Tuesday next, when I hope to find letters from home. I am waiting for them with great anxiety. My next address is Geneva *poste restante*. Give my love to mamma. Say I will write her next week from Berlin, when I hope to be able to say something definite respecting our mission.

TO MRS HARPER.

BERLIN, 14th March 1846.

On our arrival here, three days ago, I found waiting me your letter and B.'s, also one from A. They were truly like waters to a thirsty soul. I trust I was indeed thankful to God to learn that you were well, and that the children too were well. That they have also been 'well behaved' is especially cause of gratitude to me. The blessings of heaven above and of the earth beneath, ever rest on our flock of darlings.

Since writing from Halle I have with my colleagues been busy there, and have been prosecuting our inquiries respecting the 'New Reformation.' We have seen cause materially to change our opinion of the character and tendency of the movement. Rongé is an infidel; Czerski a man of weak, and what is worse, of doubtful character; the great body of the people adopt the errors of their leaders; and the almost unanimous opinion entertained by the well-informed and the pious is, that instead of a new Reformation, it is a new phase of evil; and many do not scruple to say that it is a change from bad to worse. It was part of our plan to proceed to Silesia and Posen, with a view to see Rongé and Czerski, but we have abandoned this intention—partly on account of the disturbances in those parts, which have caused them to be placed under martial law, and partly because we have obtained otherwise the most decisive information respecting the irreligious character of the movement. We intend, therefore, without delay, to set out through Saxony for Switzerland.

We have met with some excellent and kind persons here. To-day we had interviews with two gentlemen of noble rank, who manifested the greatest interest in our mission. The probability is we will be invited to interviews with the king's ministers, who are apprised of our arrival and the object of our visit, but we do not intend to delay longer in

Berlin. To-morrow evening we spend with a Russian princess, an eminently accomplished and pious lady lately converted to Protestantism, who, on hearing of our being in Berlin, sent one and a second invitation to visit her. Yesterday, having most of the day to ourselves, we employed it in seeing the sights of Berlin and neighbourhood. We have been through the palace here ; and at Potsdam, a few miles out, we visited no less than three royal palaces more. Berlin is truly an elegant city,—the streets spacious ; the houses generally built in an elegant style,—but with all this, the town is nasty and disagreeable, from the circumstance that, being situate on a flat, there is scarcely any drainage, and the foul waters stagnate in the gutters many inches deep. On our way hither, we passed through Wittenburg, the city of Luther. There we visited his cell, sat in his chair, stood at his tomb, and saw the church-door where he stuck up his famous Theses against the doctrine of Indulgences.

I must add a story for the young folks. Well, at Halle there is a church with two towers or steeples at one end, said to be 200 feet high ; they are joined together near the top by a bridge thrown over the gulf between ; on this bridge a man takes his station every night at nine o'clock, when he chants upon a trumpet a hymn of Luther's praising God as preserver and stay ; all night he remains on his watch-tower to give alarms in case of fire ; but the most amusing thing is that the man, with his wife and children, live at the top of the steeple ; on the one side of the bridge is their kitchen, and on the other their parlour ; and the children come down every morning to school as if they were inhabitants of the clouds, and climb at night again to their nest at the top of the steeple. We went up one morning to this aerial dwelling-place, but though the little parlour was uncommonly neat, and the bridge we passed over, I daresay, secure, I confess it was a relief to me to find myself again in the streets of Halle.

TO THE SAME.

FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAINE,
March, 19, 1846.

I wrote you from Berlin on Monday. We left same day for this place, which we reached this morning a little past five. We travelled by what is called a courier post, which is alleged to journey faster than the Schnell; but all the speed we made was on an average six miles an hour, so that we were a day and two nights on the way. . . . The weather here has undergone a change for the worse; it is now cold and rather wet, but we expect soon to be in the warm clime of Switzerland. In our way hither, we passed a night at Leipsic, where we had a view of the field of battle in 1813, when the French sustained the bloody defeat which led to the first abdication of Napoleon. We travelled by way of Erfurt, where Luther lived in his early monkish days. As the post stopped for three-quarters of an hour, we had time to visit his cell, where we saw his Bible, his inkstand, and a specimen of his handwriting; also the chapel where he preached, the altar at which he was ordained, etc., all very ancient like and interesting. The towns through which we passed in this part of our route, are among the most picturesque and novel in appearance we have seen.

My plaid, which has been of unspeakable service to me, is everywhere an object of much curiosity. At one of the stations where we waited a little, and where I kept it on my shoulders, there was a general rush of ladies and gentlemen to the windows to see the sight; but, of course, in my eyes some of the dresses people wear in this country are more worth staring at.

In one of my letters I told a story about people living at the top of a steeple at Halle. I daresay the children were amused with it. We found another of the same kind at Leipsic. We ascend the tower to get a view of the city and environs. At the top lives the keeper with his family—240 feet high. On the bell being rung at the street door of the

tower, you look up, and in a little you see a man leaning over a rail as if half-way up to the clouds, and letting down a key by a long rope. On its reaching the ground, you open the door with it, and so make your way up the stair within. On getting up, we found two boys at their lessons, and the gudewife or her daughter busy with a washing. Ask —— to imagine a woman at a washing-tub on the top of N. Leith steeple.

I hope you are all well. My thoughts are perpetually on home. I cannot suppress anxieties about our numerous little flock; but how thankful am I that fears of ill-behaviour do not distress me, their conduct is always so good. Keep them ever in mind of the great salvation. Oh, that they may all be found on the day when God makes up His jewels! We expect to be in Geneva on Thursday next, when I hope to have the refreshing treat of letters from home. . . .

TO THE SAME.

LAUSANNE, *March* 28, 1846.

We came here late last night after travelling from Frankfurt by Mayence, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Baden, Strasbourg, Basle, through Switzerland by way of Berne. Our route has been very interesting—especially after journeying over the flat and sandy regions of Prussia. From Frankfurt we sailed down the Rhine to Coblenz, which is reckoned the most beautiful part of its course. The scenery is certainly very fine, although we saw it to great disadvantage, as spring as yet is but commencing here. On both sides of the river the hills are clad with vineyards from the water's edge, sometimes to the summits of the ridge. The vines, however, were perfectly leafless, so that we had nothing of summer's beauty to enjoy. One thing which made the view somewhat animating, was the number of vine-dressers, men and women, who were busy manuring and pruning the trees. It is not, however, all pleasant or easy work, as it seems to be the custom to carry the dung in baskets on the head to the

highest vineyards, and this filthy drudgery commonly falls to the lot of the women. Our Sabbaths have been dull days here. We spent the last at Mannheim. Learning that there was English service in the town, we attended. We had the English prayers,—rather wearisome,—and a sermon so poor and so Christless that, at the dismissal, we gave nothing to the plate, though it was held up to us somewhat cravingly. Baden-Baden is a celebrated watering-place. The hot springs pour forth continually a stream of water at so high a temperature as to be sufficient for the boiling of eggs. I put my hand into a ‘burnie’ of it in its way down the street, but could not bear the heat. However, I drank a tumbler of it at one of the wells not so hot as the other, and in the evening before going to bed had a very refreshing bath of it in our hotel. At present, the place is nearly empty, the season, as it is called, not commencing for about a month, when the gay, the idle, the frivolous,—gamblers, invalids, and tourists from all parts of Europe, German princes and London cits,—all characters and grades who possess money, throng the hotels and lodging-houses of Baden. The hotel we were in, can make up 150 beds. It is almost of the size of a palace or cotton-mill, and yet of this enormous dwelling-place *we* were the only tenants besides the family, the night we were there.

After spending a few days for inquiry on this side the lake, we proceed to Geneva *on our way home*. So great, however, is our impatience for letters, that we have sent forwards to Geneva, and expect them to-night. . . .

Say to ——— that I earnestly hope he is not only studying the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, but treading in his steps towards the holy city by ‘repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Again my love to the children; oh, how fondly I bear them on my heart! The God of salvation give *them* and *us* a place in His family to abide for ever.

TO THE SAME.

GENEVA, *March 30.*

My letter was too late for posting on Saturday night. I do not now regret the delay, as it gives me an opportunity of enclosing a fly-leaf of news after witnessing a Sabbath at Lausanne. You are aware, I presume, that for a considerable time a law has been in force at Lausanne and in some of the neighbouring communes, suppressing all meetings for religious worship except those in connection with the National Church. Since the enactment of this law, the Seceders have been accustomed to meet in secret in small parties, of which from twelve to twenty are commonly held every Lord's day. They have been repeatedly dissolved by the police, but for some time past the vigilance of the latter seemed to be relaxed, and the meetings were kept up without much interruption. It is understood, however, that on Saturday night, in consequence of news from Zurich, the authorities had resolved to commence with renewed vigour to put the law against conventicles in force. In course of the day and evening, six or eight of these private meetings for worship were broken in upon by the police and dispersed. Dr Eadie and I attended a morning meeting,—the largest usually held,—where we had an opportunity of witnessing the insult and tyrannical violence to which the Seceders are exposed. Mr Schol was our conductor. For the sake of privacy, we entered by the door of a warehouse attached to the dwelling where worship was held, and after passing through sundry parts of the premises, and along passages, and up stairs, till we began to wonder what all this was to end in, we reached an upper room, where Professor Chapnys was conducting the services. After his exposition had proceeded about twenty minutes, the bell was rung with force, and in marched two policemen, armed with swords and a warrant bearing the Government seal, commanding the meeting to disperse as contrary to law.

The preacher immediately stopped, and asked permission to pray. No answer was given. He proceeded. After uttering a few sentences he was interrupted with a call, 'Have done, if you please.' Continuing a few seconds longer, he was again commanded to have done, and the service closed in the middle of a sentence, without so much as opportunity being given to pronounce the blessing. The persecutors were large, fierce-looking men, and what with their swords and frowning mien, and worse than tyrannical errand, seemed living effigies of a pair of Claverhouse's dragoons. The mob without greeted the congregation with hooting, and some of them might almost be said to gnash their teeth with rage. No words can give adequate utterance to the feelings of indignation with which we contemplated the atrocious proceedings. We attended another meeting about two hours after, which passed undiscovered; but a third, held in the evening, in a house adjoining our hotel, was dispersed, not without violence, partly under our eyes. I have no space for comment. I can only add that we had a lengthened interview this morning with the Seceders' Church Commission, which was highly gratifying and satisfactory to us, and, I trust, may prove not without advantage to the De Vaud brethren. The Lord of Hosts be their guide and defender.

TO THREE OF HIS CHILDREN.

LOGIE COTTAGE, *July 21.*

I am wearying much to see you, and were this place not so far away, and our beds so few, I would have had you all here together. I hope to take you to the country some other time, and to see your little feet tripping about over the lea, or among the heather.

There is a well here, of the water of which we all drink before breakfast. It tastes like a dose of salts among a jug of water. But it is thought good for the health. So we all take it, though we sometimes make faces, the taste is so

bad. — in particular dislikes it. She looked very miserable this morning when she had to swallow a large tumbler of it. But there are other things here better tasted than the salt water. On some of the braes strawberries grow wild. They are not much larger than peas, and not many of them, but very sweet. — and — were gathering some to-day. We got nice ones out of a garden and as I wish you to get a share of good things, I have sent a message to — about strawberries, to which I hope she will attend.

And now, my sweet little faces, continue to be well-behaved. Be obedient to —, who is at present mistress of the house. Mind your prayers, and always say them with reverence, as in prayer we speak to God. Often think of God's love in sending His Son to save us, and of the wickedness of the human heart in not loving God, who is Love. To-morrow is the Sabbath. Remember how Jesus rose from the dead. Give my kindest love to — and all the rest.

TO A DAUGHTER.

KINROSS, *July 12, 1851.*

I notice your advice to me to be moderate in study. To do a little day by day I find to be necessary for the enjoyment of recreation when it comes, and it is but little I do in the way of progress, and not much in the way of application. I believe it is every one's duty to relax at times, but when I think of the overwhelming importance of salvation and eternity, and the preparedness for the coming change, I feel as if every hour were misspent or lost, that is not made to bear on the one thing needful.

TO THE SAME.

I took farewell of —. She beckoned me to her bedside, and in dying whispers, with one of her eyes nearly closed, expressed her love to me, as she said, for leading her

to the cross, and gave me her blessing. I have not for long been so much moved by a deathbed scene, and left with fervent wishes that I might meet death with as much peace and composure as that poor girl showed as she was entering the dark valley. These are lessons that teach us the 'profitableness of godliness,' and the inestimable privilege of the peace that is found in believing.

TO THE SAME.

4 WARWICK TERRACE, BELGRAVE ROAD,
March 24, 1852.

I intend remaining in London till the middle of next week. I am now done with parliamentary business, and have leisure to look about me. It is quite possible, however, I may have something to do in the education affair, as I see from the Church Commission this week, that there will soon be other parties in the field. I passed several hours in the British Museum the other day. The Assyrian Collection is larger and in much better order than when you saw it. Yesterday afternoon I paced for more than an hour among the monuments in Westminster Abbey, musing on the men of the past, and on the vanity of earthly things. It is an indescribably solemn scene when one visits it alone. On Tuesday evening ——— and I visited a spectacle of another kind, a Lent service in St Barnabas Church,—the highest Puseyite place in London. We saw their mode of baptism, and all the parade of the ritual at evening prayers. The whole affair was a most childish attempt to give solemnity to the worship of God by idle and empty forms. As I have rather more than enough veneration for old ecclesiastical edifices and relics of the past, it is not without its use to be an eye-witness of the living (I should rather say the dead) mummery to which such places are so often devoted, and which their architectural fascinations are calculated in a superstitious sense to sanctify. What thankfulness should we have for the simplicity of the

gospel! May we ever imbibe its spirit, and rejoice in its lively hope.

TO A MEMBER OF HIS CONGREGATION.

LEITH, *March 22, 1860.*

From your kind friend Mrs ——— I have heard of the very weak state to which you are reduced, and that you are daily looking forward to your change. Owing to your long-continued illness, I have no doubt the thought of eternity has been much in your mind, and I trust it has lost its terrors to you through faith in the Lord Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. Believers are more than conquerors through Him who loved them. And is he not infinitely worthy of our faith and love? ‘Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.’ He who thus submitted to poverty, nay, to the pains of death, will not leave His people unaided—to struggle alone—in their hour of need, when heart and flesh faint and fail.

Why did He partake of flesh and blood, but that He might be a *merciful* and *faithful* High Priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people?

In suffering in our room, Christ also suffered as an example of the resignation to the will of God with which we should bear our afflictions. And surely it is consoling to think that if we suffer according to the will of God, we are treading in the steps of Jesus, who having borne our sins, has taken the sting from death itself. And so His words to His afflicted people are words of promise and of comfort.

‘Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.’ ‘I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.’

Believe in Him with steadfast heart, and you shall find consolation in Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit, and the light of God’s countenance as your heavenly Father.

Your wish shall be attended to on Sabbath. With kind remembrances to Mr and Mrs —, and commending you to the grace of God.

TO MRS HARPER.

AMSTERDAM, *June 4*, [1862.]
RONDEEL'S HOTEL.

Since writing you from Antwerp, we have been journeying hither by Rotterdam, Utrecht, etc., through a country remarkable for its flatness, and waters and green pastures as far as the eye can reach. Among other places we saw was Gouda, which is known in our country principally for its cheese, but which is well worth visiting for its church, which is famed among the curious for stained windows of almost unrivalled richness and beauty.

We did not get here till pretty late at night, and had to get quarters in a different hotel from the one we intended, on account of its being full. . . .

We go to the Synod to-morrow, expecting to return on Thursday, and, after a day here, to turn our face homeward. We have all been enjoying good health and spirits, and I trust that our mission may be of some advantage to the worthy men to whom we are sent, and to the good cause in their hands.

I hope to be home by the end of next week, but will write again soon. I am wearying to hear from home, but I am afraid the nearest place at which I can hear is Rotterdam, to which I wish you to address your letter *poste restante*. I trust you are all well, but cannot help being anxious. My love to the children.

TO A DAUGHTER.

WINDSOR, *June 16*, 1862.

After a fortnight's journeying among the meadows of Holland, and the good, honest people who make butter and cheese there, I am thus far on my way home. I trust by this time — is also turning his face in the same

direction. That you may not all at once have a surfeit of foreign news, it may be as well for me to take the start with my share of them, and tell you something of what I have seen. Well then, the Dutch are an interesting people. By necessity of position they are persevering and industrious. If they were not so, their country would soon be the bottom of a sea. They have to protect themselves from being drowned, by great dykes, erected and maintained at a heavy expense of labour. The superfluous water they confine to canals, which intersect the country in all directions, and serve for ways of inland communication by boats of various sizes continually passing to and fro. With trifling exceptions, their dress is like our own. These exceptions are chiefly among the working classes in the most northern provinces. Their mode of living resembles what you saw in Hamburg. As to personal appearance, it is generally the opposite of the dumpiness and clumsiness in which we have them described; and instead of being taciturn, we found them generally talkative. The people whom we went to see are a most interesting and deserving body. In principle and position they are exactly on the same ground as the Scottish Secession in the days of the Erskines. We attended their Synod, and though we did not understand what was said, we felt greatly entertained and pleased with all we saw. What would you think of grave divines sitting in Synod, every man with his pipe before him, and taking a whiff now and then with as much gravity as if it were a regular piece of synodical business? But notwithstanding this, all was decorous and solemn. The route gave me opportunity to see almost all the towns of note, and well worth seeing they are, though it were only for the cleanness of every nook and corner.

TO HIS SON JOHN DICK.

July 22, 1862.

I feel deeply interested in the contents of your note. When I think of the indifference to divine things which

multitudes evince, I bless God that you continue to give earnest heed to the one thing needful. That you feel a conflict necessary is what you may lay your account with, for the word of God prepares us for it, and the experience of God's people affords many examples of such conflict being oftentimes painful and arduous. But He who calls us to fight the good fight—the fight of faith—gives promise of His spirit to strengthen us with all might in the inner man. The exhortations to vigilance and prayer and perseverance with which Scripture abounds, both intimate the necessity of striving against sin, and give assurance of help and of final victory. The truths you mention are certainly full of comfort to the believer, and I trust you will continue more and more to derive from these, and from the promises of the word, strength and consolation.

I am sorry that other things pressing in consequence of my long absence, prevent my writing at greater length. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

January 17, 1863.

. . . I trust you are also keeping constantly in view that higher blessedness that can only be found in the faith of Christ. The very general awakening throughout the country, is well calculated to make us all more delight to make our calling and election sure. It is only when we have attained to peace in believing that we can find true enjoyment in anything. It is a great happiness to me to think that my children are giving growing evidence of an interest in the things that accompany salvation. We have had very refreshing letters from J. —, showing how fully he and I— have given themselves to Christ.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *Feb. 14, [1863.]*

You have been expecting to hear again this week about our dear John. There has been little change in his

symptoms—certainly none for the better—since you heard last.

B—— sends the carriage for him every day. He takes a drive for a few miles, and appears somewhat to enjoy it. My fears greatly exceed my hopes. The thought of his being taken away is very grievous, but whatever be the will of God with respect to his continuance here, we have all the consolation of knowing that he is a child of God, and advanced beyond most for his years, in the graces of the Christian character. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *March 31.*

. . . Your principal allusion in your letter is to matters still more important, viz., the health of the soul. What you mention of your discouragements is no strange thing in the history of religious experience. Undoubtedly, the sources of spiritual joy are sufficient to make the believer at all times assured and happy, and accordingly the exhortation of Paul is, 'Rejoice in the Lord always.' This shows that joy in God is both a duty and a privilege. It is *in the Lord* such joy is found. This shows us that it is by 'looking to Jesus' and 'walking in Christ' that we must seek this joy, and may hope to maintain it. You have therefore taken the right way by 'fixing your whole thoughts on the cross,' for the peace and comfort you need when doubts and fears assail you. We should never have peace at all if our acceptance with God depended on what we are in ourselves. We are 'complete in Christ,' and only in Him. And the more we realise this truth, and have our souls resting on Christ for salvation, the more shall we be drawn to His service and find pleasure in it, just as we feel it to be our happiness to do what is pleasing to those whom we truly love. You may find it of use to remember a remark of Henry Martyn's, who had his fears like you, that he was sure of one thing, that his face was turned in an opposite

direction to what it once was, though he was often stumbling in the way. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

. . . I was out this morning a little past six, when there was no foot stirring either within doors or without. The weather was enchantingly fine, and as I strolled through the wood, I could not but reflect on the wonderful bounty of Providence in pouring out such a profusion of beauties on the face of nature, which we are all so prone to overlook. And if such be the manifestation of goodness in nature, what should we not say of the discoveries of God's grace in the blessings of salvation ? . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH, *June 4, 1863.*

. . . It is a duty to take care of our health, that we may be the better able for our duties while providence is pleased to continue us here ; just as it is also our duty to submit to the will of God in whatever trials He may be pleased to appoint for us, and at whatever time it may seem to Him good our pilgrimage should close. It is our comfort to know that in all circumstances our heavenly Father is with them who fear and love Him, as their guide, and portion, and exceeding joy. . . .

I intend going to B—— to-morrow. . . . I must return early in the week after the second Sabbath of the month, to attend the Committee on Union with the Free Church. This subject, as you may well suppose, excites great interest. Everything promises well for a happy result. Difficulties may be expected, but where there is a will there is a way, and the will seems to be cordial and general on the side of both the Churches. It will be a great day for the cause of truth and charity when such a union is accomplished. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

June 27, 1863.

What you say of your religious reflections and exercises is deeply interesting to me. I am thankful that you lay so much to heart the one thing needful. If you have not the fixedness of mind on divine things which you desire, the remedy lies in the Word of God and prayer. We find the Psalmist praying that his heart might be 'united' to fear God's name, lxxxvi. 11. Then the things of God are so great and excellent that if we steadily contemplate them they cannot fail to acquire a growing influence upon us. There is no real progress to be made in the divine life without watchfulness over ourselves and a constant warfare against sin, both within and without. And this warfare is to be prosecuted in the strength of grace which God hath promised shall be sufficient for us. 'Ask and ye shall receive' is the great encouragement given us to go on in the strength of the Lord.

In my approaches to the throne of grace I have not been unmindful of your request.

Since my return my time has been a good deal taken up with the Union business. Nothing could be more brotherly and harmonious than the meeting of the Committees. We are to meet again soon to confer about a basis of union. From all appearances, I am very hopeful that our deliberations will be crowned with success, and that sooner than many people believe to be possible.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, August 10, 1863.

I am sure you must have been thinking me very forgetful for not sooner answering your letter of the 13th ult. Nor can I excuse myself altogether when I consider the purport of your letter, but I have really something to say for myself as an explanation of my delay.

Part of my time was taken up with a trip to Lochgoil to see M., and immediately after my attention was a good deal engaged with the business of the proposed union of the Free Church with our own. Last of all came the opening of the Hall, with the duties of which I am now pretty much engrossed. I greatly sympathize with you in what you say of your doubts and fears. To overcome these the only course is to follow our Lord's directions, John xiv. 1, etc. Faith in God as reconciling us to Himself, and faith in Christ through whom we receive the reconciliation, is the only antidote to the troubles of the heart under a sense of our unworthiness and shortcomings. No strange thing happens us when we are tempted. And from this we may see that our sin is not in being tempted, but in not resisting temptation when it assails us. Our duty is to watch against it, so that we may not knowingly, or through heedlessness, give occasion to temptation; and when overtaken, our duty is to be strong in the Lord by asking grace to help us in the time of need.

As to the Millenarian tenet of the personal reign, I have for myself no difficulty. The accounts of the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 51, etc., 1 Thess. iv. 13, etc., speak only of one, not of two resurrections,—one of the martyrs to reign with Christ on earth, the other of believers generally. In like manner our Lord, John v. 28, 29, speaks of the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked as taking place together, and as followed immediately by the general judgment. The passage, Rev. xx. 4, which Millenarians lay stress upon, is figurative, as is implied in the living again of the 'SOULS OF THEM that were beheaded,' etc.

You ask my opinion of Matt. xxv. 32.

I take 'all nations' in the proper sense of the words to mean all mankind. If a portion were intended, there would be some limitation indicated in the context. But there is nothing to restrict the expression to Gentiles as distinguished from Jews. Still less is there any ground for distinguishing between the goats and the sheep in the

way you refer to, as if the sheep denoted the Gentiles, when it is plain the distinction does not refer to *nation* or *race*, but to *character*, viz. the righteous and the wicked.

My advice is, that you should not be much troubled by discussions of this nature. Our comfort is mainly to be found in things plainly revealed. . . .

TO A BROTHER MINISTER.

LEITH, Oct. 30, 1863.

It was with unfeigned sympathy I heard of the death of your dear boy. From what you had said when here, I understand you were even then anxious about the state of his health ; and now that your fears have been mournfully realized, I trust you are able also to realize the consolation which the Word of God affords to believing parents in the season of bereavement and sorrow.

It would be superfluous on my part to suggest to you these sources of consolation and motives to resignation which the Divine Word so abundantly supplies ; but I may, as myself a mourner, be permitted to say that nothing else can effectually minister to a wounded spirit. To you and your sorrowing partner the words of the great Teacher will now come with peculiar preciousness : ‘Suffer the little ones to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ At the grave’s mouth these words, I daresay, were much in your thoughts.

You will accept of the expression of my sympathy with Mrs B. and yourself, in which Mrs. H. cordially unites.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, Jan. 2, 1864.

. . . In our mutual good wishes at this season there certainly is, in our case, a mingling of sorrow with our joy. The image of my dear John is never out of my mind ; and though we have the fullest assurance that in any case can

be had that he is unspeakably happy, I have much cause to fear that I am more prone to weep for our loss than to rejoice in his gain. But this is no doubt a morbid sadness to indulge, and I strive against it. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.'

I am concerned to hear of dear little Abby's return of weakness and other rather unfavourable symptoms. Would the doctor disapprove of a change of air? It was beneficial before—may it not be so again? And would not Leith Mount be the proper place for the experiment? . . .

We had our gathering yesterday—all except ———, who is too tender yet to be taken out on such occasions. Before parting I read to them your letter—with difficulty keeping command of myself in one or two of its touching sentences. Oh, that I had 'the tongue of the learned,' to turn every occasion into an opportunity of spiritual improvement! . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *Jan.* 15, 1864.

It is with much sympathy with ——— and you that we hear of dear Abby's continued illness. I do not doubt but your anxieties and fears are at times like to overwhelm you, —and your own strength, too, is but little able to undergo any unusual strain, such as you are now called to bear. Fervently do I hope and pray that your little one may be spared to you, and that you may be supported and carried through this trial of your faith, in God's good providence, and the promises He has given to His people.

I need not remind you that these are great and precious, as they are equal to all our need, and are guaranteed by the faithfulness of Him, all whose counsels are truth, and whose very chastenings are tokens of fatherly love. Have you not seen much of this already in the sweet and soothing words which came from Abby's lips in her previous illness? How evidently is she a little one whom Jesus has blessed, and in

the number of those of whom is the kingdom of heaven. In such a case good cannot but come of your present trial, whatever shall be the issue of it. If your dear child is spared to you, there is good ground to hope she will be to you a treasure on earth. If her heavenly Father call her home, she will add to your treasure in heaven. Be assured God will not leave you unaided in your hour of need. Your prayers, I know, are continually ascending for needed grace, and He says not [to] any who truly seek Him, 'Seek ye me in vain.' . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *Jan.* 22, [1864.]

. . . You say you have not the unclouded peace in believing which is so desirable, and yet I am aware you well know the way of peace. Look then with full reliance to the Lamb of God. He says, 'In me ye shall have peace.' And how? 'Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' You have thus the call and promise of the faithful and true witness to embrace and to rest on. Keep this constantly in view, and be not cast down or troubled by a sense of your unworthiness, seeing that your trust is to be in Him who is worthy, and in whom all fulness dwells. Having such an High Priest, we are to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need.

I have singularly refreshing letters from — and —. To both, God is sending prosperity in the concerns of the soul. — is evidently a decided and lively Christian. —, too, is opening his heart on this subject in a most hopeful manner. L—, far from proving a scene of temptation to him, appears rather to be a place of reviving to his soul. He seems much interested in the awakening that is manifested in so many places, and disposed to take part personally in advancing the work of God. For these things, I praise the Lord. . . .

TO A GRANDCHILD.

LEITH MOUNT, *April* 20, 1864.

I am greatly delighted with your beautiful present of books. They shall have a place on my shelves, where they may often catch my eye. When I see them I will think of the dear little face I kissed the other night in her crib, and will be reminded to pray that she may be one of the lambs whom Jesus the Good Shepherd gathers with His arms and carries in His bosom.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH, *May* 6, 1864.

I do not wonder that your heart wound is still so fresh, and that many little occurrences tend to open it anew. Your dear Abby was so closely associated with all your doings and with everything around you, and her ways were so peculiarly winning, that her image will long be recalled to your thoughts with force and tenderness. But try to combine with fond recollections of her attractive qualities, the thought of what she is now, and how she now wears the golden crown she spoke of, in the presence of the Saviour whom she loved.

I daily feel the need of supporting myself by similar reflections amidst much depressing sadness from the loss of dear John. My library, which used to be a scene of much quiet enjoyment, is now, alas! full of mementoes on every side of sorrowful bereavement. Hardly a book but reminds me of him as forcibly as if I read his name on every title-page. I find that grief is apt to nurse itself till it becomes the habitual frame of mind. But we should guard against this for the sake of the living, and that we may not be hindered in our daily duties, nor lose sight of the gracious hand that orders and overrules all our affairs.

Never forget my dear ——, that your dear child is in

glory, and where she is we all hope at last to find our eternal home. Meanwhile, let us strive to set our comforts and mercies over against our trials, and remember that a few short years, and through the faith of Jesus, we shall find, in a way we cannot yet fully realise, that all has been well. . . .

TO MRS HARPER.

GENEVA, *May* 28, 1864.

I got here on Friday. I should have written earlier to remove any anxiety that may have been felt at home about my health, but my run through France was necessarily hurried that I might arrive in time. At the hotels, my time was much taken up in ascertaining, without risk of mistake, the proper trains and hours of departure, as the slightest error would have prevented my getting forward in time, and made my mission a failure and a mockery. In various smaller points I found the table I had with me incorrect ; however, I succeeded in reaching Geneva just in time to go to the day-meeting, which, however, was in progress before I found the place. I missed writing on Saturday from not knowing the post hour, and yesterday being Sabbath I could not get another opportunity till to-day, and now to make sure of not losing another, I am up at five in the morning.

On arrival, I put up at the hotel Metropole, but next day came by particular invitation to Prof. La Harpe's, who, with his lady, shows me every possible attention and kindness. The meetings on Friday afternoon and evening—the only ones I could attend—were crowded and came off well, but there were not so many strangers from a distance as I expected,—none from Scotland but Mr MacGill and myself. I made a short speech at the evening meeting. There have [been] a number of soirees in the open air at the private houses of friends. The only one I could attend was at

D'Aubigné's on Saturday evening. Yesterday, from nine in the morning till nine at night, we were at one kind of service and another, with the exception of two or three hours in the middle of the day. The worship is conducted with great simplicity.

Mr MacGill and I propose a trip into Piedmont, but nothing will be determined on till I see him in the afternoon, on his returning from a trip to Lausanne. If we go, I will write every other day when we have opportunity of a post. . . .

I was not surprised to hear of Mr S——'s death. . . . The older members are thus slipping off—a loud call to us all, and more especially to me, to see the day approaching. . . .

TO A WIDOW.

GENEVA, *May* 30, 1864.

After my solemn parting with Mr S., it gave me no surprise when I arrived here to hear of your dear husband's death. I snatch a few minutes this morning to give expression to my sympathy with you and your bereaved family. For, indeed, bereaved you are. Although Mr S. was so long in an ailing and helpless state, his company was not the less dear to you, and the blank caused by his removal will be not the less sad. But your sorrow will be soothed by the thought that one so dear has passed away from all his afflictions, and that he has now renewed his strength, yea, perfected it, in the presence of the Lord. Yours is the abundant consolation of knowing how he loved his Saviour while he lived, and yours, too, is the privilege, together with your family, of having many, and I trust profitable, recollections of his Christian example. Stay your minds on the promises of God's word, which are exceedingly great and precious, and the faithfulness of the Promiser assures us that they shall never fail.

I trust your own health has not suffered. It is your duty to take care of it. I trust also that dear Mrs M. is in somewhat better health than when I last saw her. May the blessing of heaven above be on your family circle. If God be our portion, we shall not want any good thing. Remember me with kindest regards and sympathy to them all.

TO MRS HARPER.

LA TOUR, *June 2, 1864.*

We are now in the country of the Vaudois, whither we came yesterday from Turin. This town is in the midst of hills and vines. The Waldensian College is here, and one of the churches of this interesting people. We have not yet met with any of them, but are about to sally forth to call on the pastor. Last night on arriving we took up our abode in the chief hotel, called L'Ours,—a queer old building, something like a monastery turned into an inn; but the people are quiet and attentive, and the beds beautifully clean. Our last stay was at Turin, a very fine city. The hotel we were recommended to go to is an elegant one, but no English is spoken by the waiters, so that we were sometimes put to our shifts to get on. We purpose next to visit Genoa, which is within a run of a few hours; after that we will most probably go to Milan.

I find it difficult to say exactly when I am likely to be home, but we are making no delay in any place after a general view of it. We shall be here to-day, as we wish for particular information about the Waldenses. The present churches are the heirs and representatives of the persecuted of former times, and, both on account of the past and present, excite a friendly interest. . . .

TO THE SAME.

ROME, *March 29, 1866.*

To-day I got letter with enclosures from Lord Minto. We arrived here yesterday morning by steamer from

Leghorn. The weather was calm, the sea smooth, so that we escaped sickness, and had what is considered a very good passage. With the exception of about two hours, I kept on deck, and notwithstanding all the haps I had with me, might have suffered from the cold as it drew towards morning, but Mr ——— insisted on putting his largest overcoat on me, tucking up my rug under my chin and over my shoulders, so that I sat without any feeling of inconvenience from the chill of the morning. At Civita Vecchia we set foot in the Pope's dominions. From the official notice I saw before leaving home, I expected His Holiness' custom officers would rob me of my Bible, and also of some of the Gospels in Italian, which I had from Mr Murdoch. Instead of this, they hardly looked into my portmanteau beyond opening it, and passing a hand quietly under some of the clothing. They were not only not troublesome, but civil. If these were specimens of the Pope's servants, they must not be such bad fellows after all. We were like to be put about for quarters in Rome. The rush of visitors is unprecedented. The hotel we first applied to had not a single bed to let, and numerous applicants, viz., Cook with fifty excursionists, had to be refused. We were told by the people there, that they did not think we could find accommodation in any hotel in Rome. Indeed, Mr ——— of Leghorn had heard that parties were obliged to sleep in cabs, for want of room either in private lodging or hotels. However, we were advised by a cabman to try Hotel Allemagne Via Condotti, and here we are. It is a German house. Murray's handbook gives it so bad a character for dearness and dirt, that the proprietor threatens a prosecution. It is certainly not the beautifully clean quarters we have hitherto been enjoying, and I confess I ventured to lie down in bed with the worst fears of what was likely to follow ; but it turned out that I had the best night's rest I have had for several nights, and altogether we are quite content with our quarters, and have reason to be thankful that

we have got such as they are. . . . We drove yesterday to the Church of St Peter's, and have been there to-day to witness some of the ceremonies of what the Romanists call Holy Week. The church itself is truly a grand and gorgeous edifice. St Paul's, London, is not to be compared with it. It is more than sixty feet higher. Its proportions within are exceedingly fine, and its decorations in sculpture, painting, and gold are superb. The open space in front by which you approach is lined on both sides by a magnificent colonnade, and on the front there is a balcony, from which the Pope blesses the people. This was one of the ceremonies of to-day, and also that of the Pope washing the disciples' feet. I went early to the spectacle. After mass in one of the side chapels by one of the high dignitaries, I made my way into an enclosure reserved for those who appear in dress coats. Mine being of this description, I took my place, and secured a footing close to the railing within which the Pope performed the ceremony. Thirteen priests were arranged on a raised seat, dressed in what appeared to be thin white flannel. On the Pope's entrance, a variety of ceremonies were gone through in the way of bowings, etc. Then one of the retinue presented him with an apron with much ceremony, which he tied round his waist. He then descended from his throne, preceded by a priest bearing a pitcher of water of the size of a good large coffee-pot, with a basin and towel. As the Pope passed along, the priest poured water on the foot of each of the pilgrims, the Pope wiped it with the towel, and kissed it. This he did along the entire row ; and as I was quite close to the platform on which the whole mummery was performed, I had a near view of Pio himself as well as of the ceremonial. The men's skins were either somewhat dun, or else their feet needed a better washing than the Pope gave them. Mr ——— not having a dress coat, viewed the affair from some distance, but by the aid of his opera-glass he witnessed the spectacle very well, and he had also the satisfaction of being a spectator of the papal benediction in front

of St Peter's. This ceremony is repeated on the Sunday following in a more imposing manner, but I don't intend to be a sight-seer on that occasion.

The Pope looks as he is generally represented, a jolly, good-natured man; but, woe me! what a system of mummery, dumb show, and priestcraft Popery is! We have already seen a good deal of this, and will, no doubt, see much more. We have still to see the antiquities of Rome, which, to me, are by far the most interesting. Mr Lewis most kindly offered to go with us to the principal scenes, and, as he knows the whole so well, we will, no doubt, greatly profit by his attention. Judging from what we have as yet seen, Rome is neither the dirty nor the beggar-swarming place which it is sometimes represented to be. All I have seen is as clean and orderly as the best parts of Leith. My report may be different on a fuller acquaintance with the city. . . .

TO THE SAME.

ROME, *April 12, 1866.*

I wrote to — from Naples on Monday, and on arriving here yesterday I got her letter and one from —, from both of which I learn with pleasure that all at home are well. Our route homewards will most probably be by Milan and Geneva. Mr — still speaks of the possibility of extending our tour to Vienna; but to this I am quite averse, for I do not see it can be accomplished before the meeting of Synod. I am almost satiated with sight-seeing. The various objects that invite attention are so numerous, and the time so inadequate to do them justice, that one feels almost oppressed. Yesterday we again visited St Peter's, and went through the galleries of the Vatican—a vast and wonderful spectacle. The library is a most magnificent suite of rooms. The walls and ceilings are superbly painted; the book-cases loaded with richest gildings, but not a book to be seen, all being carefully locked up from view, one

would almost think from use. It is a speaking symbol of Popery,—outward pomp and display. (But the hidden treasures of literature in these splendid repositories are said to be the richest in the world.

. . . My yearnings for home are great, especially on Sabbaths. To me they are dull days, as I have to make my escape from the worldliness of the *table d'hôte* to my bedroom, and seldom fall in with one likeminded in the things of the soul, and everything within doors and without speaks of forgetfulness of God. At Naples, I introduced myself to Mr Buscarlet, Free Church minister, an excellent and amiable young man, with whom I passed some hours most agreeably. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE,
ROME, April 18, 1866.

I continue my perambulations in Rome, chiefly among its antiquities, with which I am getting pretty familiar. I have rambled twice over the ruins of the palace of the Cæsars; have been three times in the Coliseum; as often in the Forum, where the Roman Senate sat, and the orators thundered. Some of the modern sights I have also seen with interest. On Friday I set off to the *Scala Sancta*, as it is called—that is, the sacred stair. It is so holy, that persons must ascend it on their knees, repeating prayers as they climb step by step; and for this act of devotion, when they reach the top and make an offering to the treasury, they receive the forgiveness of sins. What makes these steps so sacred, is that according to popish tradition they belonged to Pilate's house, and were the way by which our Saviour descended from Pilate's judgment-seat. Rome contains many private palaces, which are rich in paintings and statuary, and are open to the public. I sauntered through two of these last week. It is difficult to describe

the extent and splendour. One would need weeks to examine their treasures with attention. All things conspire to give one the impression that this is a city wholly given up to the gratification of the senses in matters of religion as well as in common life.

TO A DAUGHTER GOING ABROAD.

CLYDESDALE VILLA, WINDSOR,
October 22, 1866.

By the great kindness of Mrs S., a lady who lives a little way from this, I have an unexpected opportunity of writing to you at Alexandria. This will, I expect, be put into your hands by Mrs S.'s brother, Captain Campbell, who sails on Wednesday for the overland route, by Marseilles. I could not let such an opportunity pass of apprising you of your mother's and my safe return from Southampton and arrival here, where we found James and family well. Our meeting was saddened by the thought of parting with you, but we comfort one another by the hope that you will soon find yourself more at home on board ship, and that a happy welcome awaits you at the termination of your voyage. You are never out of our thoughts, and always remembered in our prayers. May the Father of mercies shield you, my beloved child. May the sure mercies of the everlasting covenant be your portion. May the joy of the Lord be your strength.

It is no small comfort to us to think that you have the society of Dr and Mrs Young, and other passengers like-minded, to cheer you on your way. Mrs C., next cabin, is the wife of a medical missionary at Amoy. Mrs S., your neighbour, goes to India with her husband. We went ashore with her father and sister, who had been looking out for you, as we were for them when they came on board. They are very polite, pleasant people. . . .

TO THE SAME.

WINDSOR, *October 24, 1866.*

I expect you will receive a letter at Alexandria, of which Captain Campbell most kindly offered to be the bearer.

I write you again, because you will probably look for a letter at Suez. I trust you have been prosecuting your voyage with comfort. The weather has been remarkably calm here since you sailed. If you have had such weather at sea, you will have escaped much of the distress caused by sickness on board ship. As I wrote the night before last, I have nothing additional to communicate in the way of news, but I delight in another opportunity to give utterance to my affection for you, and my fervent desires that God may protect and guide you in your way. Rest on the promises. They fail not, for faithful is He who hath promised; and to all that fear Him, He is a very present help. . . .

TO THE SAME.

MILLBURN, *November 2, 1866.*

I gladly embrace another opportunity of writing a few lines. You will get all the news in J.'s letter. I hope you received the letters I wrote from Windsor, one by Captain Campbell, which would reach you at Alexandria; another, which I addressed to the care of Mr Andrews, Suez. Yesterday morning we had your letter from Gibraltar. It makes my heart sore to think of the sickness and sense of loneliness which you suffered for the first few days of your voyage. I felt as if I could have leapt over lands and seas to be beside you in the many weary hours you must have passed. I trust you felt that your God and Saviour was with you, and that His words of promise were your song in the house of your pilgrimage. After our sad parting in Southampton water, your mother and I got up to London in time for an afternoon train to Windsor. We found J.'s

family well, and stayed with them till Thursday evening, when we started for Leith. They are in their new house, a most commodious and comfortable residence. J. has named it Clydesdale Villa, in remembrance of the attractions of our Millburn scenery. We passed the Sabbath at Leith. It was communion day. My part was an address before, and another to the children after the service. In speaking to the children, I remarked upon the saying of an Irish Sabbath scholar, that saving faith is 'grasping Christ with the heart.' This led me to say that faith calmed a child's fears, and I quoted the pretty lines,—

‘Then the captain’s little daughter
Took her father by the hand,
And said, “Is God not on the water
Just the same as on the land?”’

I need not say how much you were in my thoughts at that moment as at other times.

TO A SON-IN-LAW ABROAD.

MILLBURN HOUSE, DALSERF,
June 17, 1867.

I need not say how much pleasure it gives us all here to peruse your and A.'s letter. By the goodness of God you have both been preserved in health, and I pray that His loving-kindness may be continued to you in spiritual and temporal things. It gives me joy to know that you are both keeping in remembrance the one thing needful. This is the way to make wedded life happy, and to be helpers of each other in relation to the life that now is and that which is to come. I fervently hope you will persevere and make progress in this the most important of all human interests. Attention to the duties of religion does not hinder, but rather favours success, in the affairs of the world. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER ABROAD.

RESTALRIG PARK, LEITH,

August 15, 1867.

As I have none of your letters here, I am not sure but I may omit to answer them in all the points you refer to ; but I remember in particular you wish that I could do something towards bringing the religious wants of Java under the notice of Christian friends in Holland. I am much gratified to think that you take such interest in the spiritual welfare of the people among whom your lot is cast ; and from what you say of the habits of the professedly Christian portion of them, their case is certainly one to excite your commiseration. If anything were in my power to benefit them, I would gladly meet your wishes by representing the great need there is for active Christian effort on their behalf. But the few good people I am acquainted with in Holland, are ignored by both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and I do not imagine they have any resources of their own for a foreign mission, or any undertaking of the kind. They are a body of seceders from the National Church, and were till within these few years exposed to persecution for their non-conformity.

The neglect of divine things which you witness around you, and your seclusion from religious ordinances and even from Christian society, is, no doubt, the great drawback upon your comfort, but I trust that you and S.'s pleasant private fellowship, together with occasional friends who join you, will be increasingly profitable to you both, in the concerns of the soul. You expressed a wish to have my opinion about Christ's personal reign on earth during the millennium. I do not see scriptural warrant for the doctrine, as it is held by those who are commonly called Millenarians. In the passages commonly quoted in support of this view, the advent of Christ is connected with the last judgment, immediately after which saints are to dwell with Christ in

glory, instead of His dwelling with them on earth. Moreover, Scripture speaks only of one resurrection, viz. at the general judgment. The passage, Rev. xx. 4, etc., is figurative, for it is the 'souls' of those who were beheaded who were to reign with Christ a thousand years. This seems to refer to a period of spiritual prosperity such as we all expect, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. . . .

TO TWO DAUGHTERS.

MILBURN HOUSE, *Jan.* 23, 1868.

I should have answered your joint note sooner, but though it was very short, the question you put, or rather the wish you expressed, required some consideration on my part before saying what I would do.

In answering Mr ——'s request for my MS., I declined giving it, and left myself free to do in the matter as I should see cause,—adding that if I could fall in with a subject suited to my taste and habits, and to the times, I might try my hand upon it. With the same reply to your note you will have to be contented in the meantime.

—— has, I suppose, given you all our Clydeside news worth telling. For two days we have had a pretty sharp frost, which has made our roads passable, but impeded work in the fields. Our orchard, however, being on the sunny side of the Glen, is so thawed by mid-day, that Archie has been able to go on with his digging. Yesterday he was working among the strawberries, and to-day would likely have been similarly employed had he not been engaged in the morning with a case of pig-murder. . . .

I am glad you like your music. I wish you to take as many lessons as you can get, before your return. Rather lengthen your stay than scrimp your lessons. . . .

You will also, and above all, be mindful of the great lesson of duty to God, and the care of your salvation.

Ever make personal religion the *one concern*, which must never be forgotten, whatever else be overlooked.

Write before you come home saying by what train, that we may order a waggonette, and that I may have the pleasure of meeting you at the foot of the hill, and assist you in climbing it, in return for the many loving convoys you have given me in similar adventures. . . .

TO THE MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS OF THE UNITED PRESBY-
TERIAN CONGREGATION OF NORTH LEITH, ON OCCASION
OF HIS ENTERING THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF HIS MINISTRY.

MILLBURN, DALSERF,
Feb. 6, 1868.

DEAR BRETHREN,—It was my earnest wish to address you in person next Lord's day. At one time I had the good hope to be able to do so. But a recent attack of indisposition, though it has proved to be slight and of brief duration, was nevertheless such as, in the opinion of my medical adviser, required me to refrain from public speaking for some time to come. In these circumstances I reluctantly forego my purpose to occupy the pulpit, and instead, I take an opportunity to address you by my pen on the present occasion.

The occasion indeed is one which brings to me personally many awakening recollections, and to you as a church it possesses interest, as it is commemorative of an early event in your congregational history. Last Lord's day was the anniversary of my ordination. Next Lord's day—the day on which this will be read to you—is the *forty-ninth* anniversary of my first occupying the pulpit as pastor, and I now enter the *fiftieth* year of my ministry among you, Few of your number remember these things. Of the members then composing the church, there are only *four* survivors on the congregational roll. Several more, my juniors in years, who connected themselves with the con-

gregation in the early stages of my pastorate, are still happily preserved to us. These together make up a goodly number with whom I have journeyed along the path of life for the greater part of my ministry, in the intimate and sacred relation of pastor and people. No small portion of the flock have grown up from childhood under my eye and pastoral inspection, and have been added to the fellowship of the church. A ministry in the same charge, extending now to the fiftieth year, has this peculiar feature, that when I look around, I see everywhere as it were many of my own children before me. To the eye of a pastor in these circumstances, a church presents the aspect of a family, mingling the elements of paternal care and affection with a sense of ministerial duty.

From my present stand-point I look back to a time since which one generation, and well on to another, have passed away. Hundreds have gone from under my ministry into the presence of the Judge of all, where we shall all one day stand together to render our mutual account. I confess this thought solemnizes me even to trembling, and that the overpowering reflection in my mind is that of the awful responsibility resting upon me as one entrusted, for so lengthened a period, with the care and oversight of immortal souls. To the God of all grace my prayer is, that of His rich mercy He may be pleased to pardon me wherein I have failed to watch for souls as one who must give account,—wherein I have failed to ‘preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine,’—wherein I have come short of His glory in purity of motive, in singleness of aim, and wherein my example has failed to commend my ministry to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

In this regard, I humble myself not the less that I can say I have in some good measure felt and acted under an obligation to ‘keep back nothing that was profitable to you,’ but ‘to declare unto you all the counsel of God,’—

that I have not consulted my own ease in the performance of my work—that I have sought to feel more deeply the importance of those things which I have preached to others,—that I have studied to be impartial in my pastoral attentions to rich and poor,—and have endeavoured to bear in mind the spiritual interests of my people at the throne of grace.

Vain are the wishes to have lost opportunities recovered that I might avail myself of the results of experience and of many years of reflection on the duties and responsibilities of the sacred office. The good Lord forgive what has been wanting, sinful, amiss, and grant that my remaining days may be in some respects useful, though less fit for active service in the church.

And now for the present, I can do little more than express my good wishes for your individual and congregational comfort and wellbeing. I pray the God of hope that your faith may grow exceedingly, that the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind may strengthen what among you is weak, may stablish the wavering, may preserve every one from the fatal snare of a form of godliness without the power thereof, may comfort them that are cast down, may sanctify trials for the good of the afflicted, may build you up in holiness and comfort, and make 'all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work'—in a word, that under the ministry of my young brother and colleague, you may have peace and prosperity, esteeming him highly in love for his works' sake, and that, keeping together as an united people, you may make increase to the edifying of one another in the way and work of the Lord.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.—I remain, dear brethren, your friend and co-pastor,

JAMES HARPER.

TO A FRIEND.

MILBURN HOUSE, DALSERF, CARLUKE,
March 31, 1868.

It was with much sorrow and surprise we saw notice of your sore bereavement. I need not add with what sympathy we all feel for you in your distress. Your dear husband has been taken from you in the prime of life, and in the midst of usefulness. Truly the dispensation is a trying one, but you will remember what is said of the trial of our faith—that it is much more precious than of gold that perisheth. Such trial is precious by reason of its fruits. It possesses a value as it strengthens the faith of the believer, and is a means of making it an enduring and abiding principle in the heart. Whereas gold, though tried and purified by fire, is still a perishable thing.

I have sometimes heard afflicted ones speak as if their trials had the effect of unsettling their faith instead of confirming it, but in the case of a true child of God this could only be a temporary disquietude and temptation. For it is of the nature of faith to see the hand of God in the darkest dispensations, and to say, ‘He hath done all things well.’

Such, I feel assured, will be your experience from what you know of the love of God in Christ, and of His faithfulness to His promise in all His dealings with His people.

He who is Judge of the widow and the Father of the fatherless will never leave you. Cast your burden on the Lord. He invites you so to do. It is good both to hope and quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord.

You have many materials of consolation in Mr S——’s valuable ministry and private Christian fellowship. Dear and profitable remembrances of him will calm and comfort your heart amidst your many tears. And your hope of heaven will now be increasingly prized by you, as the final home where the children of God, separated for a time, shall be gathered together to be ever with the Lord.

I trust your own health is good, and that of your dear

babe. May the little one be long spared to you for a stay and blessing to you in the days of your pilgrimage.

TO A DAUGHTER ABROAD.

1869.

My jubilee was celebrated on the 19th May. A number of United Presbyterian and Free Church ministers were present, and several made congratulatory addresses. A testimonial was presented to me amounting to £1200. Also a valuable time-piece to your mother, which cost £30. I have no doubt a full account of the proceedings, as given in the newspapers, is by this time in your hands. The occasion was as solemn to me as it was in some respects gratifying. It reminded me that my course is drawing to a close, and brought vividly before my mind my responsibility as one who has so long had opportunities of working for Christ and the spiritual good of my fellow-men. What a call to work while it is day. . . . I trust the candle of the Lord continues to shine on your tabernacle—that S—— and you are holding on your way as fellow-helpers on your way Sionward. You have much cause to rejoice that, in the things of God, you see eye to eye. This is the more a matter of thankfulness that you are in the midst of a community where you can find no real fellowship for your strengthening and comfort. May the joy of the Lord be ever your portion and your inheritance. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

EDINBURGH, *August 11, 1869.*

. . . I have said 'by God's blessing,'—words full of meaning, though we are much in danger of using them almost of course. Affliction, however, teaches us how entirely we are in His hands, and how much it is our duty to humble ourselves under it, and to look to Him to raise

us up if such be His pleasure. One thing we should be careful to keep in mind, both in the way of duty and encouragement, is, that God 'does not afflict willingly.' 'It is not for His pleasure, but for our profit.' There is, therefore, an improvement to be made of affliction. It is designed to make us draw nearer to God as our refuge and strength. Finding all things temporal inadequate to our relief and to our satisfaction, we learn to look constantly higher, even to Him from whom cometh our help, and who is the 'health of our countenance and our God.' To find our all in God, is what we are prone to forget when things go well with us; and He has His own ways of showing us that it is His favour alone which is life, and that it is the good pleasure of His goodness that His children should know this to their joy even in tribulation. I am persuaded you have these things habitually in your mind. I fondly hope they afford, and will continue to afford, you comfort under your oft-returning infirmities. 'Commit your way to God' is not more a precept than a privilege.

TO A SON.

ESKBANK, *Jan.* 15, 1870.

I am deeply grieved for Jessie and you. From a note of A. S.'s to your mother yesterday, I feared the worst, and yours just now received only increases my anxiety regarding the issue of your dear Willie's illness. I have borne his case to the throne of grace in the closet and at our family altar. What remains but to leave events with God? He does all things well, and does not afflict willingly, but for our profit, that we may seek the 'strong consolation' that sustains the broken heart. Your dear child, I have no doubt, is safe, in the highest and best sense of the word. You have all along given him to the Lord, and He who gathers the lambs with His arm, and carries them in His bosom, will keep Him in His hand, nor shall any pluck him

out of it. Amidst saddest anticipations, I even yet cling to the hope of recovery, feeling at the same time as if it were hoping against hope. I am just leaving for Penicuik, where I preach to-morrow, and will have a burden of anxiety in the prospect of Monday, when on my return, I will, no doubt, learn the result. May the God of comfort support you all in this hour of need, and as trials abound, may your consolation in Christ still more abound.

TO THE SAME.

ESKBANK, *Jan. 17, 1870.*

On returning to-day I found the sad news of your bereavement awaiting me. My heart bleeds for you under this heavy stroke; your darling Willie was indeed a very endearing child. Well do I remember his sweet look and his winning ways; and I can well understand the poignancy of your grief for such a loss. But your beloved boy is now where, in dying words, he said he wished to be—‘with Jesus.’ This is almost all we know of the blessedness of the redeemed, and all we need to know to be assured that our loss is their gain.

For to be with Christ is to be like Him, changed into His image from glory to glory, admitted into His fellowship in such sort and measure as we have only a foretaste of now, and to see God in Him with joy unspeakable.

Pass in your thoughts from the deathbed struggle of your dear Willie to the scene and employments on which he has entered now, and let *your* mourning be swallowed up in *his* victory.

From your note to your mother, I am glad to see that J. is bearing herself with resignation. You will comfort one another with the consolation that is in Christ, and with the assured hope that the separation is but for a time. Your Willie has gone where many friends are before him. I dwell much on the thought of his meeting with his dear

uncle John. Fain would we know something of the converse of glorified spirits. But we must wait. What we know not now we shall know hereafter.

TO A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

ESKBANK, *Jan.* 24, 1870.

‘Sorrow upon sorrow.’ It is even so. But another of your lambs safe in heaven is the next thought to cherish. Your beloved little ones, like twin cherubs, have winged their flight almost in company into the presence of God and the Lamb. Think where and what they are now. Is there not gain as well as loss even in this twofold heart-rending bereavement?

God does not afflict willingly. He will therefore be nigh to comfort them that are cast down. His Holy Spirit is the Comforter. And to them that ask of God, He is freely given. ‘Uphold me with thy *free* Spirit,’ is a prayer never offered in vain. Great must be that comfort that *upholds*.

I fervently trust that J. and you will experience its sustaining efficacy. Vain is the help of man in such fiery trials, but the Divine Comforter is a very present help—able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

I feel much anxiety about J., lest he should suffer in health amidst such circumstances of afflictive bereavement. I know the exceeding tenderness and depth of his affection, and were it not for his strong faith, my heart would almost fail me when I think of the crushing stroke. But the hand that chastens never crushes. No, it lovingly upholds the tried one, and prompts him to say, ‘In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul.’ May our heavenly Father strengthen you both, and spare the dear ones, that they all may grow up for your comfort and joy. He never leaves nor forsakes those who look to Him in the time of their need.

TO A SON.

ESKBANK, *Feb. 4, 1870.*

I have no words to express the depth of my sorrow on getting the sad, sad accounts of your and Jessie's loss, and I can truly say my own, in the death of your dear George. I had a very special affection for him, and cannot read your narration of his sufferings and sayings without tears. Oh, what a blank now in your family circle—one after another, and last of all darling George, the inexpressible sweetness of whose look I so vividly recall with a rush of tenderness which almost unmans me! Truly I share in your sorrows. If there is such a thing as the anguish of sympathy, that is what I feel.

But I must not let myself be carried away with mere feeling. I would keep before my mind both Who has done it, whence come the duty of submission, and in what way He has done it, whence the duty of cordial resignation. Has not the grace and faithfulness of the Chief Shepherd been most signally manifested in the ripeness for heaven of the lambs which He has taken from your domestic fold, to be near to and with Himself? The flower that bloomed so sweetly under your training, is now transplanted to a Paradise where is neither the blight of sin nor sorrow, and there they are waiting for you, to bless you in the presence of the Lord for the loving care with which you so diligently led them to Jesus, to whom all the praise is due. The Lord will sustain you both. It cannot be otherwise. Faithful is He who has afflicted you, and His promise of grace to help in time of need, cannot fail. Your mother cannot well write at present. I need not say how tenderly she feels for Jessie and you. You are never out of her thoughts, nor forgotten in her prayers. Take care of your health. I sometimes tremble for you amidst so much strain of body and mind. God bless you both, and spare the darlings that are left, that you and they may yet see the light of joy and health shining in your tabernacle.

TO THE SAME.

June 15, 1870.

SONG OF SOLOMON II. 14.

The import and spirit of the passage is as you interpret it — expressive of the tender affection of Christ for His Church, and is in sweet accordance with His many promises of care and sympathy on behalf of His people. How much of this there is in the Hebrews! Chap. iv. 5 may be regarded almost as a text of which the whole epistle is an illustration.

Blessed be God that J. and you experienced this so fully in your fiery trial. You have been upheld and come through all that tried you, and the darlings are all right now amidst the hallelujahs of the redeemed.

TO THE SAME.

I see you are taken up with Pearsall Smith's views. I have been reading his *Walk in the Light*, and am much pleased with the warmth of his devotional feeling, but his statements are sometimes vague, and his expressions not quite correct. His aim is a 'higher life,' which is just what every Christian is striving after. But Mr S. must mean by this expression something different from what the words ordinarily convey, for he says 'Christ crucified for us has been preached of late years with a blessed and almost unexampled distinctiveness, but the time has now come when the mission of the Church is to preach with no less emphasis and distinctiveness, the Christian's crucifixion with Christ and deadness to sin, with the consequent life unto righteousness.'

Now the time to preach these things came with the gospel itself. As to *time*, there never was a time when such preaching was not *needed*, and never a time when such preaching was not *heard*, where Christ was known as crucified for us. It was so in Paul's day, whose experience was 'forgetting things behind, and reaching forth unto

things before ;' and his counsel corresponded,—'Let us go on unto perfection.'

To one who is conscious of having fallen behind, Mr S. says, 'You must get on believing ground again before you can again believe, and this ground is that of entire consecration to God.'

This is unsafe. The ground of faith is the *work of Christ*, not our *consecration* to God. Consecration is the fruit and evidence of believing.

TO A DAUGHTER.

ESKBANK, *Sept.* 26, 1870.

The Hall closed on Thursday, and your mother and I returned to Eskbank on Saturday afternoon. We passed three weeks with — very comfortably. . . . It was on the whole a convenient arrangement for me during the time we were domiciled there, as it was an easy distance from Queen Street, which I now feel to be a considerable advantage. I am sooner fatigued by walking than in former days, and glad to get a rest at times.

I have now completed the twenty-eighth year of my professorship, and nearly my fifty-second in the ministry, and cannot but wonder at the goodness and long-suffering of God in sparing me so long. I have gone beyond the ordinary span of human life ; my days therefore must now be few. This reflection makes me feel more heavily than ever my responsibility in the relations which I fill as a minister and as a parent. On the proper discharge of the duties connected with these relations, depends in a great measure the colour of the retrospect one takes when he calls himself to account. Hence the good news that Christ is made of God unto us righteousness, and that all fulness is in Him.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that I and all the children God has given me may be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith, so as to be able to say with blessed Paul, 'I know whom I have believed.'

I trust this will be the gospel held forth by the young men from whom I have just parted, some of whom have completed their course, and will soon be licensed. I never had more comfort in my work in the Hall, than among the students this session, and I have good hopes of them.

. . . I hope — continues well. He will be discoursing to you at length on the war news. What a fearful calamity! Who can think without shuddering of the loss of life, and of the sufferings of many of the survivors. And who can tell what is yet to come. Let us thank God that there is peace in our borders.

What about the Greek Testament? Are you minding the daily verse? . . .

TO A SON.

ESKBANK, DALKEITH, *Jan. 5, 1871.*

I am glad and thankful that you have now regained your strength, but do not wonder you carry about with you the burden of your sore bereavement. I trust, however, that J. and you will continue to feel—and that exceedingly—that it is a burden from a hand that sustains under every calamity, that works only for good to them that love God, and that will be seen more clearly hereafter than now, to have done all things well. The darlings are often in my thoughts, with their sweet smiles and winning ways, and I think of their condition now, with the persuasion that their happiness is as certain as the promise is sure. Were I to have any doubt of seeing them in glory, my doubt would regard myself rather than them. You sorrow, but it is with a hope that imparts *strong* consolation.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *May 18, 1872.*

Last night I walked up to the Assembly Hall, to a prayer meeting in which Dr — and others took part. The object was to commence a series of such meetings, and to take

up certain topics in succession, such as the opening of Rome to the preaching of the gospel—foreign missions—state of our own country—our churches—our families, and the like. Arrangements are mostly in the hands of Mr —, who is always at his post when any good work of this kind is to be done. There was a large gathering of people, apparently impressed with the service. These were mostly devotional. I felt it was well to be there. It is always pleasing to see people of different Churches, dropping their distinction in services common to them all. There is often in such meetings more of warmth in prayer and in the other exercises. Everything last night was conducted in a way fitted to do good, and I am glad to see that they are to be continued during this week. As the Assemblies meet on Thursday, there will be an opportunity presented to the members of withdrawing for a little from the discussion of debateable matters, to communion with God; but I fear the excitement of ecclesiastical questions will not dispose men's minds, or prove a good preparation, for the quiet and solemnity of a prayer meeting.

I trust some good has resulted from the special meetings we had in Leith, but I cannot say I *see* much of this. The benefit arising from them has been, I rather think, in the way of enlivening the well-affected towards such means of grace.

TO A GRANDSON.

LEITH MOUNT, *Jan.* 6, 1873.

It gave me great pleasure to receive and to read your nice little letter. I hope you will be able to write me a longer one by and by, giving me all manner of news from home. Your handwriting is very good for a beginner, and will become easier by practice. You will find the same with all your lessons. This should encourage you to persevere. Be especially mindful of Bible lessons. There is no knowledge so necessary as the knowledge of God. 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' Be very

attentive to the instructions your father and mother give you, to pray to God morning and evening, that He may have you in His good keeping, as your heavenly Father whose favour is better than life. . . .

TO A GRANDDAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *Feb.* 19, 1873.

Your epistles are always a treat to me, but I am sorry to learn from your last that your mamma has been suffering from bad headache. I hope she is better now, and am sure you would all be very attentive to her in her illness, and would make no noise to disturb her. One lesson to be learnt from the illness of those who are dear to us is, to be more mindful of our duty to one another, as we are not always, and may not be long, together in this world.

You would, no doubt, be well pleased to go with papa on mamma's birthday to buy a present to her. It would also be very pleasant to her to receive it. Let us always remember that as we have each had a birthday, so we must each have a dying day ; and to those who are the children of God, there is a promise of length of days in heaven for ever and ever. . . .

TO A SON-IN-LAW.

LEITH, *April* 19, 1873.

The death of your uncle, though not altogether unexpected, must have been a sore bereavement to you all, and to none more than to — and you. He was deservedly much beloved by the entire family circle, and his removal will leave a blank not easy to fill. Though I did not know him intimately, I saw enough of his singular amiableness to account for your and —'s attachment to him, and the strong sympathy which you both felt for him in the time of his long-continued bodily affliction.

You have the comfort to know that your uncle had the

kindest attention possible during the whole time of his illness. You and other relatives had the privilege of ministering to his relief under his trouble, and above all you know that he died in the faith and hope of the gospel. What more can be wished—what more is possible amidst the bereavements and sorrows of our earthly pilgrimage? ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,’ and happy are the surviving kindred who have done their duty to the dear departed, and who as partakers of the same grace hope to meet them again. ‘Wherefore comfort one another with these words.’

I hope your father and sister are enabled to bear their loss with Christian resignation, and experience under God’s chastening hand the consolation that is in Christ.

— I trust is gaining a little more strength. Much need for it. Charge her to be kind to herself. Great grace be on you both, and on your little ones.

TO A WIDOW.

DALNAGLAR, GLENSHEE, *July 22, 1873.*

Letters from home for some days past prepared me in some measure for the sad notice in yesterday’s paper of the death of your very dear husband, and my early and constant friend. I deeply sympathize with you and your family in this your day of sorrow. The loss which you have sustained is one that cannot be made up in this life; for all here is change, and friends part not to meet again on earth. To recover what we lose by death, we must look to Him who by dying abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

You have much cause to be thankful that God blessed you with a husband so remarkably amiable and kind-hearted. He was also spared to you and to the family to a good old age; and after illness came upon him, his sufferings were not so great as in most cases attend the approach of death.

From his failure of memory and increasing weakness he said little to indicate his views in the prospect of departure, but we know that God can manifest Himself in the privacy of the heart, to those who seek Him as a present help in time of trouble. I pray God that He may be a very present help to you all in your affliction. Many will mourn with you, but the 'strong consolation' we need is the gracious presence of the great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who is mighty to save.

I have not learned the day of the funeral, and am truly sorry that distance will prevent me from joining with other friends, in paying the last tribute of respect to the memory of one whom I so much esteemed, and whom I will ever remember with affection. I trust the family are all well. They will continue to cherish the memory of their dear father, and to be loving and happy with one another as they have always been. It must be no small comfort to yourself to be surrounded by such dutiful sons and daughters; and now that you are the surviving parent, you will see the double duty which Providence has laid upon you to care for their souls. Long may you be spared to do a mother's part, and to feel a mother's joy in the welfare of your children. . . .

TO A SON.

LEITH MOUNT, *Dec. 5, 1873.*

I have been trying my hand at an exposition of the Apocalypse, and have got on to the slaying of the witnesses. The subject is deeply interesting, and calls for being ready for perilous times to come. Let this be our comfort and stay, that God knoweth them that are His; and let us strive after that full assurance of faith that will enable us calmly to wait the issue, which is in the hand of Him who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him.

TO A SON.

LEITH, *Dec. 27, 1873.*

. . . I trust, however, that you are careful to keep in mind that the religious instruction of the young devolves first and chiefly upon parents; for such instruction, to be worthy of the name, must go much further and deeper than is ever attempted in common school education. Nothing short of touching the young heart with the love of God, comes up to the requirements of religious instruction. By imparting such instruction, the parent is benefited as well as the child. The all-important matter of a personal interest in the salvation of the gospel, needs to be constantly kept in view amidst the adverse influences with which the walk of faith is beset. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *March 7, 1874.*

. . . It was well you got to one of the evangelistic meetings. That you did not hear Mr Moody to advantage is to be regretted, as it is but seldom you can be expected to attend on these occasions; but it matters little who is the instrument, if God give His blessing. And this, my dear —, is what we must constantly seek to rest upon all the means of grace, that we may have the root of the matter within us, and evidence thereby that we have passed from death to life by the power of the Spirit of God. We are to hold evening meetings in our congregation, from Sabbath evening first, every evening till Friday. May power from on high be present to work effectually for the awakening of many.

TO THE SAME.

The smile of God is on the work of His hands; surely then He should be in all our thoughts.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, Oct. 9, 1874.

I was hoping to hear of you all this morning. I do not say this in the way of complaint, for I know well how busily and anxiously you must all be employed. As no news is sometimes good news, we fondly hope that B—— is no worse, and that A—— continues to gain strength. I trust that —— is bearing up under this heavy trial. And how are you yourself? Take great care of health. I hope you attend to the directions which —— wrote to ——. You are engaged in a labour of love in which I pray God you may not sustain any injury to your health. You are constantly in my thoughts, and I long to see you back again strong and well.

I earnestly hope —— will yet be spared to us all. But nothing can exceed the comfort of knowing that, be the issue of her trouble what it may, the dear child is one of the lambs of the Good Shepherd, and that she is safe in His arms. This is the refuge we must all seek, and cease not till we find it through faith in his name.

Your mother and I have been journeying a little. . . . I left —— yesterday, and came in to attend the opening of Mr ——'s mission hall in St Andrew Street.

Much deserved praise was given Mr —— for his missionary spirit and liberality, but he modestly ascribed the main share of credit to me! who, he said, had, thirty years ago, first called his attention to mission work, and had encouraged him in what he did in that way.

. . . Give my warm love to ——. May God of His great mercy bear her through this season of trial. ——, too, I trust, will be supported trusting in the Lord. Give him my sympathy and love.

——, ——, and —— are at home and well, and join me in affectionate remembrances. Adieu, my dear ——. May the God of comfort be with you, and His richest blessing rest upon you.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LENZIE, Oct. 15, 1874.

I have been indulging myself in miscellaneous reading. Have just finished the two last volumes of *Cockburn's Memoirs*. To one who, like me, has lived through most of the time, these reminiscences of bygone times (and such times!) are deeply interesting; and then Cockburn's sketches of the men of his time are so lively and dramatic, that they almost make one feel as if living the last seventy years over again. But what a want of the one thing needful! On coming to the close, the pleasure is absorbed in the melancholy.

TO A SISTER-IN-LAW.

LEITH, Dec. 7, 1874.

B. has given me the particulars of the sad change. It was preceded by long and occasionally severe distress, but the storm is changed into a calm, and his heavenly Father gave to your dear husband a quiet dismissal to his rest. It is one alleviation of your bereavement, that Mr W.'s departure was so quiet and peaceful.

It is a yet more comforting reflection to you, that when Mr W.'s distress had so increased that his laborious breathing hardly left him power to articulate, there were intervals when he was able to drop in your hearing some of those portions of the Word which are the choicest utterances of pious trust and resignation, when the hand of God is heavy upon His people.

You have many considerations to mitigate your loss, and you have cause to be thankful that you were so long enabled, by affectionate assiduity under God's blessing, to alleviate Mr W.'s sufferings, and, I verily believe, to add to his days. You are now a widow, bereaved of a loving-hearted husband of whom you will have for life many

pleasing remembrances, and not the least will be the thought that, in the time of his weakness, you were ever at hand to cheer him by the alacrity of your kind offices, and by your unwearied care for his relief.

You will now look to God, who is the Judge of the widow, and her protector in her holy habitation, and you will be led to many thoughts of that better land where all who sleep in Jesus have their inheritance and home.

I am shut up to the house by cold, yet hope to be present on Monday at the closing scene. B. tells me you propose to attend. I think your resolution noble—no saying how far it may tell as a becoming example. . . .

TO A SON.

GROSVENOR TERRACE, GLASGOW,
April 10, 1875.

You were no doubt employed in a good work by assisting in the Moody and Sankey meetings, but the care of health is an incumbent duty which cannot be neglected without hurtful consequences.

I trust the good cause of revival will be kept up in L—— notwithstanding the removal of the American friends. The same blessing which has hitherto attended their labours appears to attend them in London. It is certainly a remarkable providence that so many are awakened by the preaching of the gospel in its plainest, and as it has been preached with less or more fulness from the beginning, seeing that there is in our day such an outcry against evangelical doctrine and evangelical Churches, by numbers of people who are enemies to the cross of Christ, and indeed to the foundation principles of all religion. The enemy comes in like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. Happy are they who make their calling and election sure. I hope you keep your foot on the rock, and that you find peace in believing. It has been a great comfort to me to think that you mind the things of the Spirit.

I have been preaching on that subject lately with some appearance of a good impression. We have every encouragement to look to the Spirit of God to bless His own message and work.

TO A GRANDDAUGHTER.

LEITH, *July* 19, 1875.

Is it not a strange and unseemly thing that I should find time to write to others, without a word to my little pet? This thought has been in my mind for some days past, and I have now sat down bravely to do the right thing by sending you a letter. Now a letter from a friend is intended to convey the writer's good wishes to his correspondent, and therefore I begin by saying how glad I am to hear you are so well in health. The benefit you have gained in this way will make full amends for you staying so long at Aix-la-Chapelle, of which I hear you are heartily tired; and truly I do not wonder you should be, for what with scorching warmth, and foreign people, and Popery everywhere, you must be living in a different sort of world from what you have at home.

In many things the goodness of God has been great to you. Think of this and be thankful; and especially when you see the mummeries and superstition of the people around you, you will learn how great a privilege it is to possess the Bible, to show us the more excellent way.

In my rambles the other day, I found the old man who jobs about, busily weeding yours and — gardens. They were very weedy, but the flowers notwithstanding were growing well. Through both the large gardens, the fruit trees are generally loaded, and promise well, if the high winds spare them. The annuals are thriving. In one thing I have been disappointed. Some weeks ago I discovered in the rockery a duck upon eggs, and was looking to tell you wonderful news of a plentiful brood; but, alas! all have died save one, which I hope will waddle about to welcome you on your return.

TO A GRANDSON.

LEITH MOUNT, *Aug.* 28, 1875.

It would make you very happy to receive so many presents on your birthday.

Your grandmamma, papa and mamma, and Willie, have been very kind to you. I hope you will show that you feel their kindness by doing nothing to displease them. Their kindness to you should lead you to think of the greatest and best of all friends, Jesus, the Son of God, who laid down His life for us. If He so loved us, we should love one another. . . .

TO A GRANDDAUGHTER.

Jan. 18, 1876.

I like what you say about the Bible. It is the best of all books, because it is the book which God has given us to teach us concerning Himself. As you grow older, you will be more able to look into it, and to understand more of the wonderful things it tells us about the goodness and the glory of God. It is only from the Bible we learn who made us, and for what end we were created. It tells us the way to be happy, and it makes known to us a heavenly world where there is no sin and no death, and where all who love God shall be happier far than we can be in this world. The Bible says that 'to depart and be with Christ is far better.'

Even in this world, God gives us many things to enjoy and to be thankful for. He cares for us. He provides for us. Above all, He gives us Christ, His unspeakable gift. Should we then not love God, who first loved us? I long to see you. I am too old to go to Windsor, but I hope that, before long, you will come to see your friends at Leith—your grandmamma, your uncles and aunts, and me. We will take you into our arms and seek a blessing on you for your papa and mamma's sake, and for your own sake, and above all for Jesus' sake, who took little children into His

arms and blessed them, saying, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

TO FOUR GRANDCHILDREN.

LEITH MOUNT, *Feb. 17, 1876.*

I give you my warm thanks for your present. The gloves are very beautiful,—they fit me to a T,—and when my hands are in them, they are as cosy as a wren in its nest. Old fingers like warmth, and fingers are so needful both for young and old, that boys and girls should take good care of theirs that they may neither be cut nor frostbitten.

In the old fighting times, warriors used a glove called a gauntlet, but it was as different from a kid glove as a steel helmet from a beaver hat. Next time I see you, I will ask what use was made of the gauntlet in Westminster Hall at the coronation of our kings. More attention seems to have been given in former times to defensive armour than to comfortable clothing—a helmet for the head, a cuirass for the breast, greaves for the legs, and coats of mail were the covering of the body much sought after for safety in the day of battle. And these things are also mentioned in the Bible as a means of protection. Eph. vi.

Christ is the Captain of salvation. His disciples are soldiers of the Cross. But the warfare they carry on, is very different from the wars that men wage with one another. And the weapons which the followers of Jesus use are not carnal. They are not meant to slay men, but to slay sin, and to gain a crown of life through the grace of our God and Saviour.

Enlist, then, my dear children, in the service of Christ as your dear Leader and Commander, that you may overcome all evil—may follow Him while you live, and may inherit the kingdom of glory.

TO A SON.

LEITH, *May 26, 1876.*

You have been sorely tried by the loss of most dear and lovely children, but gladdened with signs of grace in their

young souls, in a degree far beyond the experience of many, or even most of the people of God, under such successive bereavements. I have no fear that the little stranger will be other than the rest have shown themselves to be. My daily prayer is that all my children's children may be found among the lambs of the flock. As to my recent honour, I am very sensible of it and grateful for it, but am equally sensible of the responsible duties that devolve on me in my new position. The public spirit and liberality which the Church has shown, are to me truly wonderful. . . .

TO A GRANDDAUGHTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *July 11, 1876.*

A few days ago I received your nice little letter, which greatly delighted me. For one of your age the penmanship is good, and your thoughts are very properly expressed. Go on as you have been doing, and you will soon be able for greater things.

The — which your mamma sent would be very sweet, especially as they came from home, and reminded you of your papa and mamma's love.

It is pleasant to think of the friends we have, and of the kindness they show us, because they wish to make us happy, as I have no doubt you now are, under the loving care of your grandpapa and grandmamma S. The kindness of our earthly friends should make us think of our heavenly Father, from whom all good things come, and of Jesus, our loving Saviour, who died that we might live. Your grandmamma is at the Bridge of Allan for her health. As soon as she returns we will make arrangements for A. and you visiting us. I weary again to see you, and to hear the prattle of your sweet voices. Love to dear little A. I hope she is getting stronger. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH, *July 12, 1876.*

Your pretty little memorial-nosegay came safe to hand, and very gratifying it was to me to receive it. I do not know how I came to neglect acknowledgment of this token of your affection ; but when you think how many memorial-days of the kind have passed over me, you will, I am sure, make some allowance for my undesigned omission.

It is dutiful to take note of time, that wherein we have failed in the past, we may learn to be diligent in the future—especially to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. . . .

TO A FRIEND.

LEITH MOUNT, *July 13, 1877.*

On opening the newspaper this morning I read with startling and painful surprise, notice of the death, by accident, of your dear brother, Dr J. Amidst the wide regret which this calamity will occasion in society, and especially in scientific circles, how deeply are relatives to be sympathized with under so heavy a stroke, and what need of Divine consolation and of the aids of grace to support them in this hour of need ! How sad the news of their loss to his widow and family ; how trying the suddenness and the circumstances of the blow ! May God give them strength to bear it. Underneath them be the everlasting arms.

It must have been the day Dr B. left, or the day before, that I met him, and had a minute's chat with him in Princes Street—well, and frank, and cordial as I had always found him to be. This was so recent and so fresh in my memory that I felt almost incredulous for a moment on noticing the accident, and was inclined to suppose there must have been a mistake in the name.

Such bereavements carry our thoughts into the invisible

and eternal, and teach us to prize more deeply 'the promise which He hath promised us, even eternal life' in and through His Son.

TO A DAUGHTER.

DALNAGLAR CASTLE, *Aug.* 18, 1877.

I was glad to get your letter, and to learn from it that you are all well at Leith Mount. . . .

At present the interest here mainly centres in the field sport of grouse-shooting. It has not hitherto been particularly successful. Yesterday there was a great fox-hunt party, but the fox, happily for himself, kept out of the way ; but a stag was started, which — shot, so that he was the champion of the day.

Your mother and I are pretty well, although I cannot say for myself that I feel any stronger. The weather corresponds to your own—often wet and dull, and crops far behind.

When do you expect — and hers ? I am afraid she intends little more than a day or two for Leith. . . . I weary to see them. I have a very pleasing opinion of their ways of doing, and of the evidence they give of youthful piety. My heart's desire and daily prayer for them, and for all my children and children's children, is that of the apostle for his brethren, that they may be partakers of the great salvation.

TO A GRANDDAUGHTER.

Jan. 10, 1878.

We had what you truly call a 'nice' party on New Year's Day. We greatly missed your papa and J., whom we fondly hoped to be of our number, as we had got an inkling of a probable visit from them. I enjoyed the sight of so many children and grandchildren, with thankfulness to God for all His mercies, and with solemn reflections on my responsibility—nearing as I now am the end of my

pilgrimage, and leaving so many precious souls to whom I was bound to be guide and example.

Say to your papa that yesterday I was visiting Mr Cooper, who I believe is on his deathbed. As might be expected from his life in Christ, his mind is stayed on his Divine Redeemer.

TO A DAUGHTER.

LEITH, *April 27*, [1878.]

I am sore grieved at heart by the news of your dear Mac.'s illness. From the close of ——'s note to your mother, I see there is scarcely any hope of recovery. May God support you whatever may befall. There is this to comfort you, that your darling is safe in the hand of the Supreme Disposer. The Saviour who took children into His arms and blessed them, says to all bereaved parents, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' You have with —— dedicated your child to God, and we are to rest in faith that He has accepted the offering at your hands.

If this sickness be unto death, your dear boy will be taken away from the evil to come. He will pass into the region of the blessed, with hardly having tasted of the bitters of an earthly lot. In one brief moment, he will open his mind's eye on the glories and joys of an eternity of blessedness. Let the prospect of rejoining him in the bliss of heaven, blend with your sense of loss, should it please God to take him away. He takes him out of your arms to keep him in His own.

Oh, beware of murmuring at God's dealings! They are ever righteous and kind. Cast your care upon Him. His ways are never unequal, nor does He afflict willingly. It is for our profit that we may be partakers of His holiness.

—— and you will comfort one another with the comfort that is of God, and you will be enabled to say, He has done all things well.

Your mother wishes me to say that if it would be a comfort to you to have one of your sisters with you, — or — could join you to-morrow. . . .

Love and warmest sympathy to — and you, in which we all join.

Telegram this moment—sad, sad; but God is near, a very present help. . . .

TO A GRANDSON.

LEITH, *May 7*, 1878.

Commit your way to God. He has His own way of leading His people, and sometimes 'through fire and water He brings them in to a wealthy place.' It was to attend the funeral of one of your little cousins that I was at Lenzie. He was a fine child, but not yet of years to learn Christ; but now he knows unspeakably more than the oldest among us. Your aunt bears her loss with some degree of firmness, but yields now and then to paroxysms of grief. Her husband and she, with their surviving darlings, have a claim upon us for all our prayers, that God would graciously support them by consolation in Christ. The Apostle Paul calls it 'strong' consolation. It strengthens when other comforts fail.

TO TWO GRANDCHILDREN.

BRIDGE OF ALLAN,
LYON'S LODGINGS, SUNNYLAW,
[*June 1878.*]

I thank you much for the beautiful cards you have sent me in remembrance of my birthday. It was my eighty-fourth—an age few attain to. Our times are in God's hand. They are longer or shorter as seems good in His sight. But whatever may be the number of our days, they are to be improved as an opportunity to serve God in this life, as the season to prepare for glorifying and enjoying Him in the life to come.

From this we may see that there is not a day but we should

have God in our thoughts. He is ever mindful of us in the way of care and mercy, and therefore we should praise Him, not only with our lips, but with our lives, that we may live with Him for ever.

However many our birthdays may be, we soon come to the last. Let us then make the most of our time. Both young and old we must be always learning, and the older we grow we see the more cause to regret the many opportunities we have missed to make more progress in what is good and useful. . . .

TO A DAUGHTER.

BRIDGE OF ALLAN, *July 5*, [1878.]

I deeply sympathize with you in your great sorrow. Your loss is great, but great is the gain to your beloved child. Look to the Lord Jesus in whose hands are all things, who does all things well, and trusting in Him you will see your boy again bright and happy, for 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

Think of the sympathy and the faithfulness of Christ. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and is able, and willing as He is able, to succour them that are tempted. Why then are you cast down?

Think also of your duty to the living—your husband and little ones. Do not let your grief for the loss of one, swallow up your sense of present duty to others. God has taken your dear boy to Himself, but He has spared to you your other children. Think, too, of the way others have been stricken—your own brother, for example. It is his privilege to think of his dear ones in heaven, and, in your own measure, the same privilege is yours.

You should expostulate with yourself for the excess of your grief, in that you allow it to unfit you to enjoy God's mercies in what He has preserved for your comfort.

Beware, my dear —, of restraining prayer. It is a grievous temptation to forsake the throne of grace, where all help is to be obtained in time of need.

Oh, lay to heart these things, and the Lord grant an answer to your prayers for the peace that passeth understanding!

Your mother joins me in heartfelt sympathy with you in your sadness. I expect to see you very soon. Your mother also and ——, after paying a visit to Linlithgow. My very, very dear ——, receive my love.

TO A BROTHER MINISTER.

LEITH MOUNT, *Sept.* 3, 1878.

I can hardly say how much I was struck by seeing this morning the startling obituary of your highly esteemed and valued son. Not only by the more immediate circle of family and friends, and by his congregation, will the death of one so highly respected and loved be deeply lamented, but throughout our entire denomination it will be felt that we are bereaved of one of our best and ablest ministers of the word, and one eminently qualified to maintain the efficiency of our body, as an instrument in God's hand for upholding the interests of Christian truth in our land. But the Supreme Disposer, God only wise, has seen meet to remove His servant thus early to a higher sphere.

Sad indeed to you must be this bereavement. With all my heart I sympathize with you. In the multitude of your thoughts within you, may the comforts of God delight your soul. May you be strengthened to show to others the sustaining influence of the promise of life in Christ Jesus, which you have been spared so long to exhibit for the consolation of others.

May the grace that is sufficient for the day of trial abound towards you, my dear brother, and towards the sorely-bereaved and sorrowing widow.

TO A WIDOW.

LEITH MOUNT, *Sept.* 3, 1878.

The hand of the Lord is heavy upon you. Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Nay, verily. 'When thou

paskest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' Has the Lord hid His countenance in anger? No; there comes a voice from the cloud, saying, 'Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name.' On Him I trust you cast your griefs and cares, and feel that underneath are the everlasting arms strengthening you to say, 'The Lord hath done it. Not my will, but Thine be done.'

True sympathy will not allow any one to underrate your trial. You have lost a very dear husband, and our Church one of the ablest and most useful of her ministers. For both there is consolation in Christ.

To you it abounds, for your recollections of the past are full of peace and thankfulness, and you 'sorrow not as those who have no hope,' when you think of 'the rest that remaineth,' and which your dear husband has been thus early called to enjoy. The sympathy of brethren throughout the entire Church is with you.

Paul felt such sympathy in affliction to be a solace, but above all you have the sympathy of the great High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and is able and willing to help in time of need. My wife and daughters unite with me in much sympathy.

TO A GRANDSON.

LEITH, *Feb.* 1, 1879.

I hope, my dear boy, you will always keep in mind there are risks far more to be dreaded than deep waters. These are the 'depths of Satan,' snares which he places in the path of the young, and which require both watchfulness and force of character to avoid—that force of character which is grounded on religious principles and the fear of God. We have had troublesome times in Scotland through

the failure of the Glasgow Bank. Numbers of people have been ruined by it, and nobody can see a way to meet the calamity of millions of money squandered in reckless speculation. Such is the dire effect of hasting to be rich. It is to be hoped that attention will be more turned to the true riches which cannot fail.

TO A GRANDSON.

LEITH MOUNT, *March*, 1879.

I received and read with great pleasure your letter of 21st December 1878. It brought me the agreeable news of your having got suitable lodgings in Bordeaux, and that you had made the acquaintance of several fellow-countrymen, who, I trust, you have found to be well principled and well behaved, as well as pleasant companions under the drawbacks of a stay in a foreign land.

It is a good thing that you have stated religious service, and I hope — will prove himself a good minister of Jesus Christ, testifying the grace of God for the salvation of men through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. There is much need for holding forth this truth everywhere, and especially in a Roman Catholic country. I fear you are right in speaking of the Latin prayers in Roman worship, as nonsense to many of the people, seeing that, not being understood, they are without meaning to them, and therefore the principal thing is wanting, besides being supplanted by gross errors. I would only add to your remarks about sincerity, that it must be sincerity in the truth, not in any form of error; and that what the truth is, we must learn from the Word of God, which makes wise unto salvation. The sad case of Roman Catholics is, that they are not allowed by their Church the free use of the Scriptures in their vernacular tongue; and this shows us what we who have liberty in this respect, ought to do in searching the Scriptures which contain the

words of eternal life. This is a lesson both for you and for me.

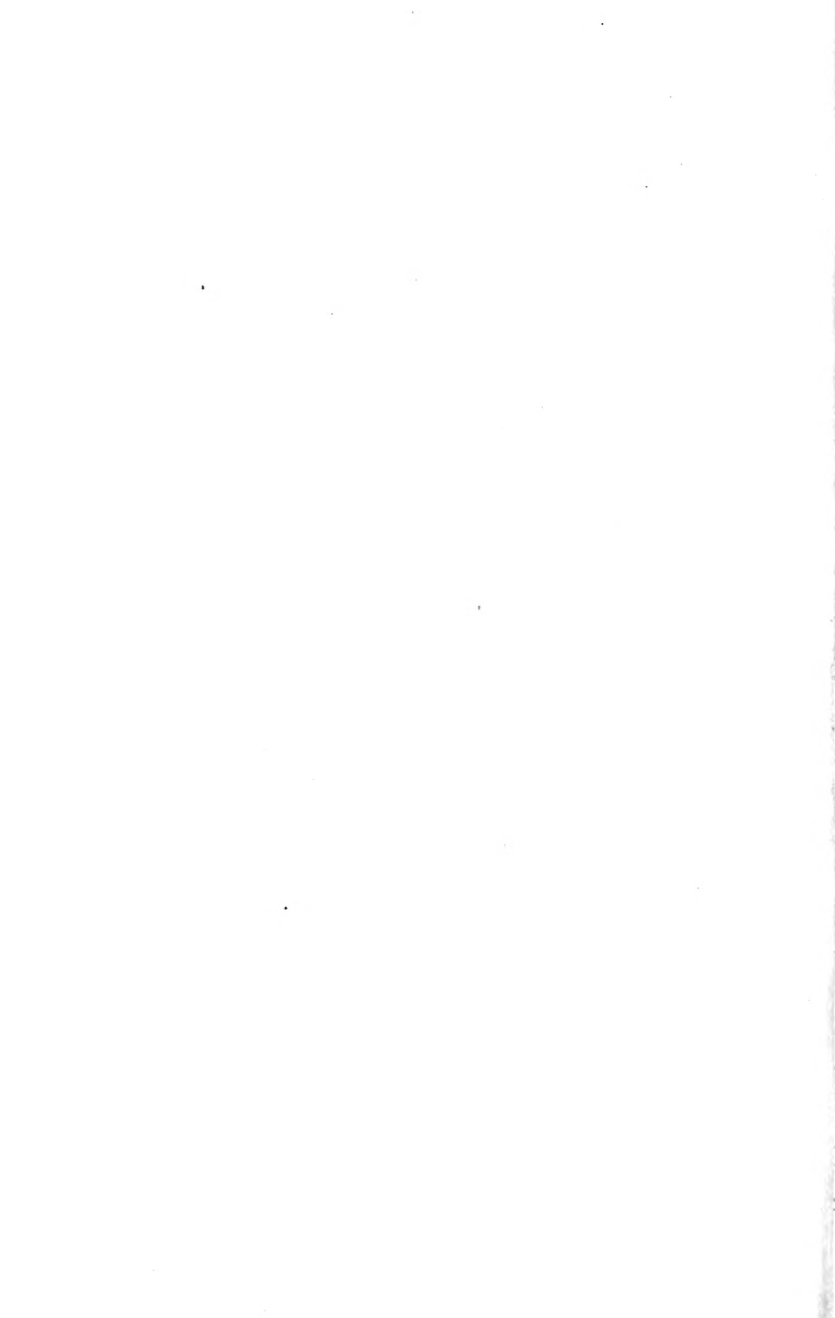
I am glad you find the French a friendly and pleasant people ; this will make your intercourse the more easy and agreeable for acquiring the language, in which I will expect to find you an adept when you return.

TO A CHILD OF A DEAR FRIEND.

LEITH MOUNT, *March 24, 1879.*

I have received at the hands of your beloved mamma, a gift of most beautiful slippers. I think very highly of the gift, as it shows that you sometimes think of me, and that I have a place in your young heart. Your mamma will read this, and explain it to you when you are a little older.

The love of children is very delightful to old people. The old are soon to leave this world, and it pleases them to think that they shall still be remembered by those they leave behind. And it is still more pleasant to think that the friends they leave, are the friends of Jesus, and that they shall all meet in a better world, where friends part no more. May Christ, my dear boy, have you in His holy keeping, and bring you to heaven at last.



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